

21st Century “Own the Night” Warfighter Requirements

Night Vision PM Office Develops Plan to Cope With Realities of Downsizing

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Since the start of President Clinton’s first administration, the Army has been coping with a world in which fewer resources are available to support manpower and modernization efforts. This reality is neither good nor bad. It’s just the way things are. Nevertheless, any functional area which hopes to accomplish its mission needs a vision or plan that enables it to meet critical mission requirements, even with diminished financial and personnel resources.

Army Col. Jeffrey A. Sorenson, Project Manager for Night Vision Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (PM-NV/RSTA) manages a staff actively engaged in planning to meet this particular challenge. Even though PM-NV is one of the PM offices that has been blessed with continued high-level interest and relatively stable funding, its core civilian Table of Distribution and Allowances is being somewhat reduced. As with other PMs, PM-NV/RSTA must also “do more with less.” To meet this challenge, a three-pronged approach is in process.

Phase One—Sharpen the Ax

As the PM workforce gets smaller, employees and managers have should-

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TARGET LOCATION AND OBSERVATION SYSTEM (TLOS), AN/PLQ-8, A NIGHT VISION SYSTEM THAT IS DESIGNED TO LOCATE AND ACQUIRE ENEMY TARGETS.

dered heavier workloads. However, unlike the parable of the busy woodcutter who couldn't take time to sharpen his ax because he had too many trees to cut down, PM-NV/RSTA has embarked on a deliberate journey into the future. They hold regular internal strategy meetings that map out current business and future business base areas. Their objective seeks to accommodate warfighters' requirements beyond the year 2000. Integral to this process is the ongoing preparation of career development plans that advance employees on to required Level II and Level III certifications in their acquisition careers. Employees with one Level III career field certification are encouraged to begin working on a secondary career field, similar to the military career management model.

Phase Two— Empowerment and Reorganizing to Meet the Challenges

As organizations seek to manage smarter, one way to accomplish this goal is to work smarter. The office equivalent to working smarter is to reduce or eliminate the administrative equivalent of scrap and rework in the PM office. Knowing that a focused group of motivated workers can come up with better acquisition strategies than a single manager, or through a series of sequential management overviews, PM-NV has been deliberately implementing the Integrated Product Team (IPT) concept as found in the March 1996 *OIPT-WIPT Information Guide* published by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Reform.

To formalize the process of making IPTs work, PM-NV first established a formal, chartered Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT) comprised predominately of the managers. By preparing a formal charter, the group had both vision and operating "bylaws." This formal charter, coupled with formal training in IPT operations, has provided a roadmap for development of subsequent Working-Level Integrated Product Teams (WIPT).

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Following OIPT establishment, two other WIPTs have since been established with others pending. One of these IPTs is for the management of the Long Range Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3); the other is an Automation Improvement IPT geared to providing 21st Century tools and skills for program management activities across PM-NV's many programs.

Within PM-NV/RSTA, OIPTs and WIPTs follow a simple rule set in order to achieve success. Sample rules include—

- use of agendas and minutes to keep track of agreements;
- consistent use of metrics;
- making IPT meeting attendance a priority;

- open discussion with no secrets;
- qualified, empowered team members;
- consistent, success-oriented, proactive participation;
- continuous up-the-line communications;
- reasoned disagreement; and
- issues raised and resolved early.

Phase Three—
Modern Times and Modern Tools
As mentioned earlier, today's complex environment requires rapid data manipulation and information retrieval for use by managers and staff. To meet this goal and to cut down on redundant paperwork, PM-NV, through its Automation IPT and support contractors, has also begun work on developing a series of software tools that complement the Program Executive Office-Intelligence Electronic Warfare and Sensors (IEW&S) Information Management System (IMS) and the Financial Accounting System (FAS).

User-friendly, Windows-based "point and click" icons will allow instant visibility initially in eight areas: Suspense Control, Contract Information, Major Issues, Logistics Status, Funding Documents, Program Schedules, Contract Deliverables, and Information Contacts.

A second effort is designed to tie these software tools into an Automated Data Processing technical architecture capable of supporting the "corporate brain" and the PM-NV/RSTA "factory."

In summary, all managers must constantly evaluate mission performance in view of resource constraints. Bearing this in mind, there is no single correct solution. Each Program Management Office can draw on the best ideas available to tailor their own solutions. Nevertheless, PM-NV/RSTA's strategy to meet emerging "Own the Night" equipment requirements for 21st Century warfighters demonstrates the value of developing and implementing a plan based on the organization's collective vision.