

Communications Plan in Support of the AMC Strategic Plan

Purpose:

To provide a framework for leaders and associates throughout Army Materiel Command (AMC) to communicate effectively key AMC themes and messages in support of the AMC Strategic Plan and the Army Vision.

Introduction:

The command's strategic communications mission is to educate our customers, shareholders and stakeholders about AMC/Army through an integrated, multi-faceted communications effort. This plan defines the command communication objectives and strategy to accomplish that mission. The plan will promote recognition of AMC's crucial role in the Army's ability to perform its mission, in Army Transformation, and in national security. The overarching goal of this plan is to communicate to key decision makers, the American people, and the Army what AMC does and why AMC is key to the Army's acquisition, logistics and research and development processes, and to achieving the Army Vision. The architecture for AMC's execution of the communications plan will consist of horizontally and vertically coordinated and integrated efforts. These efforts will include engagement in multiple venues to gain support for Army/AMC budget, plans, programs and policies.

AMC Mission and Vision:

a. Mission: Provide superior technology, acquisition support, and logistics to ensure dominant land force capability for soldiers, the United States and Allies.

b. Vision: Dedicated and innovative people: Committed to continuously improving support to soldiers; Leading the development of new technologies and sustainment processes to transform the Army; Reshaping the workforce for the 21st century.

Communications Strategic Vision:

To achieve a level of understanding and appreciation on the part of soldiers, Army and DOD leadership, Congress, industry, community leaders, and the general public that AMC is the preeminent materiel provider for America's land force – thereby underscoring the Army Vision. AMC touches every soldier in the Army every day – audiences need to know that, and to feel they can count on AMC every time.

The end state is an AMC that is better known and understood at the tactical unit level, in the halls of Congress, the Pentagon, throughout the acquisition and logistics communities, and in industry. Such understanding includes increased awareness of AMC's role in readiness.

Communications Mission:

Keep the people informed...

1. Raise stakeholder awareness, especially among Army leadership, of AMC's missions and its contributions to Army Transformation, the Army mission and vision, and national defense. This includes providing information on current missions and activities as well as on long range initiatives.

2. Inform the Army, DOD, Congress, industry and the general public of the critical, multi-faceted role of AMC in the readiness of our Army, and ensure these audiences identify those roles with AMC.

3. Portray, to internal and external audiences, AMC and all of its organizational entities as elements of a single, integrated command responsible for current and future materiel readiness.

4. Portray the AMC civilian and military workforce as dedicated to supporting our nation's soldiers, and doing so efficiently and with a total commitment to quality.

5. Familiarize AMC personnel throughout the organization with the command's structure and its mission.

Organization Assessment — The Situation:

AMC, a major command, is 40 years old, but its mission is as old as the Army: develop, acquire, equip and sustain dominant land force capability to defend the United States and its Allies. Yet, the command is still often misunderstood, or little understood, by much of the Army. Some people reveal there is a general feeling in the Army Staff and Secretariat of, "I don't *understand* what AMC does." Some people believe they understand but don't. Others understand, but think it could be done better — so they don't "like" AMC.

While our major subordinate commands (MSCs) are familiar to certain segments of our audience in varying degrees, there is generally a lack of command identification — people do not see the MSCs as being part of AMC. Thus, while the good work of our MSCs is often acknowledged, the vital role AMC plays as the primary integrator, the logistics facilitator, gets lost. There is, then, a need for AMC to be perceived as a unified organization, rather than as multiple, singularly autonomous organizations, as is now commonly perceived. On more than one occasion, even officers newly assigned to

HQ AMC have remarked they had no idea the MSCs with which they had significant past dealings were part of AMC. Their comments echo each other almost verbatim: “I had no idea what AMC was until I got here.”

The story we tell needs to include an explanation of how, by nature of its being a single, unified organization, AMC creates a value-added synergy that contributes to the Army mission.

Need for unity of message:

AMC, along with the rest of the Army, is undergoing tremendous change. While change has been the status quo for years, it has resulted in AMC becoming less understood, both internally and externally, and hence less effective in gaining essential resources so vital to all of our missions. Unity of message creates strength, enables teamwork, and promotes technology, acquisition, and logistic integration essential to everyone’s success. Speaking with one voice, with a clear, coordinated message, is key to gaining an understanding of, and support for, the diverse AMC mission.

To this end, key overarching AMC messages are:

1. If a soldier shoots it, drives it, flies it, wears it, communicates with it, trains with it, or eats it, AMC provides it.
2. AMC is continuously improving support to soldiers.
3. AMC is leading the development of cutting edge technologies and sustainment processes to transform the Army.
4. AMC is reshaping and building its workforce to develop and support the Objective Force and Army Transformation.
5. If the Army is to have a Transformation, there must be a Transformation in Army logistics.
6. AMC is THE place in the Army that brings together technology, acquisition and logistics to deliver materiel readiness.

Strategic Communication Objectives:

1. Develop and implement a command-wide policy to ensure identification of all AMC elements as belonging to a single enterprise.

2. Portray, to internal and external audiences, AMC and all of its organizational entities as a single unified command responsible for current and future materiel readiness.
3. Develop and implement communication training that will improve the effectiveness of senior message carriers with a focus on clarity of message, body language, tone of voice and attitude.
4. Strengthen relationships and enhance understanding of AMC among centers of influence, both those traditionally supportive and those who have frequently voiced dissatisfaction and/or opposition.
5. Craft overarching messages with command-wide relevance, and enable local execution, tailoring, and reinforcement.
6. Develop an initiative to get more AMC people involved with communication at all levels.

Communication Strategies:

Communication is everyone's business. It is that simple and that vast in scope. There is no event, no meeting, that is not a potential opportunity for communicating about AMC. And there is no occasion where impressions will not be created, reinforced or counteracted. Even the most routine briefings represent opportunities to underscore the command's critical missions. Everyone, at all levels, must look for and create opportunities to inform others about the command. Communication must be a priority, especially for senior leaders. Leaders should seek opportunities to meet with the media, visit industry, and meet with community leaders, congressional Members or staffers, and soldiers. For example, leaders on TDY should seek out possibilities for communication, just as they seek out good places to go run.

Each commander must establish a climate that nurtures an enthusiasm to be proactive – one that makes people feel comfortable to meet with the media, for instance – and commanders must lead by example. That same climate is even more important during times of crisis or in negative situations. Responsiveness, candor, and willingness to talk will prevent misinformation and reduce negative perceptions. Past reticence of some senior leaders, during both positive and negative situations, often resulted in no publicity and too often left negative impressions.

Every AMC employee is, in some manner, a spokesperson for the command. Therefore, all AMC employees should have at least a basic understanding of AMC's roles and missions and must consider all interactions as opportunities to communicate about the command's importance. Although AMC is a complex, multi-faceted command, it is important even the most general characteristics of AMC be communicated whenever possible — and communicated in a positive, enthusiastic and

energetic manner. Survey after survey attests to the fact that *how* we say something is at least as important as *what* we say.

Effective communication results from the cumulative impact of clear and consistent messages. Each communication opportunity should have a clear communication objective. Determining the relevant message is the first step. What do we want to get across to this particular person/audience at this particular time? The goal must never simply be to impart information. It must always also be to leave a lasting impression, to create a *feeling*. The cumulative effect of delivering messages at each opportunity is to build an appreciation for the vital nature of the command, and for how it permeates every facet of Army readiness and contributes to national security every day.

At least as important, we must ensure seats at the table when AMC areas of interest are discussed outside the command. The approach should not be to merely shoulder our way in at the last minute, but rather to establish ongoing, effective working relationships so that AMC's input is sought and valued.

a. The “Domino Theory” of Communications:

Managing information flow during this time of unprecedented change is vital. Who hears what from whom, and when they hear the information, tremendously influences how people feel about the change. Change management lessons learned, and resulting best practices, repeatedly demonstrate the essential effectiveness of notifying stakeholders in the following order:

1. Congress and other political stakeholders (mayors, municipal leaders, governors, etc.)
2. Union officials
3. The workforce – as personally as possible
4. Finally, inform the media and industry

b. Image:

1. In today's world, partnerships demonstrate strength. Increasing the visibility of ties to AMC benefits the MSCs by conveying that each activity, installation, or MSC is part of larger enterprise. MSC successes reflect positively on AMC; AMC-wide successes reflect well on the MSCs. Installation signage, briefings, brochures, web sites, videos, business cards, and most other communications should include identification with the command *in words* (“A major subordinate command of The U.S. Army Materiel Command,” etc.), not just an AMC shield graphic. These actions will go a long way toward enhancing understanding of what AMC is.

2. Each AMC employee is, in some manner, a spokesperson for the command. Each should have a basic understanding of AMC's roles and missions and, ideally, should demonstrate a positive, energetic, customer-oriented attitude in all dealings with people outside the command. Employees should seek opportunities to talk about the products/services they provide to soldiers and the Nation.

3. Expand communication opportunities (exhibits, media opportunities, congressional visits, etc.).

4. Use Army Knowledge Online and other web-based venues to distribute information as widely as possible.

c. **Media:** The media is a vital conduit.

1. Reach out for interviews. Leaders should seek opportunities to communicate with the media.

2. Create targeted events and opportunities to strengthen media relationships and enhance understanding.

d. **Congress:**

1. AMC leaders must engage Members and staff of Congress through several types of events, including office calls, social events, hearings, inquiries, program and budget briefings, and visits to AMC installations.

2. Increase AMC's visibility on Capitol Hill in support of the Army/AMC Legislative priorities in coordination with DA, OCLL.

e. **Industry/Academia:**

1. It is important that AMC expand industry events, where appropriate, and "create" media and/or Congressional opportunities in support of these events as well. For example, AMC often invites media and Congressional members to our conference exhibits and demonstrations, award ceremonies and special events, and CEO and industry outreach visits.

2. AMC, especially at the headquarters level, participates in several conferences/trade shows and other industry meetings and events. Look for alternative venues where AMC can participate to increase the command's visibility with the defense industry (whether U.S.-based or international), and academia

3. Raise the level of knowledge and understanding on the part of members of Congress, governors, local community leaders (mayors and other municipal leaders) of AMC's role and its impact on the local community (e.g. capabilities, jobs provided, monetary benefits to the economy).

HQ AMC communication tactics

1. Use technology gallery as an opportunity to show off what AMC does for the soldier and Army Transformation. Include in the tour an explanation of how AMC manages the Army's acquisition, logistics and research and development.
2. Continue to saturate trade pubs with stories on what AMC is doing to support the soldier providing efficient, cost-effective, quality systems. In addition to national and international outlets, media should include defense hardware, security policy and government/ corporate management publications.
3. Consider media coverage in regional markets when AMC senior leaders visit AMC and DoD facilities in the field
4. Create news/media events in coordination with other elements of the headquarters and MSC public communications offices
5. Gather feedback in after action reviews following events
6. Assist AMC leaders in making presentations to outside organizations: AUSA breakfasts and evening seminars, AUSA and NDIA symposiums , Lexington Institute Land Warfare seminars and other venues for AMC to get its message out
7. AMC leaders address/attend combat arms conferences/leaders
8. Expand venues where AMC "exhibits" the command.
9. Invite members of Congress and staff to AMC installations and events
10. Incorporate Congressional issues at key conferences when appropriate
11. Encourage the AMC senior leadership to personally respond to queries from key members of Congress and their staff
12. Host quarterly events with staffers from the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate
13. In conjunction with Department of the Army, Office of Chief of Legislative Liaison, assist AMC senior leadership in office calls (formal or informal) on Capitol Hill
14. Continue to reach out to industry by: (a.) encouraging exchanges between AMC leadership and CEOs through special briefings and meetings during seminars and other venues; (b.) participating with industry and academia in the conduct of appropriate conferences and symposia.
15. Use weekly AMC News Dispatch to disseminate news about events and changes at AMC.

Resources:

- a. A communications “toolbox” with instruction manual that provides effective ways to cut through noise, drive home points, and create lasting impressions.
- b. AMC graphics for use in briefings, business cards, exhibits, and other presentations.
- c. A library of video clips for use in presentations, and current videos for displays.
- d. Communications training with a focus on clarity of message, body language, tone of voice, etc., conducted by request at HQ AMC.
- e. Overarching messages with command-wide relevance.

Measuring success:

1. AMC has a wide range of valued stakeholders, including Army leaders and soldiers, industry representatives, Members of Congress and their staffs, and the American people. Reaching these diverse audiences is difficult. Measuring how well the AMC message is being communicated to them is even more difficult. Any message is subject to interpretation, which makes evaluation of the success of our communication efforts subjective. Using the SRS Basic Scorecard architecture, the AMC G-5 developed several metrics to measure how well the various audiences are being reached. Application of these measures will yield valuable data on how well the command is communicating with its stakeholders.
2. While it is generally recognized that the communications process is subjective in nature, there are ways to determine whether communication is taking place. How well that is being done and how stakeholders interpret information they receive is open to interpretation, and represents the subjective nature of this objective. The AMC G-5 will use a weighted index, using methodology similar to that used by the Logistics Transformation Task Force, to determine the extent to which the command is informing all stakeholders. Similar to the Implementation Readiness Level Assessment scale, the G-5 has established a weighted index of activities. Because a simple count of these activities would not necessarily depict the true measure of our success, the raw count is balanced by weighted values, which are based on the value-added nature of those activities. The final scores are compared to a graduated scale for each activity to determine the final level of success – designated as red, yellow, or green. Further details are available on request.