

# Overarching Integrated Product Team— Working Integrated Product Team Process

## Successful Acquisition Programs Through Early and Continuous Insight

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**E**arly in 1995 Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) William J. Perry and Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Technology) (USD[A&T]) Paul G. Kaminski directed a fundamental change in the way the Department acquires goods and services. In his April 28, 1995 memorandum, “Reengineering the Acquisition Oversight and Review Process,” Kaminski stated:

I direct an immediate and fundamental change in the role of the OSD and Component staff organizations currently performing oversight and review of acquisition programs. In the future these staff organizations shall participate as members of integrated product team or teams, which are committed to program success. Rather than checking the work of the program office beginning six months prior to a milestone decision point, as is often the case today, the OSD and Component staffs shall participate early and on an ongoing basis with the program office teams, resolving issues as they arise, rather than during the final decision review.

The direction was clear, and it’s working today! How did we get there?

### Implementing the Change

With its mandate from the SECDEF and the USD(A&T), the Department established and began implementing

the Overarching Integrated Product Team (OIPT) and Working-level Integrated Product Team (WIPT) policy and procedures that are now embodied in the new DoDD 5000.1 and DoD 5000.2-R, published on March 15, 1996.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1995, most of the Department’s ACAT I-D programs were “re-baselined” to the OIPT-WIPT process. The program offices developed their WIPT structures and coordinated them with the appropriate OIPT leader. Similarly, the program managers (PM) proposed and received OIPT leader approval of the information required by the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA) to support the next milestone decision.

With the OIPT’s strategic guidance in hand, the PMs began the process of forming the agreed-to WIPTs; baselining the team members’ knowledge on the program; and engaging these new teams, using the collective expertise in the Department, in the business of making system acquisition programs more successful.

As the teams formed into their WIPTs, both team leaders and team members faced new roles and responsibilities. The focus was now on jointly developing affordable and executable strategies and plans that would increase the opportunities for program success. Members were expected to identify and help resolve issues in a timely manner. They were required to view

the program as a whole rather than from a narrow, single functional area perspective. For many members from the Component and OSD staffs, these were significant changes from their old oversight roles that consisted of after-the-fact checking and assessment of a program’s readiness to proceed to the next acquisition phase.

In the beginning it was tough work, especially with all ACAT I-D programs transitioning to the new process at the same time. It placed high demands on people’s time as they tried to actively participate in the many WIPTs to which they belonged. However, most people dug in, rolled up their sleeves, and went to work, helping define this new OIPT-WIPT process and contribute to *their* programs’ success.

### Supporting the Change

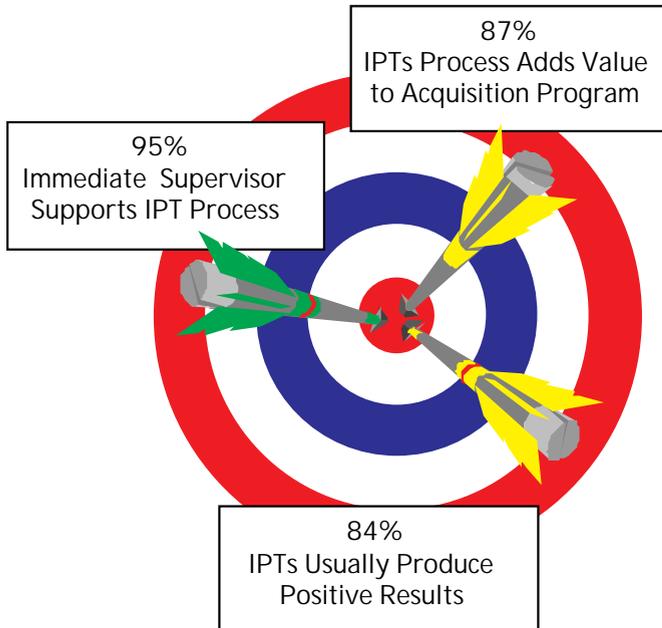
It was clear from the outset that implementing this cultural change to the Department’s oversight and review process was not going to be easy. People’s roles and responsibilities were changing. If the change was going to happen efficiently and effectively, education and training of the workforce were vital.

To kick off the cultural transition to the OIPT-WIPT process, Kaminski hosted a day-long DoD offsite, on July 20, 1995, at the Defense Systems Management College (DSMC), with the theme of “Institutionalizing IPTs—DoD’s Commitment to Change.” The objective of that conference, attended

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## OIPT-WIPT Survey Results



by approximately 400 people, was to develop a common understanding within the Department regarding implementation of the IPT concept. The program included speakers and panel discussions. On August 14, 1995, the USD(A&T) published a memorandum addressing questions and answers that flowed from those discussions.

Because all of the program offices were undergoing the change to the OIPT-WIPT process at the same time they were managing their programs, they needed immediate help and guidance. Consequently, various organizations from the USD(A&T) staff, that had been instrumental in developing the OIPT-WIPT policy, were assigned to the WIPTs. They acted as consultants and mentors to the teams, interpreting the policy and offering guidance regarding implementation.

The OIPT-WIPT process was also a major topic of the October 11-12, 1995 PEO/SYSCOM Commanders/PM Conference hosted by R. Noel Longuemare, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Technology) and Defense Manufacturing Council (DMC) Chairman. There were presentations, panel discussions,

and breakout groups focused on discussing the specifics of the new OIPT-WIPT process, overcoming the implementation barriers, and measuring IPT success.

The conference attendees generally supported the new initiative and recommended ways to accelerate the institutionalization of the OIPT-WIPT process. First, they called for a "Rules of the Road" guide to assist the PMs and their integrated teams as they implemented the new procedures. They recommended that we capture and disseminate to the field any lessons learned and wisdom acquired through early WIPT organization and operations. *Rules of the Road: A Guide for Leading Successful Integrated Product Teams* was published and distributed in November 1995.

The conference attendees also called for additional education and training to "move the OIPT-WIPT process concept from 50 percent to 90 percent effective," and a training video was suggested. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition Reform) (ODUSD[AR]) responded by producing the *Overarching and Working-level Integrated Product Teams* video and the companion *OIPT-WIPT Infor-*

*mation Guide*. The video was aired during a nationwide satellite broadcast, on March 14, 1996, and was followed up with a live question-and-answer (Q&A) period. Copies of that tape, with the Q&A session, were distributed by the Acquisition Reform Communications Center throughout the acquisition community.

More copies of the guides and tapes were distributed again to the acquisition community to support the Department's Acquisition Reform Day on May 31, 1996. The OIPT-WIPT process was a major topic for discussion on that day when the Department's Acquisition Community ceased normal operations to discuss and increase its awareness of the various acquisition reform initiatives.

### How are we doing?

Quite well. Is there room for improvement? Absolutely!

In February 1996 the USD(A&T) commissioned DSMC to conduct a survey of the OIPT-WIPT process. The surveyed population included all ACAT I PMs and their staff, matrix support to project management offices, program executive officers and their staff, Component staff, and OSD staff. The response was very positive and encouraging.

As shown in the Figure, the vast majority of the respondents indicated that the OIPT-WIPT process produces positive results. Eighty-seven percent of the people said the IPT process adds value to acquisition programs. That's a strong endorsement for the new process.

What do people like about the OIPT-WIPT process? Some of the written comments received in the survey were:

- "Involves all key players early so that there are no surprise 'No's' or 'Nonconcur's' at the last minute."
- "Promotes team building; you get a good understanding of the viewpoints of other organizations."
- "Creates cooperation and ownership of the decision."

People enjoy being part of the team. They like contributing positively to program success through early and continuous participation in developing program strategies, plans, and solutions to issues. Clearly, the OIPT-WIPT process has also improved the job satisfaction of many team members.

Another indicator that the process is working is the Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) record for 1995. Of 26 scheduled DABs, only eight were held. For the other 18 programs, the IPTs had done their job so well that there were no unresolved issues, and the OIPT leaders recommended at the DAB Readiness Meeting that the MDA issue an Acquisition Decision Memorandum without formally convening the DAB. In fact, that was done—the MDA conducted a “paper DAB” for those 18 programs.

Areas for further improvement include: education and training, WIPT member empowerment, and WIPT size.

Many respondents told us that we needed to do a better job at disseminating implementation guidance and providing the workforce with the education and training required to understand and effect the changes. As discussed earlier, in March 1995 ODUSD(AR) intensified its response to that need with the video tape, the satellite broadcast, and the OIPT-WIPT information guide. There has been a very favorable response from the field to those materials. The Defense Acquisition University has also stepped up the process of updating their curriculum to ensure acquisition reform information is built into their course material.

The OIPT leaders are carefully addressing the issues of WIPT size and team member empowerment. Without dictating solutions, they are encouraging team leaders and members to tailor team composition and size to address program strategies, plans, and issues without omitting key participants or stakeholders (including key organizations that are not part of USD[A&T]).

However, teams must balance that need to include all stakeholders with the concern that too many people can hamper productive discussions and meetings. Ultimately, IPT success is dependent upon having the right players at the right place at the right time.

Team member empowerment is critical to the success of the OIPT-WIPT process. The earlier and continuous involvement by the Component and OSD staffs with system acquisition programs is time consuming and demanding. If the systems acquisition programs are to progress in a timely, effective manner, functional heads must delegate and empower their people to speak for them and make decisions on their behalf. Therein, the functional heads have a new role—that of defining the limits of empowerment and then providing staff personnel with the education, training, and other resources to effect proper delegation and empowerment. This area is complex and will take more time to define and develop the required skills, roles, and relationships.

### Conclusions

In a relatively short time, the OIPT-WIPT process has become the norm for conducting program oversight and review. It has revolutionized the way the Department does business. Program offices, Component staff, and OSD staff are now working together as a team, using their collective knowledge and expertise throughout the acquisition cycle, to increase their programs' opportunities for success (to provide the warfighters what they need, when they need it, and at an affordable cost.)

As we've seen, the OIPT-WIPT process is working and adding value to the business of systems acquisition. Working together, communicating good ideas up and down the chain of command and horizontally with our contemporaries, the acquisition community will continuously improve the process and provide even better support for the warfighters of the future.

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