

New Director 'Chases' Excellence in Human Capital

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Michael Chase, Defense Contract Management Agency Human Capital executive director, speaks to Human Capital employees during a monthly all-hands meeting at DCMA Forward Chester, Va., Jan. 12. Chase has four major first-year priorities: improving customer service; creating new and streamlining existing policy; initiating requirements-driven training; and aligning employee recruitment of new hires more closely to existing vacancies.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and former naval officer, Michael Chase, Defense Contract

Management Agency Human Capital executive director, draws on those experiences to help the agency navigate potentially rough and uncharted seas. Chase joined the agency less than six months ago, but his belief in people, persistence and an attitude of playfulness keeps the directorate, which provides human resource support for more than 10,000 employees, sailing toward the agency's desired end states.

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Human Capital. His priorities include: improving customer service; creating new and streamlining existing policy; initiating requirements-driven training; and aligning employee recruitment of new hires more closely to existing vacancies.

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Chase wants that sense of family to extend to Human Capital's customers and improve service. He believes when

customers' needs aren't met, no one has fun, making for a less-than-optimal experience for everyone.

"I think on a scale of one to 10, we would rate about a five," said Chase. "We have great people. Their talent and dedication are among the best things about working here, but we can do better."

The executive director thinks there are some simple changes in place now that will make a big difference. For example, he thinks providing customers with one point of contact and one phone number makes it much easier to resolve issues. Instead of having to look through an entire directory

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of 130 names, customers can now reach out to their own dedicated representative.

Customer service tops Chase’s list, but some of the roughest waters reside in the area of policy. “Because DCMA spun off from the Defense Logistics Agency, we still don’t have many of our own really good policies,” said Chase. This lack of policy hampers people and can keep them from doing their work effectively.

“We recently streamlined the policy drafting and approval process. Now we are fully coordinating Human Capital policy with all of our customers, both at headquarters and in the field, and getting policies to final signature much quicker,” he said.

Training and recruitment complete Chase’s top priorities. “We want to make employee training more requirements-driven. Starting with the fiscal year

2012 budget, we will generate budget requests for training via validated training requirements. That way, when we receive training funds, we will know where they are going and how they will be spent.”

In the recruitment area, Chase said, “We have begun using DCMA’s new manpower documents as a link to reach our customers and learn where their vacancies are that they need help in recruiting and filling and then hosting targeted recruitment events to fill those vacancies quickly.”

If all of these plans sound daunting and involve a great deal of red tape and bureaucracy, Chase takes it all in stride. “My favorite book is ‘Catch-22’ by Joseph Heller,” he said. “It is the only book I ever read where I actually laughed out loud.” In Heller’s satirical novel, airmen from the fictional 256th squadron face paradoxical situations where they need things that

cannot be obtained because of frustrating and seemingly absurd rules, regulations or procedures.

Chase puts aside some of the absurd aspects of life and work when he talks about the importance of persistence. He thinks what often separates the good from the great is persistence and a willingness to press on. He believes there are people with great natural ability who squander their talent, while others who may not be as naturally gifted keep pressing ahead and accomplish great things.

With characteristic humor he said, “I guess that’s why I like the cartoon character Wile E. Coyote so much. The coyote never gives up. You can do anything to him — blow him up with dynamite, drop him off a cliff, flatten him with a boulder — and he keeps going after the Roadrunner. I think the reason we don’t see Roadrunner cartoons anymore is because the coyote was so persistent he finally caught the Roadrunner.”

Chase believes in his new crew at DCMA and knows that with the perseverance of the coyote and a sense of playfulness and fun, they are building a better directorate, as a team and as a family. 



Michael Chase, Defense Contract Management Agency Human Capital executive director, works at his desk in the Chester DCMA office. Chase’s top priority for the directorate this year will be improving customer service. (Photo by Mark Woodbury, DCMA)