

Cohort 6

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# Developing Talent – Cohort 6

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## - *Developing People for the Next Job*

### **Introduction –**

Ka-Bar Cohort 6 was tasked with researching the current talent development methods being used at MCIA for both Military and Civilian Supervisors and then propose a strategy to help Supervisors maximize their skills at building a talented workforce that meets future Enterprise needs. The starting point of any sound strategy is to clearly understand and define the current policies and methods used now in order to plan for the future. Our KA-BAR team believes that the following strategy outlined in this paper will enable Supervisors to develop their ability to build talent.

### **The Enterprise Vision –**

The high level vision for developing a talent pool for the Enterprise has already been outlined in a policy letter released by the Assistant Director of Intelligence at Headquarters Marine Corps on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011. This policy letter addresses professional development of employees and outlines the need for leaders at all levels to enable the USMC workforce to reach their full potential. This policy also directs all employees to be accountable for mapping a progressive

program of self-development mixed with professional and technical training, thus having the end goal of ensuring that the Marines succeed on the battlefield now and in the future.

If one truly understands the intent of these documents, then the philosophy and high-level strategy can be clearly seen. There also must be a strong belief among both military and civilian leaders that people really matter and that talent development is a strategic priority. Both military and civilian Supervisors must develop the capabilities of their employees, nurture their careers and manage the performance of individuals and teams. Leaders are responsible for developing talent in their organization and acknowledging this is only the first of many steps.

Success at this initiative will require a significant amount of time and resources. More importantly, unyielding faith that great results will be achieved regardless of temporary set-backs or future resource limitations. Persistence will prevail regarding this initiative especially if developing talent in key areas is inclusive of both military and civilian resources.

### **The Problem -**

It is the perception of our group that most managers are not actively involved in developing the talent of the workforce. Managers are often disconnected from the talent development process and rely on outside sources to improve their employees talent. This combination of being disconnected and not actively being involved creates a situation in which employees are often left to search for development opportunities on their own. This often consist of the employees searching out opportunities by word of mouth and web searches. This approach is both inefficient and perpetuates the disconnection of supervisor's involvement in developing the workforce's talent.

### **Why This Problem Exists –**

We believe that this problem exist because while policy requires managers to develop their hard and soft skills, there is no requirement that requires managers to transfer these learned skills to the workforce. Also, there is no requirement for managers to be held accountable for actively being involved in the development of their subordinates' talents.

### **The Impact of the Problem –**

It is the perception of this team that the impact of supervisors not being directly involved with the development of talent of their subordinates will produce these concerns for the Enterprise:

- That talent is not always aligned to support the Enterprise vision
- That talent is often not developed in an efficient manner
- Talent development investments yield no return to the Enterprise

### **What is Currently Being Done**

To develop talent, MCI has utilized the Individual Development Plan (IDP), Mentoring Program, KaBar, Essential Elements of Intelligence Analysis (EEIA), and Analysis 101 to develop talent in the workforce. Presently, all are being used.

The Individual Development Plan is a tool for employees to present to their supervisor a plan for the upcoming year with regards to training. The purpose of the IDP is not only to outline a training plan, but to ensure that the employees and supervisors discuss the goals of the employee and the expectations of the supervisor. The IDP was adopted by MCIA in 2005 and has since been streamlined to be an automated form. It references to the Marine Corps Intelligence Career

Road Map and ensures that Marine Corps Intelligence employees are all on the same path for success of the organization as a whole.

The Mentoring Program began in 2004. To date, the Enterprise has had a total of 100 mentors and 100 mentees. This program provides the chance to both aid employees in the success of their career as a mentee, and allow employees to gain knowledge and guidance from mentors in the workforce. The program is voluntary for both mentors and mentees but has had huge success since inception.

KaBar began in the Marine Corps Intelligence Enterprise in 2010. After the graduation of Cohort 6, the Enterprise will have graduated 83 leaders and potential leaders from the program. KaBar is geared for GG-12, 13 and 14's in leadership positions, or those that have the potential to become future leaders in the Marine Corps Enterprise. KaBar is a 10-week program that teaches employees concepts from diversity to decision making.

EEIA began in 2012. This program is designed for new analysts to MCIA. It is an 8 week program taught by MCIA employees and is offered aboard Quantico Marine Corps Base. This program teaches new analysts the skills that will ensure their success. Tasks that are learned include the ability to “identify information gaps relevant to the understanding of an intelligence problem” and “the ability to identify specific events that will provide opportunities to collect against intelligence problems”.

Analysis 101, which is similar to EEIA, is a course that is offered at DIA. This program is a 2-week course teaching basic skills for analysis.

**The Strategy to Meet Enterprise Requirements in the Future –**

In the following text, we will address areas of focus for talent development. Then we provide recommendations for how we believe that MCIA's managers can become more involved in talent development, not only for the workforce, but for the Marine Corps Enterprise as well. While this paper will only address recommendations for talent reform at MCIA, we believe that because MCIA is the backbone for excellence in intelligence under the Marine Corps Enterprise, it is a natural starting point. Also, we believe that MCIA is the perfect location to implement our recommendations because both Marine Civilians and Marines serve as supervisors and would be exposed to the concepts or recommendations.

Ultimately, we believe that our recommendations will achieve three things. First, it will empower leaders to develop talent within the Enterprise. Second, it will cause leaders to become invested in developing talent in the Enterprise. We believe that when leaders are empowered and invested, they will want to put forth the effort to improve talent in the Enterprise. Third, we believe that our recommendations will help tailor talent development to the Marine Corps Enterprise's needs. There is a saying that "Nobody knows you like yourself". This is also true with regards to what talents are needed within the Enterprise. By creating a successful talent development program at MCIA, it is our belief that we will create a model that can be adapted to meet the talent development needs of the Enterprise.

### **Three Areas of Focus –**

The above initiatives have paved the way for talent development in the Enterprise. However, our KA-BAR team believes that the complexity of the Enterprise will require that the Marine Corps improve upon existing talent development programs. Also, some of the key talent initiatives, such as Analysis 101 and EEIA focus on developing analyst talent and ignore other roles in the

Enterprise. Therefore, talent development in the future needs to be holistic. Our Team further believes that in order for the Enterprise to successfully move forward, there are three areas that leaders must focus on to drive talent development in the Enterprise.

**1) Tradecraft-** Tradecraft refers to the hard skills that employees need to do their jobs.

Usually tradecraft is developed through education. Traditionally, the Enterprise has educated its workforce by sending employees to outside institutions to hone their tradecraft. While we realize that the Enterprise will still need outside help with tradecraft, we believe that the Enterprise can develop tradecraft from within.

**2) Leadership-** Leadership is the soft skills that the enterprise will need to improve how employees act and treat each other. Developing leadership will create a culture of professionalism in the Enterprise.

**3) Personal Sphere-** Personal Sphere refers to self-awareness. The Enterprise will require that leaders know their strengths and weaknesses. Doing so will allow leaders to exploit their strengths while working on their weaknesses.

Drawing upon the three areas above, our KA-BAR Team recommends the following three methods to enable Supervisors to truly develop a talented workforce for the future.

## **Implementation –**

### ***1 - Individual Empowerment***

Employee empowerment is a strategy and philosophy that enables employees to make decisions about their jobs. Employee empowerment helps employees take ownership of their work and take responsibility for their results. Employee empowerment often helps employees serve customers at the level of the organization where the customer interface exists. In addition, part of

the success achieved by empowering the employee may also be tied a project management philosophy often touted by the Project Management Institute (PMI) doctrine that states that employees performing the work, best understand how to perform it, how long it will take and what resources will be needed to perform work and own their work at the lowest or task level.

***2 - Supervisor Empowerment - “If you are a Leader, You must be a Teacher and a Student so Take 2 and Teach 2”***

Supervisors and Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) have many people looking to them for guidance and direction. In order for leaders to assist them, and have a major impact on their success, it will require Supervisor Empowerment, and ultimately, the level of success will be significantly affected by their ability to teach others. If you’re going to build a competent and successful team, it is an absolute necessity to be able to show others how to attain success.

Our KA-BAR Team recommends the following method, which will allow all Enterprise staff to lead and be exposed to different leadership styles and further organizational awareness. We believe this method should be called “Take Two, Teach Two” or the T4 Requirement.

In order for supervisors or SMEs to meet this requirement, each Supervisor and SME will attend two classes being taught by other Supervisors and SME’s internal to Marine Corps Intelligence and outside the field of their expertise. These same individuals will also teach two classes per year within the Enterprise to share their knowledge and demonstrate their competency in their particular field of expertise. These classes will be at the 101 level for general attendance and can be at the advanced level for smaller groups meeting the prerequisite of the 101 knowledge of the class being given.

### ***3 - Centralized Talent Development – “Reaching Out with Online Tools”***

In order for talent development to reach all members of the Enterprise, we must be willing to engage employees wherever they are located. Because this is not always possible, the need to centralize general training resources and provide self-teaching tools is a must for success.

Our KA-BAR Team recommends the following tools and techniques for allowing all Enterprise employees to know and understand their strengths and meet their Personal Sphere requirements. We believe that the Strengths Finder Assessment tool must be made available to all staff online. All current and new employees must utilize this tool and review their Strength Assessment results prior to meeting with their supervisor to plan out their IDP. The stages of this process will be tracked online, centrally managed and the results will be shared with assigned Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors. Utilizing the recommended tools and technique will help empower the employee through self-understanding, reflection and ownership of the near term career goals captured in the IDP. The individual will be furthered empowered by knowing themselves and by knowing the path forward because they helped plan out their own road to success.

#### **Conclusion –**

We believe the strategy and methods outlined in our paper can be used to map the way forward for developing a talented workforce to meet future Enterprise needs. As stated earlier in this capstone project paper, Supervisors must make talent development a strategic priority in order to make themselves, their organization and most importantly, the Marine on the Battlefield successful.