

NETCOM embraces crucial KM role

By Todd J. Daugherty

MG Jennifer L. Napper and the command group at Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Signal Command (Army), Fort Huachuca, Ariz., embrace knowledge management as crucial in NETCOM's mission to operate, maintain and defend the global network enterprise.

"Timely access to information and sources of knowledge play a critical role in mission success at all levels of command; and through

knowledge management, we can all help ensure information is available to those who need it the most when they need it," said MG Napper, NETCOM/9th SC(A) commanding general. "Our ability to create and store information and knowledge has evolved exponentially, now we must also evolve the way we share, manage, and retrieve it. Knowledge management is everyone's duty."

Information technology is a rapidly evolving field, with a shifting knowledge base distributed across a four-generation workforce.

Therefore, NETCOM/9th SC(A) is focused on codifying and sharing knowledge in a timely fashion, and toward achieving efficiencies and cost avoidance, which are pillars of the Secretary of Defense's cost-cutting measures. When knowledge is codified, it becomes more easily discoverable by those who need it. In turn, when knowledge is discoverable, sharing is facilitated. Not only must knowledge be relevant and discoverable, it must be timely.

"Providing 'just-in-time' information or knowledge to the people or organization that needs it, is what KM is all about," said Matthew Viel, NETCOM's knowledge management officer.

Constant IT evolution quickly makes today's knowledge passé, said Viel. Effective content management practices and governance are essential to provide up-to-date knowledge to NETCOM's staff.

NETCOM/9th SC(A) leadership defines knowledge management as: "a systematic and integral approach that delivers information and decision superiority to all levels and individuals in the organization by enabling the effective and efficient use of people, processes, and technology in a defined, repeatable and continuously improving manner in order to meet current and future mission requirements."

NETCOM/9th SC(A) content managers are vigilant because they are key enablers of an efficient and effective knowledge based organization, said Viel. CMs work closely with content creators and subject matter experts to ensure those who know can connect with those who need to know (why,



Photo by Eric Hortin

An ardent supporter of Army Knowledge Management, MG Jennifer L. Napper, NETCOM/9th SC (A) commanding general, speaks during her promotion ceremony 4 Feb. 2011 at the NETCOM headquarters, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

(Continued on page 26)

(Continued from page 25)

who, when, and how) by leveraging knowledge transfers from one to many. Content is created and vetted by SMEs who make this relevant knowledge available to anyone who needs it via the NETCOM/9th SC(A) SharePoint® portal. CMs also assist content creators and SMEs in learning how to tag an information item with relevant metadata – commonly thought of as “data about data” – that enables easy discoverability. The CM is aware of the value of up-to-date knowledge as well as the liability of dated knowledge, and works to provide staff with valuable knowledge resources.

NETCOM/9th SC(A) leadership recognizes that integration of people, processes, and technology within a KM framework equates to a more effective, efficient and modern work environment. The command has the technology and processes needed to enable a robust KM program, said Viel. Command efforts can fail, however, when a stagnated culture – where knowledge is hoarded – prevails over a sharing culture, where every interaction is an opportunity to acquire and share knowledge. NETCOM leadership, recognizing the value of innovation, leverages a workforce with varied skills, experiences, perspectives, and approaches to problem solving.

“We need to transform our workforce from manual workers to knowledge workers where task-oriented employees are not just doing what they are instructed to do, but they are making independent choices and decisions,” said COL Michelle Fraley, NETCOM chief of staff and chief knowledge officer.

Fraley, as the command’s CKO, models KM culture to encourage staff to adopt smarter business practices. Further, because much of KM is IT enabled, the command’s KMO and his staff work under NETCOM’s assistant chief of staff, G-6, although the KMO is under operational control of the CKO.

“KM is already something we are doing and have done for thousands of years,” Viel said. “But in this second wave of the technological age, we are at a critical juncture where it is imperative to mission success that we leverage technology – such as Web 2.0/3.0 tools – to learn and share experiential knowledge with a wider audience, effectively enabling our people and processes.”

In order to assure that NETCOM HQ’s staff understands KM, MG Napper initiated a program to embed KM training into the developmental programs of all staff, said Viel. Training is tiered for general staff, and for KM professionals and NETCOM/9th SC(A) leadership.

NETCOM/9th SC(A) is harnessing distributed KM education offered on Skillport, DCO, and the Civilian Education System, as well as paid on-site training provided by industry and Army Knowledge Management programs offered through the Center for Army Lessons Learned. “The command also has begun a bi-weekly brown bag workshop series where representatives of NETCOM’s divisions can learn about KM processes, technologies, culture, and techniques, and take those lessons learned back to their staffs,” Viel said.

“The NETCOM/9th SC(A) Knowledge Management Office mission is to ensure an always-

improving KM program,” said Viel.

Through a still-emerging set of quantitative and qualitative surveys, the KM office strives to continually improve processes. An initial knowledge assessment will be conducted in the spring timeframe as a means to provide a baseline of quality for the command’s KM program; a full assessment will take place in 2011, and future assessments will be conducted to ensure the KM program continues to be central to the success of the command.

Todd J. Daugherty graduated from the Army Knowledge Leader intern program in Feb. 2011. He served rotations with CIO/G-6 Strategic Communications, DoD-CIO/ASD(NII), and in the Knowledge Management Directorates at the U.S. Army Signal Center of Excellence, Fort Gordon, Ga; and with the assistant chief of staff G-6, Fort Huachuca, Ariz. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Penn State University and a master’s degree in Library and Information Science from Clarion University of Pennsylvania. His first permanent position with the Army is at CIO/G-6 Chief Integration Office.

ACRONYM QuickScan

CALL – Center for Army Lessons Learned
CIO – Chief Information Office
CKO – Chief Knowledge Officer
CM – Content Managers
DCO – Defense Connect Online
IT – Information Technology
KM – Knowledge Management
KMO – Knowledge Management Officer
NETCOM – Network Enterprise Technology Command
SME – Subject Matter Expert