Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP)

Competency-Based Management

in the DoD-Wide Contracting Community

The Issue

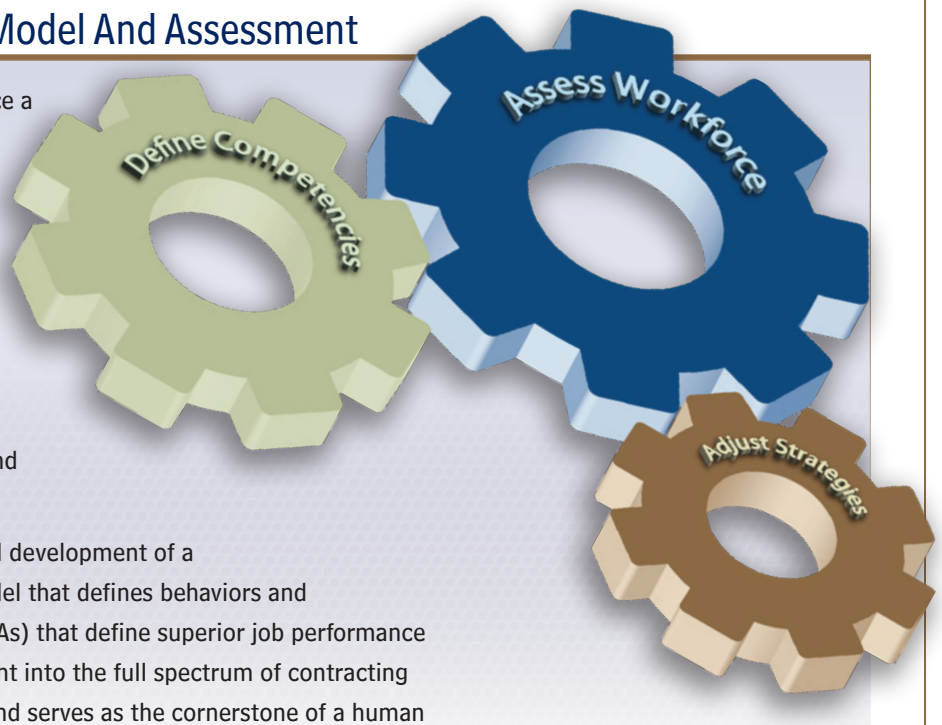
Two of the major questions before the Department of Defense (DoD) are: (1) whether we have enough people in the Contracting Workforce to perform our mission effectively, efficiently, and in a manner that assures the lawful operation of the federal acquisition system, and (2) whether our Contracting Workforce has the collective capability to meet the needs of our warfighters.

Our Role

Consistent with requirements of the Quadrennial Defense Review, the DoD Human Capital Strategy, and the Acquisition, Technology & Logistics (AT&L) Human Capital Strategic Plan, DPAP and the Department's Senior Procurement Executives are working together with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to pursue a competency-based approach to workforce management for the DoD-wide Contracting Workforce.

The Contracting Competency Model And Assessment

DPAP's human capital strategy will put in place a continuous competency-based management process to define the competencies required for the Contracting Community to deliver mission critical capabilities; assess competencies resident in the Contracting Community and identify gaps for current and future requirements; and align/adjust personnel strategies to address competency gaps and provide opportunities for training and development.



In March of 2007, the Department completed development of a comprehensive Contracting Competency Model that defines behaviors and underlying knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that define superior job performance for the Contracting Workforce; provides insight into the full spectrum of contracting job requirements and career opportunities; and serves as the cornerstone of a human capital strategy to identify and fill capability gaps.

Assessing the Workforce

Between now and July 2008, DoD will use the Contracting Competency Model to conduct a Contracting Competency Assessment of all military and civilian members of the DoD-wide Contracting Workforce. Results of the Contracting Competency Assessment will provide a complete inventory of competencies which exist in the DoD-wide Contracting Workforce; identify current and projected competency gaps; and support workforce development in ways to best fit the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce and the needs of the contracting mission. In addition, data from the assessment process may also be used on an individual basis for personal and professional growth by guiding individual development.

Where are we now? Assessing the Contracting Workforce

Aug-Dec 2007
Pilot competency assessment process at DLA, AF, and Army

Jan-Jul 2008
Conduct competency assessments across the DoD-wide contracting workforce

Jul-Sep 2008
Analyze assessment results and evaluate workforce strengths and weaknesses

Oct 2008 & Beyond
Identify strategies to address critical competency gaps

The Contracting Competency Assessment Process

1 Preparation and Training – DPAP and the Contracting Community will work together to coordinate with component human resources/ labor relations professionals and to educate the workforce on the competency assessment process.

2 Deployment – The Contracting Competency Assessment will be conducted using a web-enabled assessment tool. The tool is comprised of two components: an employee's self-assessment and a supervisor/ equivalent assessment of the employee's current proficiency.

3 Results of the employee and supervisor/equivalent assessments will be combined to determine the inventory of competencies for the DoD-wide Contracting Workforce and to identify competency strengths and weaknesses such that workforce development efforts may focus on needs of the contracting mission.

Next Steps

- DoD will use assessment results to adjust human capital strategies such as education, training and development; targeted recruitment and retention; and the allocation of resources;
- DPAP and the Contracting Community will refine the Contracting Competency Model as required, incorporating lessons-learned from the assessment process and combining assessment results and input from subject matter experts (SMEs) to add additional competencies and/or specialty areas as required;
- DoD will integrate competency-based management efforts for the DoD-wide Contracting Community into the AT&L human capital strategic plan and establish a continuous process to define and maintain the competencies required to deliver mission critical capabilities.

If you would like to provide comments or suggestions or if you would like more information, please contact:
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