

AGENCY MAINTAINS STRONG CUSTOMER RELATIONS THROUGH REALIGNMENT

By Mark Woodbury, DCMA Public Affairs

In an effort to further strengthen customer relations and centralize the way the agency communicates with its customers, Charlie Williams, Jr., Defense Contract Management Agency director, created the Portfolio Management & Integration directorate, appointing Joseph E. Sweeney, former acting Naval Sea Systems Division director, as the first acting director on March 23.

Sweeney said he is excited about taking on his new assignment, and he realizes how important his office’s role is within the agency.

“Everything starts and ends with the customer,” said Sweeney. “Customer relations is, therefore, absolutely crucial in our business.”

Sweeney says understanding our customers’ requirements is essential to efficiently and effectively focus our efforts and resources on the right products, services and capabilities needed by our warfighters.

“Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with our customers is the only way the agency will successfully accomplish its mission of providing contract administration services to the Department of Defense acquisition enterprise and its partners to ensure

delivery of quality products and services to the warfighters on time and on cost.”

Sweeney notes the agency’s mission statement defines its customers as “the Department of Defense Acquisition Enterprise and its partners.”

“It’s important to be clear that while the agency provides day-to-day support to program executive officers, program managers and contracting officers, our status as an independent agency also requires that we deliver real-time quality decisional information to the acquisition enterprise as a whole,” he said.

An example of this effort was Sweeney’s recent meeting with the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Portfolio Systems Acquisition director to provide him a brief on how DCMA’s realignment can be leveraged to improve weapon systems acquisition insight and management. He says the next steps will be to meet with the various PSA deputy directors, Warfare Offices to discuss information requirements, identify special interest items and establish periodic PSA and PM&I meetings.

Even though the primary program executive officer interface will now shift from the divisions to the new



In an effort to further strengthen customer relations and centralize the way the agency communicates with its customers, the Defense Contract Management Agency director created the Portfolio Management & Integration directorate, appointing Joseph E. Sweeney as the first acting director on March 23. (DCMA photo)

PM&I directorate, Sweeney says the agency’s primary interface with the program managers and contracting officers, which is the great majority of the agency’s customer interactions, will remain with the contract management offices.

“This should ensure the great customer relationship we currently enjoy at the tactical level of our agency remains essentially unchanged,” he said.

Even though the agency has built strong relationships with its customers, Sweeney says there is still room for improvement in the area of customer satisfaction. “The results from the 2007–2008 [Office of the

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Secretary of Defense] Biennial Review of DCMA showed that 100 percent of our customers believe the products and services provided by the agency are important to their organizations with 98 percent indicating a continued need for our contract management products and services,” he said. “Most notably, however, are the negative aspects of the report, which show a decline in scores for overall product and service quality, responsiveness and coordination.”

Sweeney believes the agency’s actions of: (1) focusing on executing the agency’s strategic plan to enhance the core competencies; (2) rebuilding the agency’s infrastructure; and (3) adding approximately 3,000 personnel to the Department’s acquisition enterprise will be effective in reversing the decline in overall customer satisfaction.

Another key element in building stronger customer relations, in Sweeney’s opinion, is ensuring customer liaison representatives keep customers up to date on what is happening within the agency’s realignment through regularly

scheduled PM&I customer engagements. Sweeney says there have been concerns voiced by customers on how the agency’s realignment will affect them. However, he says the CLR’s have, and are, communicating to customers that the realignment will maintain the goodness of a product-aligned agency while eliminating the seams in communication and productivity that occur as a result of being product-aligned.

Initial customer feedback on this effort has been positive, Sweeney said. “Especially once customers understand how the region alignment will benefit their organizations.”

He is convinced the new regional alignment will provide the efficiencies and consistency the agency needs in executing its mission in support of our acquisition enterprise customers while preserving the benefits achieved through a product-aligned structure. In short, Sweeney simply sees the realignment “making DCMA a better agency for our customers and our workforce.” 

JOSEPH E. SWEENEY

PRIOR AGENCY ASSIGNMENTS

- April 2009 to March 2010 — Naval Sea Systems Division acting executive director
- April 2007 to March 2009 — Naval Sea Systems Division executive director
- 2003 to 2007 — Space Sensors and Communications deputy commander
- 2000 to 2003 — East District Staff Headquarters Program Support and Customer Relations director

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Masters of Science in engineering management — Western New England College
- Masters of Arts in national security and strategic studies — Naval War College
- Bachelors of Science in industrial engineering (with distinction) — Worcester Polytechnic Institute

CERTIFICATIONS

- Joint Professional Military Education qualified
- DAWIA Level III Certified in: (1) program management; (2) systems planning, research, development and engineering; (3) life cycle logistics; (4) production, quality and manufacturing

PERSONAL CIVILIAN AWARDS

- Defense Contract Management Agency Meritorious Civilian Service Award
- Defense Logistics Agency Meritorious Civilian Service Award
- DLA Superior Service Medal

PERSONAL MILITARY AWARDS

- Currently a Navy captain and commanding officer in the Naval Reserves
- Navy Meritorious Service Medals
- Navy Commendation Medals
- Joint Service Achievement Medals
- Navy Achievement Medals