

U.S. Army
Talent Management Strategy
Force 2025 and Beyond



*Ready, Professional,
Diverse, and Integrated*


20 September 2016

Foreword

Headquarters, Department of the Army

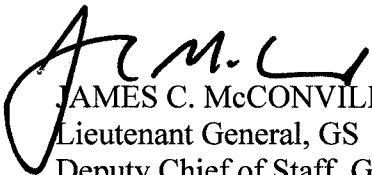
A strategy, by its very nature, is a roadmap for change, and the Army's *Talent Management Strategy* is no different. Despite our best efforts this strategy will be imperfect. We simply cannot predict exactly what the world will look like five, ten, or twenty years from now. We do recognize, however, that the uncertainty and complexity of armed conflict will endure as a prominent feature of any possible future.

The Army must remain ready as the world's premier combat force. That **readiness** is strengthened by people that comprise the force. After all, equipment does not learn, understand, innovate, build teams, or exercise judgment – people do. Human capabilities - resiliency, critical thinking, comfort with ambiguity, ability to accept prudent risk and adjust rapidly – define our profession.

To ensure that the Army has the necessary *skills, knowledge, and behaviors* to win in a complex world, we must shift from simply distributing personnel to more deliberately managing the talents that our Soldiers and Civilians possess. This means creating the policies, programs, and processes that recognize and capitalize on the unique talents possessed by every member of the Army team and employing each member to maximum effect 

Talent management enhances Army readiness by aligning individual capability with the Army's needs while optimizing human performance and engagement. The Army Profession is a team of uniquely talented people who collectively embody America's greatest advantage over our potential adversaries. This is why the true evolution in U.S. military affairs requires a culture of continuous learning and a transformation on how we identify and cultivate the full potential of our people.

This strategy is the first step toward that transformation. It lays out the ends, ways, and means necessary to optimize the talent of all Army Professionals, so they can thrive and win in a complex world.


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DEBRA S. WADA
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Army needs resilient and fit Soldiers of character who are competent, committed, agile and adaptable who can serve on cohesive teams of trusted professionals and represent the diversity of America.

LTG James McConville, DCS, G-1

1-1. Overview

a. The *Army Talent Management Strategy (ATMS)* establishes talent management as the organizing concept behind its future-focused human capital management practices. The *ATMS* articulates an overarching vision, mission, end state and strategic goals.

b. The *ATMS* consists of four chapters and two supporting appendices.

(1) Chapter 1 introduces the strategy's vision, mission and desired end state and explains its linkage to other Army concepts and strategies. Chapter 2 explains the Army's Talent-focused Workforce Management Framework. Chapter 3 articulates strategic goals, major and supporting objectives, and critical enablers ("Ends, Ways, and Means"). Chapter 4 provides additional guidance for implementation to help achieve the goals and objectives of this strategy.

(2) Appendix A outlines the supporting objectives and enablers and demonstrates how initiatives developed from the TMCP link in the strategic framework. Appendix B lists supporting references.

c. The *ATMS* supports The Army Plan and the Army's Operating Concept. It derives its conceptual basis from *The Army Human Dimension Strategy* and the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center's *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond (TM CONOP)*. The *TM CONOP* identifies talent management as a required capability that directly impacts Army readiness.

d. Given the vision of future armed conflict expressed in its strategic documents, how can the Army best maximize readiness and prepare Soldiers and Civilians for uncertain threats in a complex world? The *ATMS* vision statement answers this question:

VISION: *The Army optimizes human performance by recognizing and cultivating the unique talents of every Soldier and Civilian*

The *ATMS* mission statement elaborates:

MISSION: *Acquire, develop, employ, and retain professional Soldiers and Civilians with a breadth and depth of talents needed to enhance Army readiness*

Accomplishing the mission with the *ATMS* vision achieves its desired end state:

END STATE: *A ready, professional, diverse, and integrated team of trusted professionals optimized to win in a complex world*

1-2. Background

a. The Army's pivot to a more deliberate talent management system demonstrates our institutional agility and our strength as a learning organization. It acknowledges that the Army must rapidly evolve to keep pace with proven best practices while balancing the care of our people against enduring requirements and unanticipated contingencies.

b. The Army has for years has stressed "competency" in its personnel doctrine. In popular usage, competent means having "requisite or adequate ability," and in a labor market context it is defined as "an enduring combination of characteristics that causes an appropriate level of individual performance." Today's demands require the Army to *acquire, develop, employ* and *retain* people whose collective capabilities move the Army beyond "competent" and firmly into the realm of "talented."

c. "Talent" is the intersection of three dimensions – **skills, knowledge, and behaviors** – that creates an optimal level of individual performance, provided individuals are employed within their talent set. All people possess talents which can be identified and cultivated, and they can dramatically and continuously extend their talent advantage if properly developed and employed on the right teams.

d. To optimize performance, the Army must recognize that each Soldier and Civilian possesses a unique distribution of skills, knowledge, and behaviors. It must also acknowledge the unique distribution of talent requirements across the force. Doing so allows the Army to thoughtfully and deliberately manage supply and demand.

e. Effective talent management relies upon accurate and timely data. The development and fielding of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A) will, for the first time ever, provide total force visibility of the Active Component, Army National Guard, and US Army Reserve on one Human Resources system. IPPS-A will also enable talent management allowing users to better match inventory to requirements. Finally, IPPS-A provides an audit capability for personnel and pay. A comprehensive, searchable, interactive database supported by IPPS-A will enable more deliberate talent management of the force.

f. Talent management is about more than assignment satisfaction. Talent management is required to help the Army reach its overall strategic personnel objectives of enhancing readiness,

sustaining a workforce of trusted professionals, and ensuring we have diverse and integrated teams across the enterprise - active, reserve and civilian. Talent Management mitigates the one of greatest risks posed by an uncertain operating environment - mismatch in people and requirements (either not enough or too many) and losing talented people to the wider American labor market.

g. The Army competes with the private sector for the full range of talents America has to offer. The domestic labor market is dynamic and, in the last 30 years, it has increasingly demanded employees who can create information, provide services, or add knowledge, the very talents in high demand across the Army Profession. The Army cannot insulate itself from these market forces. To remain competitive, the Army must strengthen the relationship between its people and their human capital managers.

1-3. Assumptions

- a. The United States will face economic and technological competition.
- b. Global demand for U.S. military presence will remain for the foreseeable future.
- c. Intense competition for resources, both fiscal and human, will remain a significant challenge.
- d. The United States Army will remain an all-volunteer military force.
- e. The Army will increasingly operate with joint, inter-agency, and multi-national partners.

CHAPTER 2

A Talent Management Framework

We will do what it takes to build an agile, adaptive Army of the future. We need to listen and learn—first from the Army itself, from other services, from our interagency partners, but also from the private sector, and even from our critics. Developing a lethal, professional and technically competent force requires an openness to new ideas and new ways of doing things in an increasingly complex world. We will change and adapt.

- GEN Mark A. Milley, “39th CSA Initial Message to the Army”

2-1. Introduction

Army strategic guidance recognizes that institutional agility is critical to maintaining the Army Profession and ensuring warfighting readiness. Creating institutional agility and Soldier and Civilian adaptability requires a talent management strategy that recognizes the interdependency of acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining talent. This enables the integration of resources, policies, and organizations to employ “the right talent in the right job at the right time.” Talent matching produces not just effective organizational performance, but efficient performance, optimizing workforce productivity and Army readiness, particularly given the constraints facing the Army.

2-2. Talent in a Military Labor Context

a. A new understanding of “talent,” grounded in leading human capital scholarship yet attuned to the demands of the military labor market, underpins the *ATMS*. As the Army’s *Talent Management Concept of Operations* states:

Talent is the unique intersection of skills, knowledge, and behaviors in every person. It represents far more than the training, education, and experiences provided by the Army. The fullness of each person's life experience, to include investments they've made in themselves, personal and familial relationships (networks), ethnographic and demographic background, preferences, hobbies, travel, **personality**, learning style, education, and a myriad number of other factors better suit them to some development or employment opportunities than others.

b. Skills. Skills can range from broadly conceptual or intuitive to deeply technical. People tend to manifest aptitudes for skills development most powerfully in the fields to which their native **intelligences** draw them. For example, a person with a high degree of “logical-mathematical” intelligence may be drawn to civil engineering, where they will be able to think conceptually, learn rapidly, and respond effectively to unanticipated challenges, just as a peer with highly developed “linguistic” intelligence might perform in the field of journalism. If these people exchange professions, however, their productivity may plunge as the journalist wrestles with structural tension and the civil engineer struggles with split infinitives.

c. Knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge represents the further development of a person's several intelligences, and thus an extension of their talents. While some knowledge is acquired via training and life experience, education provides the largest knowledge lift because it bolsters mental agility and conceptual thinking. It allows people to extract greater knowledge from their life experiences. Education teaches people how to think, not what to think. People more rapidly assess unanticipated situations and formulate courses of action leading to desired outcomes. They gain decision-making courage stemming from increased confidence in their own cognitive abilities. In other words, the key to an adaptable Army Profession is a highly educated workforce.

d. Behaviors. Professions require not just technical and cognitive skills, but also values, ethics, attitudes and attributes that "fit" their culture. The Army Profession's seven values (Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage) are the most visible, but its moral calling demands dozens of other personal attributes or behaviors (grit, tolerance, compassion, caring, character, candor, faithfulness, etc.). These behaviors are essential to the profession. In particular, "teamwork behavior" is as critical to the creation of a highly adaptable military profession. Teamwork, the ability to respectfully share goals and knowledge with others, leads to rapid problem solving.

e. Talent Distributions. Each person's talent set represents a *unique* distribution of skills, knowledge, and behaviors, just as each organization has a unique distribution of individuals. By seeking a distribution of talent with varying breadth and depth, the Army essentially buys an insurance policy against the uncertainty of future requirements. Carefully managing the nexus of these distributions dramatically enhances efficiency, success, and readiness.

2-3. Army Talent Management

a. Talent Management is a way to enhance Army readiness by maximizing the potential of the Army's greatest asset – our people. By better understanding the talent of our workforce and the talent needed by unit requirements, the Army can more effectively acquire, develop, employ, and retain the right talent at the right time. In Army talent management, "best" equals best fit for the work at hand.

b. The TM CONOP identifies several talent management principles necessary to transform the enterprise and implement effective talent management practices. These principles serve as the foundation for all aspects of Army talent management – programs, policy planning or execution – regardless of workforce segment.

Effective talent management –

- is an investment
- requires a systems approach
- balances the needs of the individuals with the needs of the organization
- ensures job - person fit
- empowers employees

2-4. Differentiating Army Workforce Segments

The Army's workforce has discrete and specialized segments that, by necessity and law, are managed differently. These specialized segments include the different components (Active and Reserve), officers and non-commissioned officers, warrant officers, enlisted personnel, civilians and a multitude of specialty branches within the already mentioned sub-groups. While it may seem easier to manage them all similarly, this approach may inadvertently sub-optimize the diversity and strength of the total work force. It is critical to remember that each workforce segment has unique responsibilities and challenges, necessitating a tailored talent management approach.

2-5. The Army Workforce Management Framework

a. **Workforce Planning.** Workforce planning is vital to determining the future talent requirements the Army needs to meet its strategic objectives. The strategic alignment of talent requirements to existing and future talent inventory as well as an understanding of the unique and varied career paths is a critical input to the Army's Talent Management Strategy. There are four core functions of Army talent management: acquire, develop, employ, and retain talent. Holistic integration of these functions will help achieve the desired end state of "a ready, diverse, and integrated team of trusted professionals optimized to win in a complex world."

b. The cross-cutting nature of the four functions becomes clear when considering activities related to any one of them (see Fig. 2-3). For example, over-acquiring part of a workforce produces more people than an organization can employ. This may result in some professionals toward "make-work" tasks that stifle development. The resulting negative employment experience reduces workforce engagement and ultimately can create retention challenges.



The Army's Talent Management Strategy

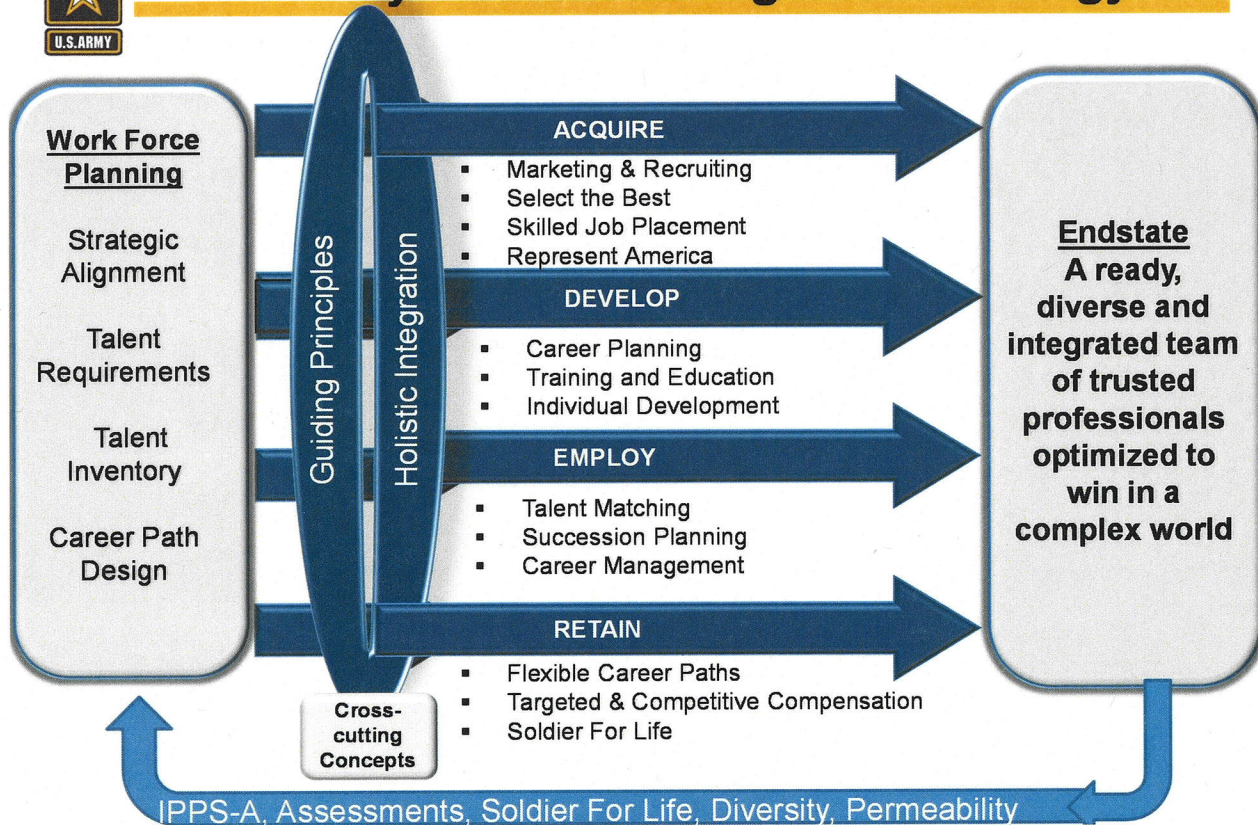


Fig. 2-3 Talent-focused Workforce Management Framework

c. **Continuous talent assessments**, supported by data-rich information systems, are critical enablers of the framework. Individual talents must be comprehensively assessed across all domains. Soldiers and Civilians must be screened, vetted, and ultimately released if they lack the talent required by the Army. During employment, assessments should not just capture performance, but also developmental gaps that must be addressed. Likewise, workforce sustainment programs that maintain the economic, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of the Army's workforce must be fully integrated into any talent management efforts. Lastly, obtaining the resources, as well as the legislative and policy authorities necessary to execute talent management initiatives, is equally critical. Collectively, these are the "means" of the *ATMS*.

d. In sum, the Army's Workforce Management Framework recognizes the critical interrelationship between all talent management functions. Careful actions to improve in any particular area can have a positive effect in all others if properly devised and implemented. Conversely, poorly conceived or executed human capital management initiatives can cause a vicious cycle of unintended consequences, dropping overall talent levels and negatively affecting the Army Profession.

CHAPTER 3

Strategic Framework

The Army is a force viewed by too many by its end-strength, [which is] just a number... Few understand how long it takes to build an Army. Few understand the many missions of the Army. The Army's greatest strength is, of course, its Soldiers...

- The Honorable Eric Fanning
Secretary of the Army
May 2016

3-1. Strategic Goals. The *ATMS* Framework has four strategic goals that, if met, will realize its strategic vision. The strategy seeks as its “ends” to create and sustain a workforce that is ready, professional, diverse, and integrated.

a. Ready. The Army has created mechanisms to capture the true demand for particular talents, has inventoried the talents available in its people, and then heavily weights talent matching as an assignment (employment) consideration. This increases overall productivity and readiness, with more of the Army’s people “in the right place, doing the right work at the right time.”

b. Professional. The Army is a profession, a highly expert force that requires years of training and education to provide an effective national defense. As a profession, it must be morally centered to retain the trust and confidence of the American people, and it must certify its people.

c. Diverse. The Army possesses people and teams with the breadth and depth of talents that collectively make our profession highly adaptable. In this context, diversity includes race, gender, and other demographics as well as the talents – skills, knowledge, and behaviors – of the total force.

d. Integrated. The Army must identify opportunities for greater permeability between the active and reserve components and between Soldiers and Civilians to promote greater workforce flexibility and less rigid career paths.

3-2. Major Objectives. The *ATMS* has four major objectives and several supporting objectives that provide the “ways” of the talent management strategy. These include the Soldier lifecycle functions of Acquire, Develop, Employ, and Retain.

a. Acquire: Identify and recruit the diverse talents required for the current and future force, develop that talent for initial entry into one of the Army’s workforce segments, and set conditions for its optimized employment. Includes the marketing, recruiting, and selection of quality candidates to serve in the Army, the onboarding of talent and subsequent job placement. Ensures as an organization we are both diverse and inclusive.

b. Develop: In collaboration with each individual, identify employment, education, and training opportunities which will extend their talents and optimize their performance. Increase the rigor associated with the training, education and credentialing of Army professionals, aligning

certification more closely with demonstrated and measurable expertise rather than time in grade, service or position. Includes Career Planning and subsequent Career Management to enhance individual talents that contribute to the readiness of the Army.

c. **Employ:** Optimize the productivity of each Army professional by aligning an individual's unique talents against organizational talent demands, to the mutual benefit of both the individual and the Army. Aligns personnel to right job at the right time, **assigning them where they can maximize their contributions**. Includes the advancement of personnel through job placement and succession planning.

d. **Retain:** Identify individuals with in-demand talents and engage them with an integrated mix of incentives and opportunities as part of a tailored labor contract. This includes migration across Army workforce segments (permeability). Includes talent differentiation and competitive compensation of talent whereby we engage the workforce for their lasting commitment to the Army. Allows for flexible career paths for personnel to serve where they can best contribute. Provides transition benefits and services to those individuals whose talents are no longer in demand within the Army workforce.

3-3. Critical Enablers. The *ATMS* has four critical enablers that provide the “means” of the strategy. They include:

a. **Talent Assessments:** Analysis that helps the Army better understand the workforce demands (requirements) and the unique skills, knowledge and behaviors of the force (talent inventory). Talent Assessments include rigorous, scientific analysis of in-demand talents through the use of prototypes and pilots to better understand how to align inventory to requirements at critical career crossroads.

b. **Resources and Authorities:** Ensuring talent management initiatives are integrated across the enterprise provides a critical means with which to realize the talent management strategy. We must be prepared to request adjustment and changes to Title 10 that impede talent management as well as revise all pertinent regulations and policies impacting Talent Management.

c. **Information Technology:** The fielding of the Integrated Personnel and Pay System- Army (IPPS-A) is an essential enabler for Talent Management allowing visibility of the total workforce as well as audit capability for personnel and pay.

d. **Workforce Sustainment:** The Blended Retirement System (BRS) and other compensation packages that provide both monetary and non-monetary incentives enable leaders and managers at several levels to retain top talent and ensure we sustain the well-being of the Army's entire workforce.

CHAPTER 4

The Way Ahead

Our military's people have always mastered change with excellence – continuing to defend our country and help make a better world... But that excellence isn't a birthright. It's not guaranteed. And we can't take it for granted in the 21st century.

- The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary of Defense
November 2015

4-1. Talent Management Strategy Implementation

a. While the *ATMS* establishes talent management as the central organizing concept behind its future-focused human capital management efforts, implementation plans will show actionable, achievable, and measurable results.

b. Implementation Plans are functionally integrated by the Army's Talent Management Task Force.

c. Implementation Plans are linked with the *Army Campaign Plan*, the *Army Human Dimension Strategy* and supporting plans, the *Army Talent Management Concept of Operations*, the *Army Business Management Strategy*, and other strategic planning guidance documents as appropriate.

d. Implementation Plans drive the program execution enablers of legislative, policy and resource decisions.

f. As the Talent Management Task Force identifies the associated tasks and initiatives needed to accomplish each supporting objective, it should consider the problem areas identified in Appendix A of the *Talent Management Concept of Operations (TM CONOP)*. The appendix identifies 29 specific improvement opportunities in the areas of: talent requirement and demand identification; assessments, promotions and succession planning; and assignments, development and career management.

4-2. Department of Defense Force of the Future Alignment

The ASA (M&RA) and Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1 are responsible for the creation, execution, and ultimately implementation of the *Army Talent Management Strategy*. The Army will ensure all initiatives are nested with the Department of Defense's Force of the Future (FotF) and other efforts such as the National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCFA).

4-3. Army Human Dimension Strategy Alignment

As the Talent Management Task Force develops and implements initiatives to realize the *ATMS*, it will in some instances be realizing elements of the *AHDS*. *The Army Human Dimension Strategy*

(AHDS) serves as the overarching human capital management strategy for the Army. It contains several supporting objectives and key tasks that closely align with major or supporting objectives in the ATMS.

4-4. Army Business Management Strategy Alignment

The implementation plan entails execution of program, resource and policy initiatives that must be guided by the sound business principles articulated in the *Army Business Management Strategy*. These include: outcomes focus; best value; alignment with other enterprise initiatives; holistic approaches; enterprise-level thinking; integration and collaboration; and perhaps most importantly, innovation.

4-5. Army Warfighting Challenges (AWFCs) Alignment

The Army Operating Concept (AOC) introduces Army Warfighting Challenges (AWFCs) as an analytical framework for integrating force modernization efforts. AWFCs are enduring, first-order problems, the solutions to which improve the combat effectiveness of the current future force. Talent management has crosscutting effects influencing multiple AWFCs and is specifically framed by four of them. They are:

a. AWFC #4. Adapt the Institutional Army - ... maintain an agile institutional Army that ensures combat effectiveness of the total force... ensures QOL for Soldiers and families, and possesses the capability to surge or expand the active Army.”

b. AWFC #9. Improve Soldier, Leader, and Team Performance - ... develop resilient Soldiers, adaptive leaders, and cohesive teams committed to the Army Professional Ethic that are capable of accomplishing the mission...”

c. AWFC #10. Develop Agile and Adaptive Leaders - ... develop agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders who thrive in conditions of uncertainty and chaos...”

d. AWFC #19. Exercise Mission Command - ...understand, visualize, describe, and direct operations consistent with the philosophy of mission command... across the range of military operations.”

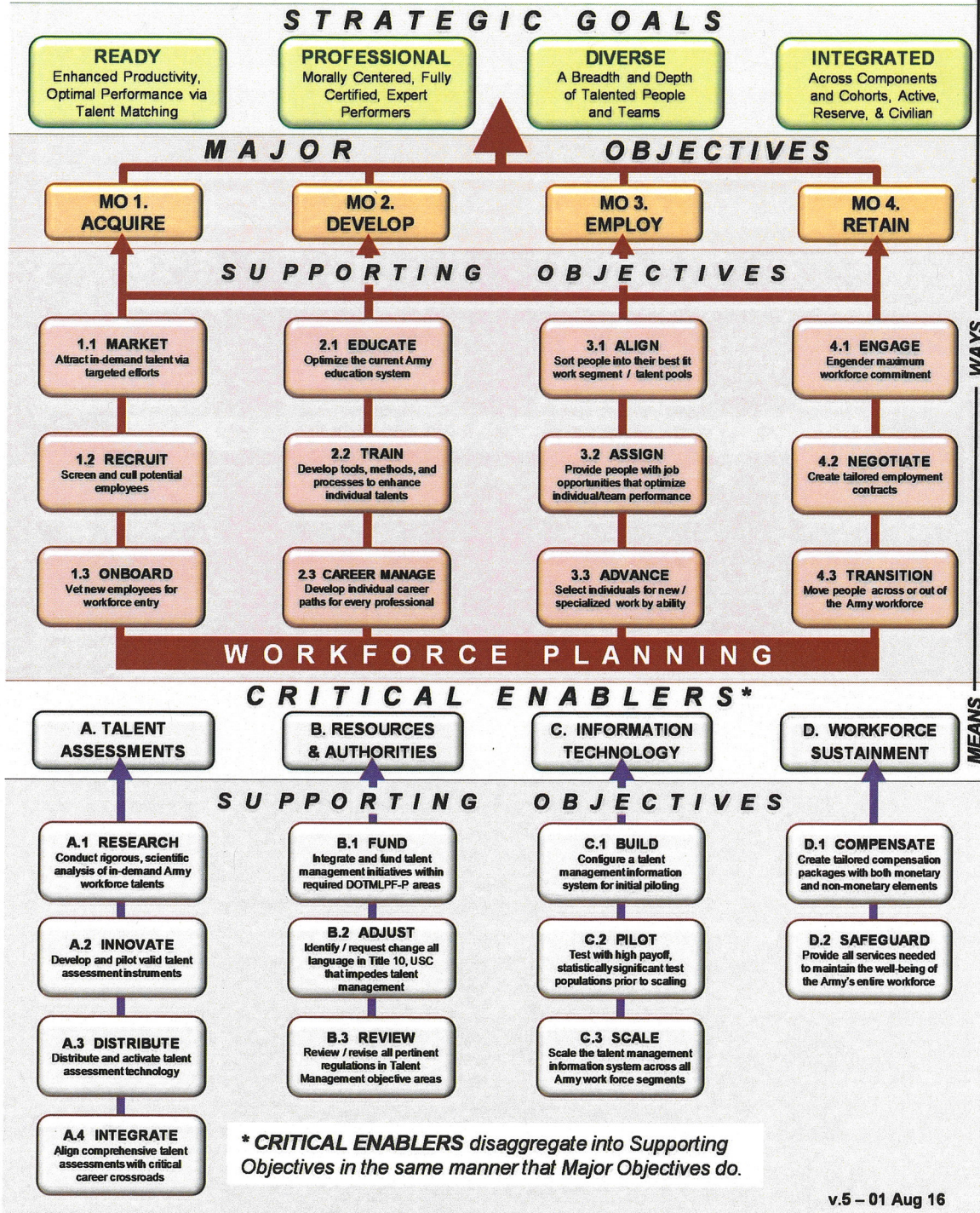
Appendix A: Army Talent Management Strategy Map



VISION: The Army optimizes human performance by recognizing and cultivating the unique talents of every Soldier and Civilian

MISSION: Acquire, develop, employ and retain professional Soldiers and Civilians with the breadth and depth of talents needed to win in a complex world

END STATE: A ready, diverse and integrated team of trusted professionals optimized to overcome any adversary



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GLOSSARY

Section I - Abbreviations

ABMS

Army Business Management Strategy

ACC

Army Capstone Concept

ACP

Army Campaign Plan

AHDC

Army Human Dimension Concept

AHDS

Army Human Dimension Strategy

ALDS

Army Leader Development Strategy

AMCS

Army Mission Command Strategy

AOP

Army Operating Concept

APS

Army Posture Statement

ATMS

Army Talent Management Strategy

AWFC

Army Warfighting Challenges

FotF

Force of the Future

NMS

National Military Strategy

TM CONOP

Talent Management Concept of Operations

Section II - Terms & Definitions

adaptability

The ability of Army leaders, Soldiers, and Civilians to shape conditions and respond effectively to a broad range of missions and situations with appropriate, flexible and responsive capabilities.

Army capstone concept

Holistic future concept that is a primary reference for all other concept development. This overarching concept provides direct linkages to national and defense level planning documents. A capstone concept drives the development of subordinate concepts.

Army human capital (workforce management) model

All of the actions needed to successfully manage the talents of the Army's Soldiers and Civilians during a professional career, organized around four core activities: acquire, develop, employ, and retain talent.

behaviors

Values, attitudes and attributes required of an employee to "fit" within an organization's culture.

broadening

Those opportunities or assignments that increase an individual's talent levels in performance areas that are lower relative to their established strengths. Enhances the ability to appreciate and properly employ the talents of others.

character

The distribution of moral characteristics that distinguish individuals. The set of moral/ethical behaviors adhered to by a group that sets it apart from others. Character informs behavior.

deepening

Those experiences that raise an individual's talent levels in performance areas where they are already strong. Enhances a person's ability to exceed productive norms and to advise others in their particular areas of expertise.

expert

A person whose deep knowledge in a particular subject area exceeds that of the average person, increasing their productivity in that area and causing others to rely upon their abilities. The Army, like other professions, creates expert knowledge and imparts this knowledge to its people throughout their professional careers.

human capital

Those things embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value, such as healthcare, training, experience and education. Investments in human capital can increase worker productivity, provided those investments are appropriate to the work required.

judgment

The ability to evaluate evidence and apply it to decision-making that generates desired outcomes.

knowledge

Further development of a person's several intelligences, and is acquired via training, life experience and education. Education provides the largest knowledge lift because it also bolsters mental agility and conceptual thinking, allowing people to extract greater knowledge from their life experiences.

multiple intelligences

Multiple intelligences reside within several autonomous brain systems. All people possess all intelligences to varying degrees. Each can be further developed. Each has limits, which differ from person to person. Multiple intelligences include: bodily-kinesthetic; interpersonal; intrapersonal; verbal-linguistic; logical-mathematical; musical; and spatial-visual.

replacement planning

Manages risk stemming from the immediate and unplanned loss of a key job incumbent. (Result: replacement is *sufficient*).

shaping

Those experiences (either broadening or deepening) that enhance productive capacities ideally suiting a person to a particular role. Synonymous with "developing."

skills

A person's productive capacities, extended or acquired via training, experience, and education. They range from broadly conceptual or intuitive to deeply technical. People generally manifest aptitudes for skills development in fields where their native intelligences draw them.

succession planning

A systematic attempt to ensure continuity of executive leadership by early cultivation of mid-career leaders through planned assessments and developmental activities whereby successors are *optimal*.

talent

The intersection of three dimensions - *skills, knowledge* and *behaviors* – that create an *optimal* level of individual performance, provided the individual is employed within their talent set. *Every person* has talent that can be cultivated or extended via proper employment and development. Talent can be shaped.

talent management

A way to enhance Army readiness by maximizing the potential of the Army's greatest asset – our people. By better understanding the talent of our workforce and the talent needed by unit requirements, the Army can more effectively acquire, develop, employ, and retain the right talent, at the right time.

the profession of arms

The Army is an American Profession of Arms, a vocation comprised of experts certified in the ethical application of land combat power, serving under Civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people.