20 October 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

Subj: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. **Purpose.** To communicate the Knowledge Management (KM) strategy for the Department of the Navy (DON) and identify over-arching focus areas for successful KM implementation.

2. **Background.** Knowledge Management is defined as the integration of people and processes, enabled by technology, to facilitate the exchange of operationally relevant information and expertise to increase organizational performance.

Knowledge Management is the cornerstone of decision superiority, knowledge dominance and information superiority. KM is a discipline that guides information and knowledge processes with the ultimate goal of helping to deliver mission effects. It is at the heart of force transformation. Three transforming DON documents, the *DON IM/IT Strategic Plan 2006-2007,* the *Naval Transformation Roadmap 2003, and FORCEnet, A Functional concept for the 21st Century* cite the importance of knowledge sharing, actionable knowledge, mutual understanding, and collaborative decision-making. DoD's tenets of Network-Centric Warfare call for improved information sharing, enhanced quality of information, shared situational awareness, and collaboration that will result in increased mission effectiveness.

Sharing what one knows is intuitive. This is particularly true within the Navy and Marine Corps where teamwork is held in the highest regard. Excellent examples of intuitive knowledge sharing are Navy Chief Petty Officer messes and Company Non-Commissioned Officer discussions within the Marine Corps. However, the consistent application of KM concepts, techniques, tools, and technologies will improve knowledge identification, sharing, and re-use. In turn, this will help optimize decision-making, improve efficiency and effectiveness of task accomplishment, and empower the Naval warfighter. KM fosters collaboration across organizational boundaries, time and space, and links people who have the requisite tacit and explicit knowledge with those who need it to do their job.

3. **Vision.** The DON vision of KM is to create, capture, share, and reuse knowledge to enable effective and agile decision-making, increase the efficiency of task accomplishment, and improve mission effectiveness.

4. **Strategy.** Knowledge Management in the Department of the Navy is a centralized vision executed through decentralized implementation. KM concepts are implemented by commands that recognize the value of these concepts as an enabler for transformation.

The strategy for KM implementation is four-fold.

- First, broaden and expand Departmental awareness that KM concepts, when applied to the operational and business processes of any command, will enable significant improvements in mission accomplishment.

- Second, encourage commands to implement KM programs, structures, pilots, and methodologies as part of process improvement efforts.

- Third, assist commands with KM experience share their experiences, lessons learned, and results to foster collaboration, enable shortened learning cycles, and assist other efforts.

- Fourth, assist commands embarking on new implementations build upon the experiences and resources of others.

KM projects that transform low- and mid-level processes of a command should be pursued as well as initiatives supporting overarching processes of an enterprise. This may be thought of as a two-tiered approach with many gradations to each tier. Tier-One efforts employ KM principles and tools to improve large enterprise processes and provide knowledge to decision makers. Tier-Two initiatives focus on integrating KM into the day-to-day operations of each level of Navy and Marine Corps commands.

5. **Focus Areas.** Effective implementation of the Department's KM strategy requires consistent effort in the following areas:

- KM Advocacy. The DON remains committed to enabling mission accomplishment through KM. Continued championing of Knowledge Management is critical. The tenets and benefits of KM will be presented and shared whenever and wherever appropriate. The understanding and support of command leadership is essential to Tier 1 and Tier 2 KM projects. The emphasis should be on KM's applicability to decision superiority, improved organizational performance, and individual task accomplishment.

- Training and Education. KM projects require differing levels of instruction and understanding of the discipline's tenets and processes. Tier One efforts are often complex enough to require formal training and, perhaps, professional facilitation. Tier Two efforts, though they may also benefit from formal instruction, will be greatly benefited by adding KM concepts to intuitive sharing. Two approaches for training and education will be pursued.

First, KM courses will be developed and offered. Several such assets already exist.
- The Afloat Knowledge Management Course offered by Commander, Tactical Training Group, Pacific prepares Information Professional Officers to fill the Knowledge Officer role on carrier strike group staffs.
- The Command Knowledge Management Course, currently offered by the Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer (DON CIO), introduces KM concepts and provides instruction on KM tools commands can implement immediately.

- The Naval Postgraduate School offers a two course series on knowledge management that is available through distance learning.

- Navy E-Learning (accessible via Navy Knowledge Online) contains introductory courses on KM and learning organizations available to DON military and civilians.

The second approach is to explore the possibility of adding instruction on KM principles and concepts to all levels of professional training (e.g. basic officer courses, CPO/NCO indoctrination, Staff NCO Academy, senior executive courses, Leadership Development Courses, Civil Service courses, etc.).

- Culture Change. KM implementation throughout the DON requires effective change management. The most effective means to this end is to make known the KM successes already existing within the Department. Applying KM instruction to professional training, as mentioned above, provides another avenue. Resistance to change can be greatly reduced by teaching the benefits of KM to the work force. This approach avoids abrupt programmatically directed cultural change and achieves a wider spread and lasting transformation.

- Communities of Practice. Communities of Practice (CoPs) connect people engaged in common missions or tasks to take advantage of multiple views and ideas to solve problems. CoPs enable knowledge sharing and collaboration. Communities can form to address specific tasks and then disband; other communities profitably exist for a very long time. Efforts will continue to identify, develop, and support communities of practice.

- KM Collaboration. KM stakeholders will continue to support and build the DON Knowledge Management Community of Practice. This group will capture and share best practices and lessons learned specifically about Knowledge Management. In particular, they will publicize the results of DON KM projects.

- KM Integration with Related Initiatives. KM should be integrated into operational and business processes. Stand-alone KM efforts will, at best, return sub-optimized benefits. Also, new KM efforts should be integrated with existing initiatives to further mutual goals.

- Tools. One of the basic tenets of KM is that it can be accomplished without the use of sophisticated IT systems. However, technology is an enabler that provides opportunities to share knowledge more quickly and to a broader audience. IT, at some level, is clearly a requirement for Tier One projects and some larger Tier Two efforts.

  Processes and tools across the technology spectrum, from simple paper templates to collaborative tools, that enable teams and communities to collaboratively share information will be identified, assessed, and distributed. Navy Knowledge Online, and eKM are examples of tools already put to use.

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6. Actions

- Commanders and Commanding Officers should, where appropriate, utilize KM concepts and tools to continue to improve business and warfighting effectiveness.

- Commands that implement KM initiatives should share their KM best practices and resources across the Department.

- Commands with KM experience should continue to champion Knowledge Management as a critical enabler of force transformation within the DON.

7. **Conclusion**. The DON strongly supports the use of KM principles and methodologies as an enabler to improve warfighting and business processes. The opportunity to reduce cycle times and achieve decision superiority makes this a valuable transformational tool. The challenges facing the Department will inevitably result in the implementation of knowledge techniques and technologies. Our challenge is to optimize the rewards KM makes possible in a knowledge centric enterprise by overtly implementing actions to inculcate KM principles and methodologies into the DON culture.

8. **Point of Contact.** My point of contact for this effort is the DON CIO Knowledge Management Team Lead at 703.607.5652.

// Original Signed//

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