

New Strategic Plan "... a Future," says Director

By Cass Locke and Dick Cole,
DCMA Public Affairs

"Over the past year, we have defined a path for the future and have made significant progress with key initiatives in support of that vision," said Defense Contract Management Agency Director Charlie Williams, Jr. "When I joined the agency, I made a commitment to maintaining DCMA's rich tradition of service and exceeding our customers' expectations. This strategic plan lays out what we are trying to achieve, establishes priorities and creates detailed courses of action for the future."

The senior leadership team's consideration of the future path for

DCMA in September 2008 focused on several key areas according to Stephen Herlihy, director of the agency's strategic effects office. "Specifically, the SLT looked at how we could continue to deliver exceptional customer service, grow and retool the workforce, enhance policies and processes and improve agency efficiencies," said Herlihy. "Mr. Williams and the SLT used a deliberative and comprehensive process to assess the challenges facing the agency, define strategies and establish initiatives to address these challenges and capture the way forward in a formal plan with detailed courses of action for implementation across the enterprise."

Part of this process was the chartering of task force teams to engage field expertise in developing the strategies that eventually became a part of "the plan." Additionally, the task force teams and the strategic effects office worked to ensure the resulting plan would support Department of Defense initiatives, secretary of defense priorities and the goals established by the under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics.

The path forward and the progress the agency has made in key areas will be the focus of the worldwide conference in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 26-30. "I believe we are now ideally positioned to turn DCMA from a 'good' organization into a 'great' one," said Williams. "The strategic plan is only the beginning of the journey." Added Herlihy, "The plan's purpose is to provide a clear path into the future. It describes our long-range objectives and lays out the various strategies that

"This strategic plan lays out what we are trying to achieve, establishes priorities and creates detailed courses of action for the future."

— Charlie Williams, Jr.

Clear Path into the



The DCMA Council at a recent meeting to discuss implementation of the strategic plan. (DCMA photo)

we will employ to achieve them. It also leverages our capabilities as an agency.”

How does it do this?

“It gives everyone the ‘big picture,’” said Herlihy. “It lays out the

challenges we face, where we’re going and how we — individually and collectively — can support the agency and our customers. The plan captures the agency priorities established by Mr. Williams. These priorities don’t cover everything

we do but help us to focus on the most critical things we need to do where we have the greatest need for change or opportunity for improvement,” said Herlihy.



(Photo courtesy of iStockphoto)

The strategic plan employs a “scorecard approach” to organizing actions and strategies. “This approach lays out what ‘end state’ or outcome is desired and then roadmaps the way to get to that result,” says Herlihy. Typically, this approach focuses on four key areas called “quadrants:” customers, business processes, people and financial. “For the DCMA plan, we defined these quadrants using terms more applicable to our environment and processes,” said Herlihy. “Our balanced scorecard perspectives are the acquisition enterprise, policies and processes, human capital and stewardship.”

Quite simply, the plan describes the achievement of the agency’s long-term objectives, identifies the highest-level focus areas needed to achieve or make progress toward the realization of those long-term objectives, specifies the programs or activities the agency will implement to reach those desired objectives and provides milestones and performance

indicators to determine if the agency is successful.

What does this mean to me?

To achieve these agency long-term objectives, or end states, the active involvement of all agency personnel in a number of initiatives is essential. A brief look through the plan, available by going to the agency’s home page

“I’m committed to the execution of this plan and setting the agency on the path to meet the challenges of tomorrow.”

— Charlie Williams, Jr.

and clicking on “Strategic Plan for FY 09-13” under “What’s Hot ...” reveals several such initiatives:

- Continuing to build the agency’s manufacturing and supply chain core competencies and develop metrics to identify supplier and industrial base risks that could delay or raise the cost of deliverables;
- Improve customer satisfaction and develop a methodology for measuring their satisfaction more accurately;
- Execute our expanded contingency contracting administration services mission more effectively and efficiently;
- Use a Lean Six Sigma management methods to enhance operational performance and ensure a common approach to projects;
- Attract, recruit, develop and retain a high-performing and diverse workforce;
- Foster a culture of mentorship across the workforce;
- Make the hiring process quicker and more effective while improving customer service and reducing vacancy fill times;
- Create a “career guide” that clearly identifies leadership and skill training requirements for the entire workforce throughout their careers;
- Design, develop and implement a streamlined agency-wide performance management system with a uniform set of performance indicators.

These are but a few of the many initiatives included in the strategic plan. “Performance management is critical to executing this plan,” said

Williams. “It is our measurement and assessment tool to tell us if we are on track to meeting our goals and objectives and help us identify where adjustments and corrections must be applied.” Williams recognizes that performance-based management has gotten a “bad rap” among many DCMA employees because our original approach was cumbersome and had too many things being measured. “We’re taking a hard look at streamlining this process and measuring only those things that will give us the quickest and most accurate view of whether or not we are going to reach our desired end state,” said the director. The review is underway among the agency’s executive and division directors.

These performance indicators and our progress implementing them will prompt discussion and examination at the upcoming worldwide conference. “The implementation of the plan requires contributions from every employee,” said Williams. “I am confident that the agency can do this and that each of us should be able to see *exactly* how our work contributes to achieving the objectives in the plan.” The director affirmed his belief in the merits of the plan and said, “... it’s not just lip service.”

“I’m excited to share this plan, which will benefit our customers

and our agency. I’m committed to the execution of this plan and setting the agency on the path to meet the challenges of tomorrow,” concluded Williams. 

ONLINE

The *Defense Contract Management Agency Strategic Plan, FY 2009-2013* can be accessed via DCMA’s Web page at www.dcma.mil.

