

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Us Army Corps of Engineers Challenges and Opportunities

Being at the forefront of the development of the nation's water resources, there have been and will always be many challenges and opportunities for the Corps. Recently, the Corps has been subject to increased public scrutiny resulting from several controversial projects, and a very devastating hurricane. The Corps is prudently looking to see where improvements can be made to the organization to avoid future problems while continuing to provide needed technical support to ongoing war efforts overseas. It is hoped these improvements will result in a leaner, much more efficient organization. Four significant challenges that require leadership focus and for which suggested solutions are identified follow.

1. **Unprepared Supervisors:** The Corps is primarily a technical organization and promotes from within. Oftentimes newer supervisors/managers are not equipped to handle the change from technical support to management. Proper feedback is considered essential, yet it is felt that current supervisory hires lack the skill sets to do so effectively. Suggestions on how to improve supervisor training and selection criteria are proposed; discussions on negative impacts occasioned by current employee rating system are made.
2. **Project Manager and Planner – Erosion of Planners Role:** The Corps is facing a serious loss of planning expertise due to heavy retirements coupled with lack of interest for new planners. The role that the development of project management within the Corps has had in this is explored. Suggestions that include increase pay and benefits for potential retirees, developing a marketing strategy to both lure and retain new planners, and establishment of national, clear and consistent responsibilities of both the planner and project manager are offered.
3. **Balancing Resources:** The Corps has had to make recent major shifts to address both ongoing military conflicts and a series of major natural disasters. To be this responsive and maintain all ongoing programs and projects requires a high degree of managerial dexterity. Three recommendations are made somewhat founded on the concept of taking regionalization a step higher, i.e., a nationalization approach to Corps structure to distribute the workload more evenly. The efficiencies now being experienced with the regionalization approach to business could be realized on a national level. One of the recommendations made is to create mobile, pre-established project delivery teams; able to serve when and where needed as emergency needs arise throughout the country.
4. **Infrastructure Education:** The nations' aging infrastructure must be addressed. Throughout the country millions rely on many Corps dams and levees for reduction of flood damages, water supply and recreation. As evidenced by Katrina, failures can be catastrophic in terms of damages and loss of life. A greater attempt at educating not just the public but all Corps employees as well as to how Corps projects become reality, and what the expectations should be, is necessary. Suggestions such as involving the full PDT's in public speaking engagements at schools and civic organizations are made. Training should be afforded to all Corps employees including the administrative staff and the sponsor as well.