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U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers

Human Resources Strategic Actions

The Corps Vision
and
Our Human Resources Challenges

Distribution: HR Officers, Commanders, Managers, Supervisors

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MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: Human Resources Strategic Actions

1. It is a turbulent time in Government. Pressure mounts to minimize costs, downsize, streamline and consolidate. Although we must deal with these necessary changes in Federal structure, we must be sure to move toward other goals important for the Corps of Engineers. That is why we developed the Corps Vision. It is our way of setting sights on the kind of ever-improving Corps our Nation expects and deserves.

2. Attached is our plan for Human Resources Strategic Actions, a plan aimed at moving us ahead toward our Vision. It lists specific actions generated by a work group that represented different geographical and occupational parts of the Corps. Other actions may be added as new strategies and ideas emerge. It is important to note that all actions listed in this plan and all future actions in the human resources area will have the greatest impact when accompanied by your active support.

3. Our Vision acknowledges that Corps members are the real source of future excellence. In this light, please share the HR plan with your team members. Keep in mind, however, that commanders, managers and supervisors have a special responsibility to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse gifts and talents of our people. Our Vision will be achieved only by maximizing our human potential.

4. Essayons!

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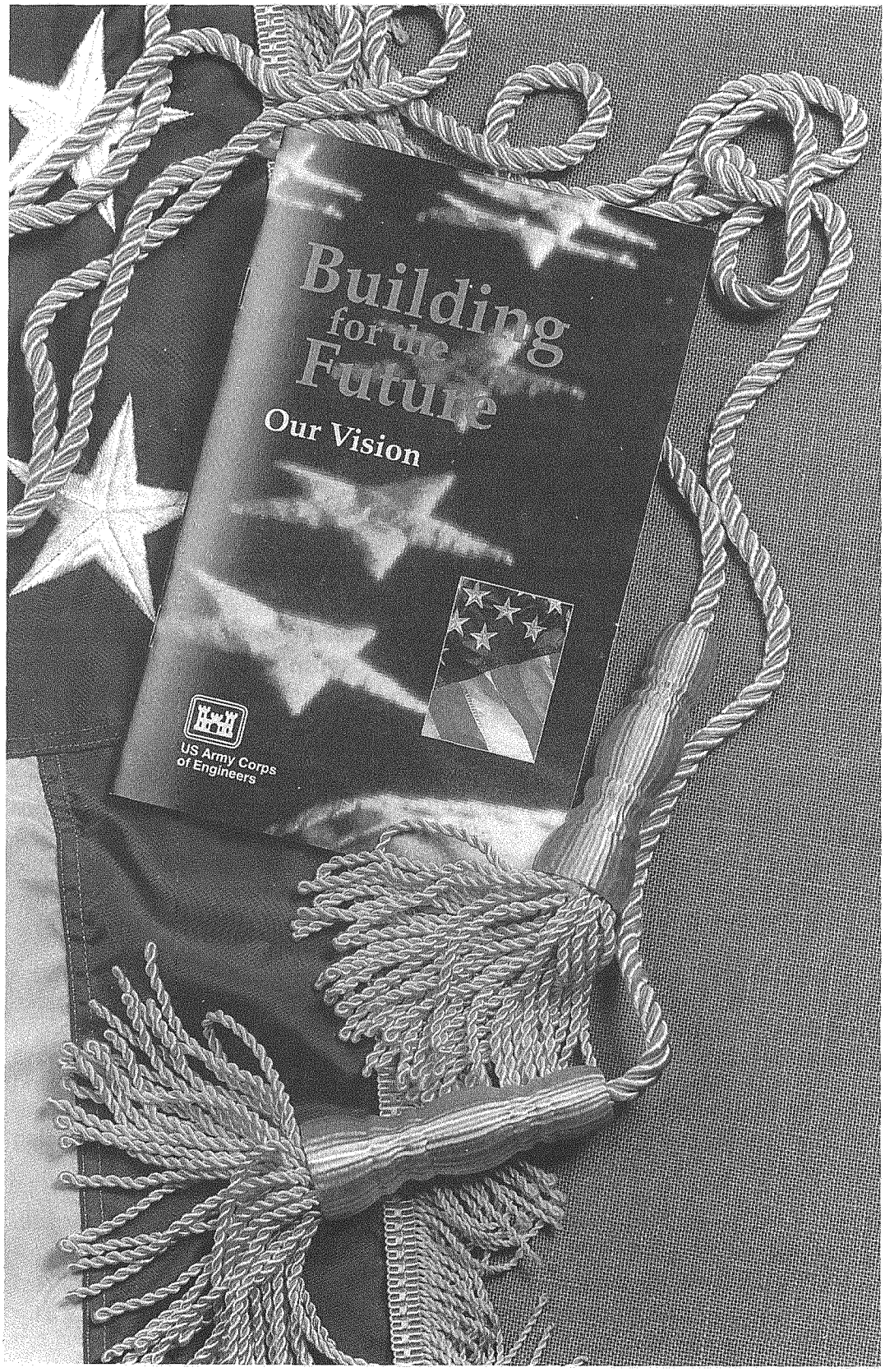
Building
for the
Future
Our Vision
US Army Corps
of Engineers

Building for Our Future

(Reprint of our Vision, EP11-1-7, with people-oriented elements highlighted)

A Vital Part of America's Army --------- The Corps of Engineers is a major command of the Army composed of over 40,000 civilian and 600 military team members organized into divisions, districts, and laboratories geographically distributed throughout the United States and overseas. As part of America's Army, we directly support the Army during deployment and conflict, as well as peacetime engagement. Our unique capabilities are an essential part of the Army's ability to both deter hostilities and promote peace. We strive to be the best public engineering agency in the world.

To achieve this goal, **we are committed to creating an organizational culture which strives for excellence, encourages and celebrates teamwork, develops leadership, and empowers people to execute their assigned missions effectively. We must continue to attract a quality, diverse workforce, dedicated to working together-as an integrated and caring team - those we serve.**

Proud of our Past ------- For more than 200 years, the Corps has effectively and proudly responded to changing defense and national requirements. We trace our beginnings to 1775 and preparation of Bunker Hill. Engineers served in all wars. Throughout the 19th century, the Corps was called to build coastal fortifications, survey roads and canals, eliminate navigation hazards on major rivers, explore and map the frontier, and construct buildings and monuments in the Nation's capital.

After the Civil War, the Corps began intensive development of rivers and harbors for commerce and by 1900 established a regulatory program to protect navigable waterways. Later in the 20th century, the Corps began to construct flood control projects to protect life and property. During World War II, Corps resources were directed to the war effort as we assumed construction of the Manhattan Project and all military facilities. From the start of the Cold War, through the Korean conflict, the Vietnam era and to the present, the Corps has been called upon to meet pressing national needs. When we're needed, we're there.

Building for the Future ------- Change will be a way of life in the coming decade. Regardless of the challenges, **we must work together to make ourselves better, both individually and as a team - a caring team with shared values, vibrant spirit, dedicated to common goals, and the Army ethic of duty, integrity, loyalty, and selfless service.**

... Our Vision

Every member of the Corps team expects and deserves to be listened to, to be treated fairly with dignity and respect, and to perform meaningful work in an environment that is exciting and challenging. We will identify talent, celebrate technical excellence, and reward achievement. We will sharpen our focus on total engineering quality, environmental excellence and leadership development to maximize personal and team growth, and execute our mission consistent with the philosophy of sustainable development. By emphasizing accountability and by promoting partnering with our customers, contractors, non-federal interests, and within the Corps itself, we intend to enhance quality, customer satisfaction, and mission execution.

With this foundation, our most effective way of ensuring a strong, viable future is to satisfy our customers by performing to our maximum capability. In the future, as in the past, the Corps again may be called upon to support the Army in military operations, as we were in DESERT STORM, to respond to the Nation's infrastructure needs and national disaster, or to assist the Nation in achieving foreign policy objectives. When needed, we are ready.

Providing Quality, Responsive Engineering Services -------- Providing quality, responsive, cost effective engineering services is the essence of the Corps purpose. This includes the full range of services the Corps may be called to perform for Army or the Nation. Mission execution is essential to meeting the requirements and demands of customers. Thus, we are committed to maintaining a clear, unrelenting focus on providing world-class support.

The Corps plans, designs, builds, and operates water resources and civil works projects, in cooperation with other agencies and local sponsors; performs military construction management support for other Defense and federal agencies. In addition, we perform real estate services and innovative research and development, furnish emergency operations in response to natural disasters, such as the Loma Prieta earthquake, Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki, and 1993 Floods, and execute a fast-growing environmental restoration EPA.

Our mission may require the services of engineers, biologists, contract specialists, archaeologists, natural resource managers, lawyers, and many team members prepared to meet the changing times and requirements. **Integrity. Quality. Professionalism. Caring. These values are our standards**; we accept nothing less.

To Support the Nation, in Peace and War ------ US Army Corps of Engineers.

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Introduction

Our Corps Vision challenges us ...

We all know the serious organizational changes we face: fewer high grade positions, restructuring, downsizing and more. The Human Resources (HR) Community faces additional changes. Army plans to consolidate many functions done by its more than 200 HR offices into 10 regional centers. Army also proposes a sizeable reduction in the number of people working in the HR area.

Certainly, we face a lot of change, but we must be careful to ensure we do not merely react. Our planning and guidance for the organization and its members should be positive, deliberate and proactive. This is where vision and leadership are important.

Our Corps Vision challenges us to emphasize leadership. We are asked to foster and promote a culture of self-improvement, teamwork, empowerment, and excellence. We are asked to make the work experience exciting and challenging. We are asked to identify talent and match people with the right jobs, to celebrate technical excellence, focus on customer care, reward achievement and ensure fairness. In short, we are asked to be leaders, in every sense. Leaders bear the bulk of the responsibility for moving toward the Vision. Surely, we want every Corps member to do his and her part by embracing the right ideals for tomorrow, but leaders are called to demonstrate these ideals and actively promote them. Leadership is the primary agent for moving toward the Vision.

... acquire a deeper knowledge of what moves people to action.

Leading will require much more of us in the future as there is a growing expectation that we can work effectively with fewer people. One solution is that we move away from traditional "command and control" toward a culture of trust and teamwork. Another solution is that we improve our HR knowledge and capabilities and acquire a deeper knowledge of what moves people to action. To do this, we will need to connect with people in a more personal, trusting way and learn what interests them.

The HR Community recognizes the challenges leaders face and is working to provide new systems and support. Examples of new approaches are delegation of classification authority, new training processes, partnering and matrix management (inter-office and inter-disciplinary teams). We are also working to provide a non-threatening, informal environment where employee and manager disagreements emerge in order to "Bring Resolution Into Disputes and Grievances Early" (BRIDGE, a mediation program now being tested).

... align HR systems with the Vision.

There are HR systems already in-place that are powerful tools, and sometimes overlooked. Systems such as selection, performance management and training can be used to guide and shape our organizational culture if we consciously align HR systems with the Vision.

This HR plan describes eight initiatives to help the Corps meet mandated changes and to progress toward our Vision. To effectively move ahead with the initiatives, we should strengthen our understanding of how HR systems can help us reach our Vision.

Strategic Actions

The Directorate of Human Resources, the HR Board of Directors and a specially formed work group of Corps members identified eight initiatives to help us move toward the Vision. The initiatives are designed to be completed within a couple of years. They are described on the following pages and hopefully will facilitate wide-spread understanding and action across the Corps. The initiatives, our HR strategic actions, fall in three areas: (1) Leadership Development, (2) Future HR Services; and (3) Automation.

Leadership Development	Leadership Selection Options for Career Development Performance Objectives
Future HR Services	HR Office Regionalization
Automation	User-Friendly HR Database Inventory of HR Applications Training Needs Survey and IDP Simplify Performance Appraisals

The strategic actions in the area of Leadership Development aim to re-shape selection methods, career paths and job expectations of leaders in future years. They will affect us all to some extent; they will certainly impact on those moving into ranks of leadership in years ahead. The areas of Future HR Services and Automation are less direct, but no less important.

Leadership Selection

Supervisors tomorrow will face a broadened span of personnel responsibilities for work groups that are larger and more diverse in culture and technical experience. The nature of supervision will by necessity migrate from personal involvement in technical work to increased attention to developing and leading individuals and work groups. Recognizing the changing nature of supervision, we need to more carefully select people for supervision and look closely at their potential for leadership. We need people with the ability and personal ambition to lead. Leaders play a significant role in guiding work groups and the overall organization. Getting the right people in leadership positions is essential.

The Corps recently built into the selection process for some senior positions a method for assessing leadership competencies. This followed years of research and testing that showed we could measure job candidates' potential for leadership. The next step is to incorporate assessment of leadership competencies in the selection processes for all senior positions and to make it available for use in filling junior positions as well.

The refined selection process will have great impact. We will move toward having people at all levels of supervision who are willing and able to emphasize leadership. If unified around our Vision, those leaders will have the ability to demonstrate on a daily basis the values described in the Corps Vision. Their actions and decisions could then regularly translate the Vision into action. The thinking behind this initiative recognizes that many of us are now good leaders. We will seek to fine-tune our selection process to focus more accurately on placing people who are the best equipped for leadership.

Expected Outcomes

- All hiring officials will have tools to measure leadership competency.
- Fair, objective information.
- Better leaders.

Tasks

- Re-issue policy letter on leadership selection.
- Emphasize leadership competence in selections.

Options for Career Development

The President's National Performance Review challenges government agencies to develop methods and systems to enhance leadership, reduce hierarchy and improve organizational and individual performance. The current classification and compensation system promotes hierarchy, as supervisory positions foster higher grades. Additionally, some people do not want, or are not ready, to assume the supervisory responsibilities that are mandatory with most high grade positions.

We proposed a demonstration project in which the Corps would implement an additional classification and compensation system for GS 13 through 15 positions. It would provide a new option for career development outside the traditional supervisor track that would emphasize technical excellence.

Expected Outcomes	*Tasks*
• Enhanced development.	• Work with Army and DoD.
• Better recognition system.	• Seek OPM approval.
• Improved leadership.	• Plan and implement.

Performance Objectives

Sample objectives addressing leadership and support of the Vision will be made available for optional use. They will be centrally developed for direct use or as models to stimulate locally written objectives.

Expected Outcomes	*Tasks*
• Focused leadership.	• Develop model objectives.
• Leaders aligned with Vision.	• Institute usage gradually.

HR Office Regionalization

Army plans to reorganize existing HR Offices Army-wide into ten regional centers, seven in the continental United States and three overseas. Current milestones call for the first center to be in the southeast region. The Training and Doctrine Command has the lead and will initially service eight installations (five of its own, two of Forces Command and one from Army Materiel Command). Later, service will expand to Corps activities (South Atlantic Division and the Norfolk District). The southeast center is expected to be fully operational in 1999.

We will be looking for ways to make our transition to regionalization as smooth as possible. We want to maintain uninterrupted support in the provision of personnel and management support services. This is particularly important in the personnel processing and management of civil funded positions and related issues.

We also need to be careful that regionalization (with the emphasis on centralization and automation) does not push us back to "old school" personnel processing with a preoccupation with data. We instead want to continue our progress at being attentive to people and their needs. A fundamental part of our transition planning here will be to define the organizational structure and roles for the HR professionals who will remain on-site after regional consolidation.

Our transition planning must also look at the work of strategic planners throughout our Command. As we move to regionalization, we want to be certain that changes in the HR Community do not interfere with command-wide plans. For example, we want to ensure a fit of HR data with corporate information architecture, including the new information systems for financial management, program management, real estate management, and other new approaches to doing business.

Expected Outcomes

- Uninterrupted HR service.
- Continued focus on Vision.
- Continued MACOM planning
- HR as full partner in Corps future.

Tasks

- Coordinate with Army.
- Develop HR data needs for corporate information plans.
- Identify best management of civil funding issues in regionalization environment.
- Define best structure and roles for on-site HR professionals.

User-Friendly HR Database

Currently, the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) is difficult to use. Information is accessible only by the HR Office, and even there by one or two "Personnel Systems Managers." We seek a user-friendly HR database, readily accessible by all supervisors and managers.

Expected Outcomes

- Easy-to-use HR database.
- More data for leaders.
- Better decision-making.

Tasks

- Survey for local data needs.
- Coordinate with Army.
- Identify extract contents.
- Build an extract process.

Inventory of HR Applications

We plan to use existing, successful and effective automation more extensively throughout the Corps. The challenge is to identify what is working well in each HR office that could be employed in other offices without too much difficulty. We will survey all offices for HR automation applications. We will review the applications, and publicize them Corps-wide. Later, we could expand the inventory to include automated HR applications available from HQDA, DOD, other Federal agencies and the private sector.

Expected Outcomes

- More efficient HR office.
- More effective HR Office.

Tasks

- Develop survey instrument.
- Gather & analyze responses.
- Share inventory results.

_____ Training Needs Survey and IDP

We seek to integrate and automate the Five Year Individual Development Plan (IDP) and the annual Huntsville Training Needs Survey. A manager could then place a request for training at the same time that he or she approves a development plan.

Expected Outcomes

- Easier, more efficient planning and requesting of training.

Tasks

- Tie-in proposed, new DoD automation for training.
- Design, implement new IDP & Huntsville Survey system.

_____ Simplify Performance Appraisals

A detailed, business process review will be made of the performance management process with a focus on: eliminating information that adds little value; reducing redundant data entry; and, making the system more effective. Automation strategies will be considered.

Expected Outcomes

- Simpler appraisal system.
- Useful tool for tracking and evaluating performance.
- More meaningful tool for enhancing communication.
- System is timely and helpful.

Tasks

- Review in detail the whole evaluation process.
- Stop redundant data entry.
- Waive requirement for data that add no value.

Other Initiatives

The eight previously highlighted initiatives were seen as a manageable work load in terms of of realistic expectations about completion, resources and impact. Other initiatives were identified by the specially formed work group and all were seen as important. Listed below are some of those ideas. They are in no particular order or priority. We would like to eventually pursue one or more of these when possible.

The other initiatives are ...

- Determine feasibility of converting Official Personnel Folders to CDs.
- Develop automated customer feedback system to improve HR service.
- Automate position vaçancy information Government-wide.
- Survey and evaluate available software and systems for potential use by managers to evaluate personnel, assess developmental needs, and position people for maximum effectiveness.
- Delegate classification authority to managers.
- Encourage enrollment of supervisors and high potential people in LEAD and OLE courses. Also, publish success stories about LEAD and OLE.
- Determine status of HQDA guidance on mentoring, and research mentoring programs currently in place in the field and at other agencies. Establish and implement a corporate mentoring program.
- Update and publish corporate recruitment and outreach program plan.
- Conduct a comprehensive business process review of personnel processes to find other opportunities to improve, simplify and automate.
- Promote pride in public service.

Closing Statement

The initiatives in this plan will help us move toward the future. The HR Community looks forward to working these issues to benefit the Corps of Engineers and the individuals that make up the Corps.

Special thanks is extended to all who have helped launch this plan. We thank the special team members who wrestled with the initiatives. We thank also the members of the HR Board of Directors and all those who offered comments during the staffing of the draft plan at HQUSACE and across the Command. We will continue to plan and adjust our sights as needed to effectively work with other corporate planners in the areas of information management, Corps business planning and others.