

Sea Warrior: Maximizing Human Capital

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The Navy's human resource system produces trained sailors to man the fleet. "Sea Power 21" demands much more. Our striking groups deployed over the past two years have been increasingly better manned as a result of a host of personnel and manpower initiatives, but we still have much to do if we are to optimize our Navy's personnel readiness. We must find a way to get each individual—consistently, systematically, and comprehensively—into the job of maximum potential.

Shaped by the conscription demands of World War II, then the Cold War, and then more than a decade of draw down, our processes and systems understandably were not designed with the individual at the center. So it should not surprise us, in today's all-volunteer environment, that we see some misalignments and inefficiencies. Neither should it surprise us that transformation is within our grasp.

This is the goal of Sea Warrior: to integrate the Navy's manpower, personnel, and training organizations—active and reserve—into a single, efficient, information-rich human resource management system. Its focus is on growing individuals from the moment they walk into a recruiting office through their assignments as master chiefs or flag officers,

using a career continuum of training and education that gives them the tools they need to operate in an increasingly demanding and dynamic environment. Through Sea Warrior, we will identify sailors' precise capabilities and match them to well-articulated job requirements that far exceed the simplistic criteria used today.

In addition, we will implement different types of incentives and flexible rotation dates and move the Navy toward a job-based compensation system.

From an acquisition perspective, this means designing our platforms and systems with warfighter performance as a key parameter. For commands, it means a market-based, near-real-time process that responds rapidly and efficiently to the manpower, personnel, and training demands of an expeditionary service.

The result is not simply trained sailors to the fleet, but a quantum leap in fleet

effectiveness through efficient development and assignment of optimally trained, motivated manpower.

Not Just Change at the Margins

The functions of manpower, personnel, and training have grown in stovepipes, each with its own set of business processes. An individual moves from one organizational process to another, to another, subject to all the discontinuities and inefficiencies associated with imperfect handoffs. But if the systems are built around comprehensive knowledge of each



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The foundation of "Sea Power 21" is our people. Navy men and women—here, returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom—will be asked to deliver unprecedented offensive power, defensive assurance, and operational independence to joint force commanders with a level of responsiveness never before achieved. It is imperative they be prepared—either on station or poised to surge—to immediately employ combat capability. Sea Warrior is how we are going to build the sailor to run the Navy our nation demands.

individual and the tasks required to accomplish the mission, these stovepipes can be integrated and handoffs between functions can be made seamlessly over a career. Creating a single business process for the range of human resource management activities is the means by which the Navy is achieving the objectives of Sea Warrior.

At the heart of this approach is "sailor advocacy," a fundamental change in the assignment process that puts the detailer to work for our sailors and gives sailors a stronger voice in and greater control over their career decisions. Working closely with the command retention team, the detailer develops a comprehensive picture of each sailor's preferences and capabilities. The command retention team, in turn, working closely with the detailer, helps each sailor develop a realistic, career-enhancing set of expectations.

To be an effective advocate, the detailer must have access to specific information about the sailor to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and personal concerns or issues. He needs more than just a performance evaluation. This additional information comes from the sailor's unit, the people in that command who have watched that sailor perform, who have developed relationships with him, who understand what motivates him. This knowledge also must be readily available to that sailor's mentors, his career counselor, and his leaders. In addition, Sea Warrior brings the gaining commands into the assignment process. With this perspective, the system is more apt to create the best match of that sailor to a job.

Bold New Technologies

Behind the process improvements fostered by Sea Warrior is advanced technology. Taking advantage of off-the-shelf, corporate-tested products such as Knowledge Management programs, PeopleSoft, and SkillsNet, as well as such newly developed tools as advanced auction engines, the Navy is constructing a human resource system that is world-leading. The Sea Warrior information technology (IT) strategy is moving aggressively to eliminate the dozens of legacy client server systems and stove-piped databases. Key ForceNet elements such as the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet, IT 21, and Task Force Web will provide the IT framework for every facet of Sea Warrior. They are the

information superhighways that bring sailors and commands together.

Sea Warrior focuses on increased options and information for career managers, commands, and sailors, providing a one-stop information source through a single, Web-enabled portal. Professional development, training and education, and continuous performance feedback are available and visible to every stakeholder on a sailor's career management team. Whether active duty or reserve, each sailor's personal and professional information—assignment preferences, family requirements, training information, and performance data—is contained in an electronic document for use by career managers and associated technologies that synchronize and couple this information to job advertisements, command requirements, and training opportunities.

Personnel distribution relies on each command's leadership and mentoring processes, in partnership with detailers, to shape expectations and guide sailors to the next logical assignments for faster career progression and greater performance. But what is the right job and how do we match the talents of each sailor with the requirements of the job? Allied with the personnel and training elements of Sea Warrior is Improving Navy's Workforce, a job content definition initiative that uses Department of Labor competency descriptors developed by SkillsNet. The SkillsNet methodology defines job requirements in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks, as opposed to our current approach of relying on the rating badge and a naval enlisted code only loosely associated with the billet.

This much more precise job definition, coupled with a parallel approach that describes the sailor in these same terms, enables optimal matches that improve job success and will increase operational readiness. Knowledge, skills, abilities, and tasks are translated into the training and education syllabus used to prepare sailors at each stage of their career development: apprentice, journeyman, master, and professional. Decomposing job content in such a fashion is key considering the Navy job portfolio of more than 400,000 positions covers the full range of competencies and that our

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schoolhouses must somehow account for and manage the production of those competencies.

With precise requirements developed for jobs, and each sailor's knowledge, skills, and abilities identified, intelligent software agents will work to expand assignment options, improve matches, and simplify the detailing process for sailors. These agents, working on line around the clock for both sailors and commands, create a virtual job market on the Web. Sailors receive information about available jobs that fit their competencies, career demands, and goals; commands get information on the sailors available who meet their advertised requirements. In addition, the on-line marketplace uses real-time incentive packages to encourage sailors to take specific assignments. These incentives, applied in response to needs of commands and claimants, will drive the Web-based marketplace into conformity with fleet priorities.

Commands also will be key sources of information for sailors and their families. Web sites viewable from the sailor's portal by family members provide information on schools, spouse employment opportunities, and community attractions, for example. Many of these sites are available today. The result is an informed system that gets the right sailor where he wants to go, and where the Navy needs him. And a sailor who reports on board satisfied with the career management process will be more motivated and productive.

The Power of Choice

Career management means a lot more than choosing the next assignment in a current rate. Sea Warrior also makes sailors aware of skill conversion opportunities, identifies new career paths and training opportunities, and introduces them to a much wider array of job possibilities. Using new personnel classification technology, Sea Warrior considers the sailor's aptitude and

interests, as well as the Navy's needs, to produce a set of skills for which the sailor would be prequalified. Then, by comparing the sailor's experience and knowledge, skills, and abilities with the skill requirements of a new rating, Sea Warrior will help map the training that would be required to convert to the new rating. Sea Warrior provides every sailor the tools to achieve his personal goals and personnel managers a powerful tool to shape the Navy's force.

Career path development for enlisted sailors is well under way. It captures a sailor's progress along five vectors—professional development, personal development, professional military education and leadership, certificates and qualifications, and professional performance. The same intelligent agents that analyze a sailor's job preferences and skills and compare them to available jobs also will interrogate this career model and evaluate the sailor's progression along each vector and factor this information into assignment recommendations. This will help sailors and their supervisors to better understand individual growth and development

and highlight strengths and skills to work on. Linked directly to the job requirements defined by SkillsNet, the five-vector model will help develop the right knowledge, skills, and abilities in our sailors and complete a critical personnel-training association.

In addition, Sea Warrior's rich language of sailor competencies makes possible profound improvements in human systems integration. System engineers can identify the exact capabilities of sailors in a particular job, take those capabilities to the lab, and design a system that "fits" the sailor. This integration of system and sailor enables a reduction of life cycle costs associated with the human element of systems.



Sea Warrior captures the early dramatic gains of Project SAIL, Task Force EXCEL, and the Navy's Workforce Initiatives. The emerging system creates a comprehensive approach to an individual's development on both a professional and personal level.

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Using the Market to Drive Top Talent to Top Jobs

Another key aspect of the marketplace concept employed in Sea Warrior is the introduction of dynamic incentives for specific assignments. There always will be jobs that because of their geographic locations or task descriptions will be hard to fill. The use of incentives, both monetary and nonmonetary, administered independently or in packages, is fundamental to eliminating involuntary assignments and getting qualified sailors to tough jobs.

Today's incentives are tied directly to reenlistments; tomorrow's will be tied to the job. Monetary incentives in the form of assignment incentive pay already are available in pilot form: Sailors compete for jobs through an on-line, sealed bid auction in which the lowest bid from a qualified sailor normally wins the assignment—not eBay, but close. Sailors know only what the maximum allowable bid is and what they themselves have bid. The bid becomes part of a weighted system that scores each candidate using preferences, skills, permanent-change-of-station costs, and other variables.

Detailers have the final assignment decision to ensure quality accompanies the use of incentive resources. Decision support tools and advanced auction engine technology will

provide the means to oversee this process to ensure accountability, enforce policy, and conduct real-time trend analysis.

The Way Ahead

As the human resource enabler, Sea Warrior is focused on getting optimally trained sailors to battle groups. This is being accomplished through a comprehensive manpower, personnel, and training integration effort targeted at producing a single integrated human resource system. The Navy already is well downstream in the initiation phase of this major undertaking, and new initiatives designed to accelerate the integration process are drawing on experts in the field of rapid prototype development. Fleet sailors and commands are partners in the process, and focus groups on the waterfront root out the pros and cons of concepts to ensure the work remains grounded in the war fighter.

The Navy–Marine Corps team responded magnificently when called to Afghanistan and Iraq. As we constitute our forces for future challenges, there is no alternative to manning it with leaders possessing 21st-century skills.

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