

streamlining the procedures set forth in MCO 3900.4D. The chart at the beginning of this article captures the gist of the upcoming revision. In essence, it will provide for a simplified warfighter request in the form of an electronic Universal Need Statement, concurrent staffing, and most importantly, capitalization upon rapid warfighter consensus deriving from establishment of top-level (i.e., 0-8 and 0-9) warfighting advocacy boards. This streamlining is heavily reliant upon the current, maturing Integrated Digital Environment, which was not available when MCO 3900.4D was published in 1991.

Consensus Building Mechanism

Streamlining of the basic staffing process will not be successful, however, without the critical mechanism to expedite warfighter consensus building of advocacy boards. These boards were instituted by the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James L. Jones, and comprise a Ground Combat Element board (i.e., USMC Divisions), an Aviation Combat Element board (i.e., USMC Aircraft Wings), a Combat Service Support Element board (i.e., USMC Force Service Support Groups), a Command Element board (i.e., MEF and Marine Force Headquarters), and a Supporting Establishment board (i.e., USMC Bases/Air Stations). The membership of these quarterly boards constitutes the respective warfighting General Officers of the USMC.

Inserting the deliberations of these top-level advocate boards into the streamlined staffing process will provide the rapid and simple validation of an acquisition requirement and, in turn, prompt an equally simple and rapid answer as to whether the requirement was initiated or disapproved. It should be noted that while this solution remedies the prolonged uncertainty a warfighter currently experiences as to whether a requirement will be initiated, it does not remove the inherent tension between CINCs and their Marine warfighters when the theater-specific requirement is not applicable Marine Corps-wide.

Top-Down Approach Should be Emulated

To solve an enduring problem, the basic enduring process/processes generating the problem must be remedied. In this case, that was the lack of a rapid consensus building mechanism for the stakeholders (USMC warfighters) to validate a proposed requirement. The Commandant's top-down approach to create forums for the stakeholders through the advocacy boards should be emulated, ensuring like mechanisms are available at all levels for stakeholders when addressing any problem. Geographic CINCs, in my view, should be authorized limited, discretionary RDT&E and procurement funds to address evolving theater-specific ACAT III-

and IV-level requirements, which, in turn, would require changes to current law and regulations.

Need for an Enduring Process

In addressing the problem of prolonged delays in initiating warfighter-generated acquisition requirements, the Marine Corps is creating an enduring process that not only will provide a simple, rapid procedure for the warfighter, but a process that distills and focuses all warfighter requirements into a coherent, synchronized warfighting road map for the future.

Editor's Note: The author welcomes questions or comments on this article. Contact Dulin at DulinPJ@mcs.usmc.mil.

ACQUISITION MANAGERS RECRUITING, HIRING, AND RETENTION HANDBOOK (<http://www.dacm.rdaisa.army.mil>)

Online Handbook Contains Wealth of Information for Acquisition Managers of Civilian Employees

The way we recruit, hire, promote, pay, and retain employees in the Federal Government is governed by civil service laws, rules, Executive Orders, regulations, and policies to ensure fairness to applicants and employees—usually referred to as merit system principles. The challenge for federal managers and human resources specialists is to work within this complex, rule-based system while still meeting operational staffing and mission requirements.

The *Acquisition Managers Recruiting, Hiring, and Retention Handbook* is a quick reference for use as a first step when considering recruiting, hiring, or retaining employees. It is intended to provide a general understanding of the civilian personnel authorities and vehicles available to meet the staffing needs of acquisition managers. It must be used, however, in conjunction with the support and advice available from servicing personnel offices, who are responsible for advising managers on how the laws, rules, regulations, precedent decisions, and terms of applicable negotiated bargaining agreements apply and what actions can and cannot be taken to accomplish objectives. The handbook

summarizes options managers can pursue to meet their staffing needs.

A number of DoD organizations are now participating in the Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project (AcqDemo). Its purpose is to demonstrate that the effectiveness of DoD acquisition can be enhanced by allowing greater managerial control over personnel processes and functions, while expanding the opportunities available to employees by providing a more responsive and flexible personnel system. In addition to the traditional hiring, recruiting, and retention methods discussed in this handbook, the demonstration project adopted initiatives permitting waiver of certain laws and regulations. Many of these initiatives (available to AcqDemo participants only) are identified and discussed in the AcqDemo section of the handbook.

While this handbook is not a substitute for statutory, regulatory, or local requirements or agreements, it will help managers understand not only the barriers and problems, but also what flexibilities may be available within the current system.