

**AUSA Notes**  
**Department of the Army Civilian Professional Development Seminar**  
**Theme: “Employee Engagement (E2)”**  
**14 Oct 15**

Mr. Phil Sakowitz - Introduction

- CIV leadership, training, and experience is increasingly important
- Take on issues that raise readiness

Ms. DeFilippi (DASA- M&RA)

- The following session will be a mini-version of the Enhanced Engagement Training Conference (E2TC) held in September.
- Introducing Mr. Schneider, with an explanation of “Why” Employee Engagement Matters. He is a great advocate of E2 and CIV Workforce.

Mr. Schneider (ASA-M&RA)

- Thank you for bringing CIV issues to AUSA.
- Fiscal uncertainty makes CIV development, morale and care more important.
- Engaged employees are more productive, effective, and innovative.
- Innovation is critical in the face of fiscal uncertainty.
- There are 3 key traits of E2:
  - EMPs **own the mission**
  - EMPs **are committed**
  - EMPs **are passionate about the product**
- The question is “How” do we get the commitment and passion for the product of their work?
- Looking to author Simon Sinek’s “Start with Why” will give us guidance. Exceptional organizations have a clear understanding of the mission. Leaders’ jobs are to articulate the “Why” of an organization.
- “How” is about the action to achieve the “Why”. Need to articulate the “Why” to drive action.
- “What” is the product?
- To get E2, we need to answer all three questions, “What, Why, and How”.
- EMPs create the “What.” The field creates it. I can help with the “How” and the “Why”.
- At Army, the “Why” is clear. ( Fight and win our Nations wars and protect our Nation and allies) The “How” is readiness. The Chief wants that readiness. And be Engaged every day.
- Trained and ready units and Soldiers are the “What.” 70% of the generating force are CIVs. We enable the readiness.
- When leaving here, think about what can we do to Engage Employees.
- We need help to build and sustain E2. USACE and AAA are very engaged groups.
- I encourage you to Act. We will make a difference if we work toward it.

- *“Army Civilians—Enabling Trained and Ready Soldiers”*

**Panel 1-Civilian Workforce Transformation—Employee Engagement:**

Kerry Straight (ASA-M&RA)

- FEVS is an indicator of E2. Now here is the panel.

Peter Hosutt (CHRA)

- At the E2TC, learned that there are a lot of different communities within the Army, with different ways to approach E2. Force distribution creates hurdles to consistent implementation. This is a follow-on to keep momentum for E2.

Rob McIlwaine (AG1-CP)

- My group was 50% MIL and they wanted to engage CIVs.
- Three lessons. CIVs:
  - Are responsible for their careers
  - Want to be recognized as leaders
  - Want meaningful and executable IDPs

Lisa Rycroft (G3/5/7)

- E2 actions are executed by CMDs. HQ wants to help with policy and resources where possible.
- CIVs want better training to do jobs well.
- SUPs recognize that they need more training and better training to do their jobs. This is a new perception because they used to say that they did not need more training.
- All are managers and leaders, not just HR community.

Linda Donaldson (USACE)

- The FEVS tells us we are good communicating the mission and helping the EMPs feel a connection to it. EMPs understand how their work ties into the mission.
- Senior Leaders need to work at connecting with EMPs. FEVS feedback tells us Senior Leaders are not communicating effectively and EMPs do not feel that leaders are listening to them.
- As a result, EMPs don't feel like valued team members.
- Conference increased leader awareness of the FEVS and that it is a valuable source of clear feedback from employees that we should be working to understand.
- LTG Bostick owned the FEVS results for USACE – the positives and negatives. He encouraged his senior leaders to analyze FEVS data for their individual organizations and develop customized action plans (that include employee involvement) to address survey results. LTG Bostick and other leaders consistently reinforced the importance of FEVS and employee engagement through townhall meetings, “Chief Sends” notes, Brown-bag lunches, “Coffee with the DCG”, and other communication forums.

- Strategic Outcomes or ROI:
  - Improved organizational performance
  - Enhanced trust in Senior Leaders
  - Engaged/empowered workforce that develops creative/innovative solutions
  - Knowledge sharing
  - High quality recruitment
  - Increased retention rates
  - Best Place to Work

### **Panel 1 Q&A**

Q1) Is there a framework for development that CIVs can look to?

- A) Yes. Career Programs have career ladders that document the career path that may develop their skill sets to prepare for advancement but does not guarantee advancement.

Q2) How effective is TAPES if everyone is rated highly?

- A) We have evolved a performance management system that does not mean anything. The new approach, “New Beginnings”, enables a process with meaningful distinctions between ratings.

Q3) How do CIVs access training funds for Education and Professional Development?

- A) Look to Commands for funding. Look to centrally managed and funded programs. CPs get funding. CIVs can apply through these programs. Communications are important to know the type of training value and availability. SUPs advise but CIVs have to look for it.

Q4) How do we continue Engagement in an environment full of budget, resource and manpower constraints?

- A) Senior leaders’ communications is paramount in importance. This is the time when communication and employee engagement are most important. We must be transparent with employees and share information with them so they understand our current and future environment, what we can do and what we cannot do.

Q5) What is being done to retain the younger workforce members in light of the current environment of fiscal uncertainty?

- A) The answer is having meaningful conversations about career development. Need to discuss opportunities to develop. Reward performance in non-monetary ways. Non-monetary awards, recognitions, on-the-spot awards, etc. Also the ETM and SETM programs give broadening assignments. The Army has made great strides.
- B) Sometimes we get caught in old mindsets. The younger generation does not believe in waiting around for training. They expect professional development. We need to widen

our scope of what constitutes professional development. It is more than just going to school and getting training. Need new ways of thinking, creativity and innovation.

- C) We need do understand some of the differences that may exist between the generations and embrace this diversity. Mrs. Engelhardt conducts periodic generational training at USACE that highlights generational differences and how we can leverage them to create competitive advantage. As we onboard new employees, we need ensure employees understand our organizational mission and help them see how their work connects to the mission to provide a sense of belonging. We also need to give employees room to be creative and innovative; to bring new ideas and ways of doing business to us. Leaders need to embrace this creativity. In some cases this may involve taking risk where we come up with great new ideas or we may have an opportunity to allow a learning experience that helps employees grow and learn. USACE has a program entitled “Door to the Corps” that encourages employees with under 5 years at the Corps to help us come up with new ideas and creative solutions.

Q6) How do we keep E2 going?

- A) We need to own the feedback EMPs have provided us with and encourage them to help us understand the feedback. We should work to increase EMP response rates. USACE has nearly doubled its response rate and increased the scores over the past year due to the fact we are actively working to understand the feedback, develop action plans that involve employees; we are using this to make a difference. E2 is not just an initiative that is intended to reach better FEVS scores and then be stopped. Leaders need to lead, engage, and never stop engaging. The Army and individual commands need to clearly define a response rate goal to raise awareness about FEVS and show employees that we want their feedback. We should also set a goal for our Best Places to Work score, as this ranking directly impacts our brand as an employer in the eyes of potential applicants, especially the upcoming Millennial generation. Command action plans are necessary to codify goals and reinforce their importance.
- B) We need to evolve training to increase the effectiveness. Decentralizing training is not only OK, it is a good thing. The design of SDC should evolve—will not be quick, but will work.
- C) Strong leadership keeps engagement.
- D) Start to measure meaningful efforts. New Beginning starts with the collection of meaningful data.

**Unaddressed questions (Due to Time Limitations):**

1. Is there a way for CIVs to access the results of the Command’s viewpoint survey of leadership refuses to share the results? A) The top level report is on OPM's website. <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/> or you can make a direct request to OPM.
2. Can you expand on the legislative change and forces distribution? How will it change performance management? A) The Performance Management (PM) Workgroup, made up of roughly a 50/50 split of Army Civilians and Active Duty military, felt strongly that a forced distribution of performance ratings should be implemented for the Civilian Corps. As we mentioned in our panel discussion, a forced distribution of ratings is prohibited by

law. The PM Workgroup has recommended that Army pursue an initiative to change the law that prohibits a forced distribution of ratings. This initiative, if pursued, would have to be approved by DoD and ultimately endorsed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). If the law is ultimately changed, a forced distribution of ratings could be used, e.g. no more than 10% of rating will be exceptional.

3. Is there a process or effort being looked at to allow Career CIVs to be selected for jobs versus MIL veterans? It appears that only vets are being selected due to their point system. A) There is no effort being undertaken to allow Career Army Civilians to be given preference over Military veterans. It is important to note that the system by which Federal Civilian positions are filled is merit based. This is an important point to remember when discussing the hiring of Veterans. Though Veterans Preference does give Veterans an advantage when applying for some positions, all applicants, whether they be Career Civilian, private sector candidates or Veterans, must all be qualified for the position for which they are being considered. Ensuring that all positions are filled with qualified candidates is the first order of business in all cases.
4. Did the panels identify any common obstacles Commands are facing in their efforts to improve E2? If “yes”, were any solutions identified? A) We did identify that we need to ensure leaders and employees work together to fully understand expectations. We also realize that DA and Commands have some great programs and best practices in place that all may not be fully aware of – we need to do a better jobs of communicating some of these initiatives.
5. Over execution in the Intern program was mentioned. What % of new interns are coming straight out of college vs. vets, and are our intern programs limited or finding it difficult to recruit the “right” new talent? A) We are looking at that data now- but there isn’t one good answer because many of the new college graduates (within 2 years) are actually vets. My initial thoughts are that most interns are recent college grads and vets.
6. Did you get any feedback about getting CIVs to stand up and be full active team members vs. sitting back and waiting to be “dragged” onto the team? A) No, we did not have this concern come up in our working group.
7. Congress seems to continually attach GS as overpaid, feather-bedded non-agile, and overstaffed talent for significant cuts. A) The CSA and SecArmy statements focus on 490 or 450k active; NG and USAR focus on One Army and Total Force 900k. No lower bound for CIV endstrength. By 2018, the plan is for the Army Active force to be at 450K; the commensurate reduction for the Civilian Corps is to reduce by 17K.
8. Who is the Command spokesperson for the CIV workforce and how do we get the CSA and Sec McHugh to argue for CIVs? Secretary McHugh and the Army leadership have been huge proponents and champions for the Civilian workforce. Efforts to support Civilian professional development have been unwavering. The Civilian Corps is the cornerstone of everything we do in the Army.

9. Will a mentorship program be developed/encourages to address gaps in unit development and talent management? Currently in final staffing is the Emerging Enterprise Leaders (EEL) program. EEL is designed to provide talent management for GS-11/12s. The four major components are: 1) Mentorship, 2) Team based problem solving, 3) Self-study and 4) Developmental. Goal is a spring '16 implementation.
10. What are your suggestions on keeping employees engaged when their SUP is not a good leader or engaged, and morale is low? A) This is easier said than done – we are all leaders and we are responsible for our work and we are known for our work and how we impact other people. We can be known as responsible professionals who encourage and uplift others if we chose. We also know EMPs have the opportunity to vote with their feet if we do not have leaders who are engaging their workforce.
11. Do we really think that morale will increase with these efforts or are we just wasting time and energy on this? Have we benchmarked with private industry? The following video is roughly 4 minutes long and answers your question much better than I could. [Employee Engagement - Who's Sinking Your Boat? - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4nwoZ02AJM)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4nwoZ02AJM>
12. The panel continues to discuss opportunities for young people. As a mid-20s intern with 7 years of Federal Service, what can be done to keep this and develop this talent for the long term without promotion potential being continually blocked by retired MIL at higher grade levels? A) One of the greatest qualities of our personnel system is that employees can join the workforce at every level of our structure. You have joined our workforce as an Intern. Many of the people you work with may have joined our workforce at a higher level, i.e. GS-11 or GS-12, after spending time with the private sector or in the military. It is not uncommon for some of our Senior Civilians to join our workforce after completing a military career or transferring from other Federal Agencies. The great part about our system is that we can select the best qualified applicant after considering a host of applicant sources. The key to success for civilian employees who are keen to working their way up is to take on the developmental opportunities that we have talked about here at AUSA. Taking on the challenging assignments and pursuing your own development will ensure that you are competitive when it is time to recruit for higher grade levels. Working is an Emerging Enterprise Leaders Program (EEL) to provide leadership development opportunities for people at grades GS-11 and GS-12.
13. Sequestration looms for FY16 (the 800-lbs elephant in the room). In 2013, severe cuts to professional develop funding. What is the E2 strategy for the mid and long-term? One of the main benefits to engagement is that to improve communication and transparency does not require additional funding. Commands are currently building their mid and long term engagement strategies.

14. Is there a framework that can help EMPs know how to grow to the top of their CP (SES)?  
A) Yes the ACTEDS Training Plan for each CP should have a career map and career ladder.
15. After being at this conference, what do you see as the best way to get to the mid-level managers to train them about leading and taking care of EMPs? A) First they need to complete their appropriate level of CES, then apply for Emerging Enterprise Leader (EEL) Program.
16. If the “Why” of the Army is to fight and win wars in national defense, does the OPM/CHRA hiring policies support a recruiting a workforce to meet the “Why”? A) Yes! As Mr. Schneider stated during his presentation: approximately 70% of the Generating Force is made up of Army Civilians. Army Civilians contribute to the readiness and mission success of the Warfighter every day and will continue to do so. The merit based system by which qualified candidates are evaluated and selected ensures that we get the best candidates to make up the Civilian Component of the Generating Force.
17. Do we understand the breakdown of CIV EMPs that are unsatisfied? Is it CIVs working for uniformed leaders, or CIVs working for CIVs that are least satisfied/engaged? I would like to refer you to the following website: <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/2014/Reports/>

## **Panel 2 on Talent Management (DSLDP, SETM, SETM-TDY, Acculturation)**

### **Panel Members:**

- Diane Hamilton – in her second year of DSLDP, graduated from Air War College and now on a professional developmental assignment at OACSIM
- Dave Clay – attending Army War College, 2015/2016 academic year
- Gloria Duck – completed a SETM-TDY assignment, graduated Army War College
- Greg Stephens – Army Medical Command

### **Introductory Remarks:**

Diane Hamilton – attended the Air Force War College last year, along with 3 other Army civilians, which was a great experience. Now she is completing her experiential assignment at OACSIM, which is another great experience because she never before served at the enterprise level. She has had the chance to see how the “data entered in at the field really is used at HQ!”

Dave Clay – Currently a TRADOC CWT specialist, now at the Army War College and subject to reassignment, through a mobility agreement (brought resumes with him). He said he had great mentors and learning experiences throughout his career, including the value of reading,

particularly the books your bosses are reading (in particular he recommended *Leading Change* and *The Tipping Point*). Call for Action—Step up for Warfighter/Soldier. His experiences at TRADOC and other places made him realize three things:

- The importance of education, training and experience throughout one’s career.
- You also have to have **passion**.
- We are ALL leaders.

Gloria Duck – She had a Force structure and manpower background, then completed her SETM-TDY assignment in the Army Medical Command to diversify herself. Her assignment was to develop a Mentoring program, for GS-10 and below. She produced a mentoring handbook, a training timeline, and some other sustaining documents so the program could live on once she departed. This experience allowed her to grow her skills, develop relationships within the Medical Command and within TRADOC due to interactions with them. She emphasized that there are a lot of opportunities out there, civilians just need to take advantage of them. And we all need to communicate those opportunities.

Greg Stevens – He had the benefit of Gloria working for him during her developmental assignment, and noted that she worked on two projects for them. Mr. Stevens then strongly encouraged senior leaders to seek out SETM-TDY personnel available for TDY assignments, and have them come work for them; he said you get a lot out of it. Relating a story about himself earlier in his career, where he denied a training request due to mission requirements, and was challenged by his boss with the question “what is it you do not understand about training”, Mr. Stevens said “Training is important” and senior leaders have the responsibility to push training for their employees. He also said that we are trained to lead in the military and we need to be sure we train civilians to lead. He noted that when you send someone to training, you get 2 things back:

- Better trained employee
- Happier, more committed employee, because you supported their training

Mr. Stevens also said that the acculturation program is key – It helps set the stage for the “Why” of the job/mission. He described the importance of senior leaders administering the oath of office to new civilians, commenting that making new Civilians part of the Army Team is powerful. Senior leaders have to make the ‘so help me God’ clause apparent.

Ms. Diane Hamilton –DSLDP and last year SSC Air War College

- Completing her experiential assignment at OACSIM, another great experience because she never before served at the enterprise level
- Has had the chance to see how the “data entered in at the field really is used at HQ!”

## **Panel 2 Q&A**

Q1) Leader development “testimonials” – Can you describe the key factor(s) that led you to pursue the program you are in? Have you provided similar guidance/support to employer to encourage their personal growth and development?

A) Expectations, objectives, IDPs were key factors

Q2) Do we hurt ourselves by not requiring mobility more often?

A) Willingness to be geographically mobile is a personal decision and depends on your individual situation. Not everyone has to move geographically in order to change jobs and get career broadening experiences. Mobility and career broadening in general (doesn't always have to require location change) are good for your experience and perspective, and you shouldn't let your unwillingness or inability to move geographically stop you from considering SETM and ETM and becoming the professional you want to be.

Q3) How do you go about securing follow-on assignments once the developmental programs are complete?

A) After her SETM-TDY assignment, she was assigned to the Acculturation program, and she embraced those additional responsibilities.

Q4) When is Acculturation Program going Army-wide?

A) It has been endorsed by the ALDF, and will soon be coming to M&RA for final approval, so she expects within 6 months the Army should be announcing Acculturation as a requirement. But it is available now on the website, so if you're interested, go take a look.

Q5) How do you become more competitive for AWC?

A) Pointing to the Acculturation Program, where an SES or General Officer swears-in new civilians, and helps mentor/guide new employees, David said that mentoring is something everyone can do, and it makes you start to think about your own career while you're offering guidance to someone else, and he suggested that you seek opportunities to mentor and guide new employees. He also said that Civilians should seek out and take on more assignments and make sure they complete their grade requirement of CES to continue to develop themselves. He stressed that you have to own your own career, can't rely on your supervisor to do so. Reading is another way to develop yourself - start reading what your boss is reading. Change is inevitable; it is how you deal with change that will impact your career.

B) Relating a story about the grandfather who told his teenage grandson that two wolves fight beside you: a good wolf and a bad wolf. When his grandson asked which one wins, he replied “The one you feed,” he stressed the importance of being positive and optimistic.

C) She stressed the importance of believing in yourself; do not let non-selection dissuade you from trying again, noting that she was not selected for SETM AWC the first time she applied. Don't sit back, you have to be aggressive about going for whatever training you want. And practice – find people who challenge you, that will help you get ready for a

panel/board/obstacle. Apply for more opportunities, e.g., DSLDP and AWC, so you have a better chance of being accepted to one.

Q6) If I haven't been able to be mobile to go to senior service college but have broadened myself through advanced degrees, etc., can I seriously be considered for SES?

A) Yes of course you can. However, it is encouraged for people to try to take advantage of senior service colleges because the post senior service college placement process is the one opportunity to have SES's and GO's really looking at you and what you need for your development, and they have the influence to get you those opportunities. Also noted, applicants who have been successful in achieving SES have shown that they have done a variety of different things, taken on tough projects, and demonstrated that they can be a successful executive. Panel also briefly described the SETM and ETM programs, and the new option for GS-15s to get an SES detail; current window is still open for any GS-15s still interested.