



# 2010 Denison Culture Survey results: From the desk of United States Navy Supply Corps Vice Adm. Alan Thompson, DLA director

We received the preliminary results of the 2010 Culture Survey and I'm very happy to say they show that – without a doubt – we continue to improve as an agency and to progress on our goal of being the highest performing logistics agency in DoD.

I thank all of you who participated in the survey. I know it isn't always easy to take the time to complete the questionnaire, but we continue to maintain a very high response rate from our workforce. We dropped slightly from last year to 68 percent this year, but that's still much higher than other federal workforce surveys.

I think the reason we have, and keep, that high participation is because all of you understand how important the survey is to moving DLA forward and you recognize the great opportunity it gives to get your opinions and suggestions across to your leaders and to all of DLA.

Though I'm pleased with the response rate and with our overall culture scores, before we discuss the data I want to make sure that everyone understands the survey isn't about the numbers. It's about what it's like to work at DLA and that, in turn, affects what it's like to be a DLA customer.

The culture survey is about getting us all on the same sheet of music and keeping us there. It lets us see and truly grasp where we are, where we need to go and what we need to do to get there.

The numbers reported on the culture survey can be confusing so let me tell you a little about how to interpret the data. The numbers are benchmarked against other organizations outside and inside the Defense Department. If you look at DLA Energy in the "Core Values" category and the number is 72, that doesn't mean 72 people answered or that the people who answered "graded" us at 72; it means, when compared against the other companies and organizations Denison uses in its benchmarking pool (over 1000 of them), we rank in the 72nd percentile.

Or, more simply, that 71 percent of the organizations in the sample are below us and 28 percent are above us in that category.

Our biggest change this year was in the "Mission" wedge where we measure strategic direction and intent, goals and objectives, and vision. The increase in this area shows us that we understand more about what the agency does and where each of us fits into that work. It tells me that we share the vision

and goals of DLA and that we share in the responsibility for moving this great agency forward to its rightful place as the best logistics organization in DoD.

I know that a few folks wonder exactly what we do with the information we gather from the survey, and some have even said they don't believe the survey is useful. Let me give you a handful of examples that show what the culture survey does for DLA.

We have ongoing projects at the headquarters and our primary level field activities that grew directly from our culture survey results. For instance, last year your coworkers at DLA Distribution saw a delta in their "Involvement" and "Consistency" wedges. So, they're currently improving those areas by focusing on leadership and workforce development. So far, DLA Distribution has increased Level 1 Six Sigma green belt training and advanced leadership training to enhance the activity's internal focus. The folks in Columbus are making progress and, though they still have a way to go, their organization and its operations are improving.

Over at DLA Disposition Services, the 2009 survey showed a need for improvement in leadership

and communication consistency, along with employee trust and “churn.” The response by the activity to those results included a number of plans and programs such as publishing and distributing minutes and reports from weekly management team meetings, weekly activity reports, and Director’s Calls.

DLA Disposition Services is also establishing a leadership conference and a new governance structure. They’re benchmarking and gathering lessons learned from across DLA in order to improve their operations. All of that change came out of the culture survey results.

And, we’re already working on changes coming out of the 2010 Culture Survey. For example, we

received good scores for “We Are DLA,” but we’re looking at revising the “We Are DLA” tools provided to supervisors to help explain the initiative to their workforces. It is likely we will build some additional products to make it easier for our mid- and junior-level supervisors to relay the information in an interesting and time saving manner. Those modifications are in response to the culture survey.

I believe in the culture survey because I have seen the changes in DLA from both the customer and the workforce side. I know what DLA was like when I was the commander at the Defense Supply Center in Columbus, now called DLA Land and Maritime, and I see what DLA is like now. We are more agile, responsive and forward thinking than we were even four

years ago when we answered the 2006 Culture Survey questions.

From my time as a customer I can tell that DLA has grown in the idea of partnership and information sharing. We are a more transparent organization and one that is interested in working with its customers and its suppliers to give the best value at the best price possible. That willingness to change, to improve, is at the heart of our culture and why the results of the survey matter to DLA. Your survey feedback will drive many improvements in the coming year. The opinions you shared will ensure that DLA remains a world class logistics organization.

DLA Distribution’s results of the 2010 Denison Culture Survey will be released soon.

# Defense Logistics Agency Culture Survey

