Systematic Information Management

Providing and delivering an advantage in the information environment for the world's finest fighting force

by Henry J. Costa

In the mid-1970s, the Marine Corps was coming out of long, protracted war in Vietnam. The Marine Corps was feeling the effects of politics and the economy while the quality of recruits and officer assessments were dropping and impacting the quality of Marines and retention. Then-Commandant Gen Louis H. Wilson laid out his intent to the Force, "I call upon all Marines to get in step and do it smartly."[1] It was in this campaign, "to move out smartly," that then BGen B.A. McMillan in turn marched out smartly with his concept of systematic recruiting. He held a speech at the Recruiter Management School on systematic recruiting, highlighting the need for change and adoption of this systematic recruiting framework.[2] In this framework, McMillian cited the characteristics of standardization, management, training, and integrated actions that have been the hallmark of systematic recruiting. For over four decades, systematic recruiting has allowed the Marine Corps to not only improve the quality of enlistments and officer accessions but also to establish an ethos within the recruiting service to make mission and adhere to quality standards that have made the institution of the Marine Corps the aspiration of every young person across the world. "Making Marines and Winning Battles," is the Nation's aspiration and reality cherished by all American people.[3]

Today, after the Vietnam War, our longest war ever is Afghanistan. This

>*Mr. Costa is a Cyber Policy and Strategy Planner, Information C4 Division, HQMC Deputy Commandant Information.*

conflict has shifted our strategy and design in support of the Marine Corps information environment (MCIE). With an early outsourcing effort at the beginning of this century and most recently in this past decade insourcing activities of the MCIE under a government owned and operated construct, the Marine Corps has committed to lead in this information domain and

> *Then-Commandant Gen Louis H. Wilson laid out his intent to the Force ...*

has for the past several years supported DOD initiatives such as joint information environment (JIE), Defense Enterprise Service Management Framework (DESMF), and the zero base review. In his book, *The Fifth Domain*, Richard Clark talks of the digitization and transformation of the information environment as the new warfighting purpose that is being pursued by military and governments entities.[4] We have seen this organizational change in the leading efforts in the cyber domain with

the establishment of U.S. Cyber Command and Marine Forces Cyber Command (MARFORCYBER) at the end of the first decade of this century and most recently with the establishment of Deputy Commandant Information (DCI) in 2016.

In a recent 2019 DCI Initiative, the Marine Corps Information Enterprise Environment (MCIEE) blueprint was published describing this transformation and digitization of the information environment as described by Clarke. The MCIEE is an ecosystem of people, processes, and capabilities capable of connecting users with data to address a mission.[5] Additionally, during this same period, the Marine Requirements Oversight Council decision to establish a Network Governance Board started to break down the bottlenecks and gaps seen in moving from a regional, federated characteristic to the enterprise perspective for the MCIEE. This perspective will benefit the MAGTF and subordinate elements' operations in this new warfighting for future battles. However, this will not come without behavioral change, in the book *Leading Transformation: How to take charge of your company's future*, N.N Furr and his co-authors talk about the interrelated and iterative steps required to set enterprise transformational change. (See Figure 1 on next page.)

Leading transformational change requires a behavioral change, much like what BGen McMillian established over 50 years ago with systematic recruit-
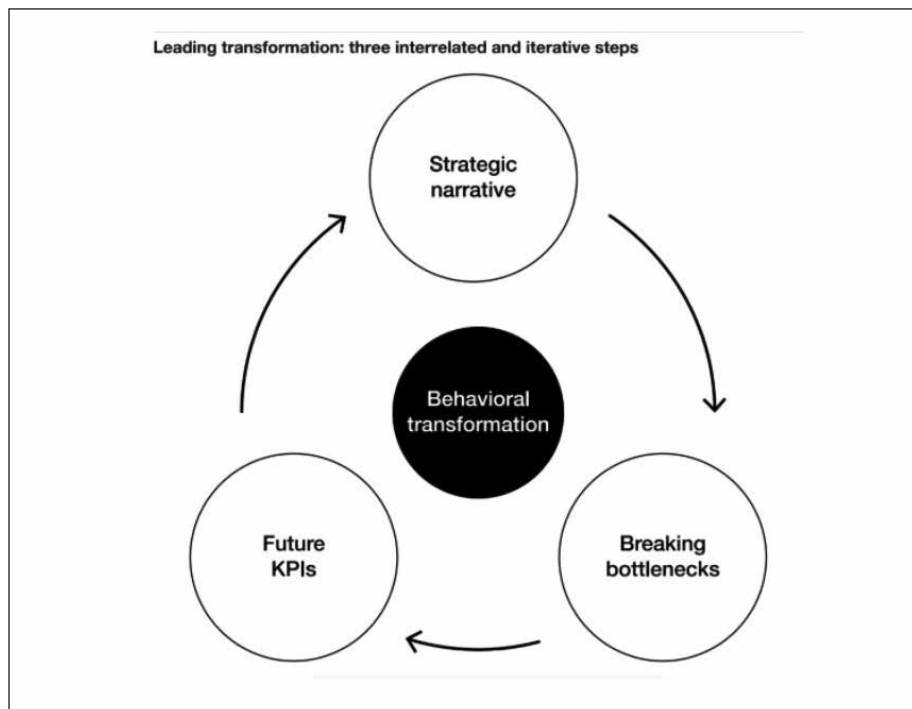
Figure 1. Leading transformation.

ing. Shortly after the establishment of the MCIEE blueprint in March 2019, DCI commenced a service improvement initiative to set the strategic narrative that included several town hall and engagements with key stakeholders to strengthen the management and governance of the MCIEE. Pursuing what Furr, Zoega, and Ramsoy discuss in their book, *Leading Transformation,* the establishment of strategic narrative must be followed by breaking bottlenecks and establishing key performance indicators. These three interrelated and iterative steps are critical to success in any transformational action.[6]

Breaking down bottlenecks is currently occurring under the DCI Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (E-ITSM) campaign. Carried out as a chartered group under the Network Governance Board this cross functional team lead by Information, Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (IC4), Combat Development & Integration, MARFORCYBER, and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) is on the way to conduct continual service improvement to the MCIEE ecosystem and lifecycle. In conjunction with this Continual Service Improvement (CSI)

effort there are other initiatives in support of the MCIEE such as Marine Corps Acquisition Concept for Information Technology (MACIT) led by MCSC, as well as development of a Single Enterprise Information Technology Construct (SEITC). Finally, command and control (C2) re-alignment under the leadership of MARFORCYBER to establish an enterprise capability providing better unity of purpose and command over regional stakeholders of the

Breaking down bottlenecks is currently occurring ...

MCIEE. This will shape the MCIEE to the new construct that values the enterprise information environment with a better posture to provide reliable and persistent capability to the MAGTF that will also include the establishment of the network battalions.

Central to this campaign is also the establishment of the E-ITSM Office (E-ITSMO) to affect how the standardization, management, training,

and integrated actions will be managed in the campaign of integrated actions. Additionally, these other critical lines of efforts (C2, MACIT, and SEITC) will affect the changes to break the bottlenecks currently experienced by all stakeholders. Consequently, the E-ITSMO will lead this change to affect the development of standards, metrics, training, and integrated actions. This transformation will require the same call as declared by Gen Wilson to have all Marines get in step and do it smartly to provide the best efforts they can on this campaign to establish a reliable and effective information environment for the warfighter. Finally, as described in *Organizing for Reliability*, the exceptional ability of some organizations to continuously maintain high levels of operational reliability under demanding conditions is due to setting the stage, focusing on the critical success factors (CSF) for creating a reliable organization, and implementing key performance parameters to achieve CSFs.[7] This will need to be an all hands effort; Combat Development & Integration is working to develop a new Marine Corps warfighting publications on the information environment. These warfighting publications, as well as concepts of operations and strategies coming out of DCI on E-ITSM and the new C2 concept for the MCIEE, will influence the actions and activities to be standardized excellence in the information warfare domain.

In support of this doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities approach to the digitization of information in the MCIEE, the E-ITSMO planning is underway, reaching initial operational capability in fiscal year 2020 with the establishment of domain and process owners within the DCI, CD&I, MCSC, and MARFORCYBER. These domain and process owners are quickly getting trained and educated in DESMF to operationalize their domains and processes to deliver better value to the MAGTF in the information environment. The intention is to establish full operational capability with the establishment of an E-ITSMO by the end of 2021. (See Figure 2 on next page).
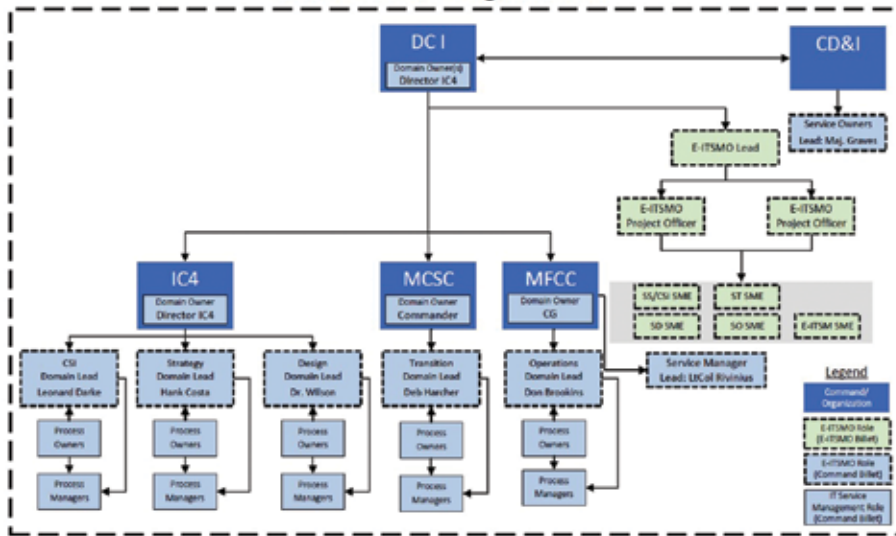
USMC E-ITSMO Organization

Figure 2. E-ITSM office operational architecture.

This office will be the orchestrator of the MCIEE ITSM activities for the DCI and conduct visits to the community outlining and communicating the importance of building in redundancy and resilience in the MCIEE and to effect then improvement of key performance indicators affecting the delivery of services. The E-ITSMO will drive a plan for integrated actions and create a behavioral transformation to complete the campaign objectives through a realization of an ITSM aligned culture, broking a willingness to change and providing the information transparency and measured reporting to ensure the development of MCIEE standardization, management, and training, specifically:

Standardization. Developing a concept of operations and standardization for information technology service management is a complicated and complex endeavor that requires expertise and knowledge, establishing a knowledge management environment that promotes transparency while allotting management by exception for leadership to focus on the big picture and allowing managers to know how and when to intervene when they see something going wrong is critical.

Management. Developing a single unifying platform under a people, process, and data systematic approach that aligns to commercial best practice and current doctrinal and operational constructs that measure and improve the reliability and effectiveness of the MCIEE.

Training. Deliberate and continuous training to maintain proficiency and competency with the information technology management community of interest and the associated intelligence and cyber practitioners.

Integrated actions. Adopting an agile "quick win" mentally in the pursuit of this campaign is critical and is supported under the ITIL v4 and current DESMF construct allowing tighter alignment with the other Marine Corps wide initiatives.

In summary, this campaign is a top priority to effect change in support of the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and enabling objectives for Force Design 2025 for the future Marine Corps. The digitization and transformation of the information environment as a new warfighting function and capability requires our attention. As stated by the 31st Commandant's father, LtGen Victor Krulak,

> There is little that will sober an enemy more surely than the knowledge that somewhere, just and over the horizon, lies a force of well-trained, well-equipped Marines in competently manned ships capable of delivering a stunning amphibious blow at a point and time of their choosing.[8]

Dominance in the information environment is the inevitable prerequisite for future battles, and allowing Marines to operate in that environment is our mission and the call of this campaign. The E-ITSMO end state will affect the MCIEE vision as a leader for the Marine Corps to continuously advance, learn, adapt, and evolve to maintain information superiority and enhanced lethality. The Marine Corps must update the current E-ITSM capability in order to effectively and efficiently measure, manage, and govern the MCIEE.

Notes

1. David White, "Louis H. Wilson 1920-2005," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: August 2005).

2. B.A. McMillian, "Systematic Recruiting Background," (presentation, Recruiting Management Course, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Quantico, VA, 1979).

3. Charles Krulak, "Crucible: Building Warriors for the 21s Century," *Marine Corps Gazette*, (Quantico, VA: December 2013).

4. Richard Allan Clarke, *The Fifth Domain*, (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2019).

5. Deputy Commandant Information, *Marine Corps Information Enterprise Environment Blueprint* (MCIEE), (Washington, DC: HQMC, 2019).

6. Nathan Furr, "Leading Transformation- How to Take Charge of Your Company's Future," *Harvard Business Review*, (Boston, MA: 2018).

7. Karlene Roberts and Ranga Ramanujan, *Organizing for Reliability*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).

8. Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984).