

## **Chapter Six: Professional Development**

### **6.1 Purpose of Professional Development**

In reference to the Marine Corps' civilian workforce, General M.W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, states "People are our most important asset" (White Letter No. 01-03). He goes on to support the policy of his two predecessors, Generals J. L. Jones and C.C. Krulak, in emphasizing the importance of implementing an organized system of professional development for civilian employees.

The purpose of professional development is to promote excellence in the civilian workforce and to provide an environment in which employees can attain their highest potential. In addition, the Marine Corps increasingly depends on its civilian workers to fulfill its mission. Therefore, the Marine Corps has implemented a plan to provide specialized skill and leadership training for its employees.

Another purpose is to provide a forum in which to instill certain core values into the civilian workforce. Those values are honor, courage, and commitment. Honor encompasses honesty, dependability, responsibility, trust, and dedication. Courage equates to the strength to do the right thing and make the hard decisions. Commitment underlies the determination to excel.

Some of the core competencies addressed in training include customer service, decision making, diversity, teamwork, presentation skills, problem solving, self-direction, budgeting, communication, leadership, and management. Mentoring is also highly encouraged as a means of helping employees evolve professionally.

The USMC created an extensive training and leadership development program that includes classroom training, online training, and distance training. Trainers come from various backgrounds, areas of expertise in order to maximize the professional

development experience for civilian employees. Contract employees are encouraged to attend on a space available basis.

## **6.2 MCCS Opportunities**

Since the goal of the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is to facilitate the permanent change of station (PCS) moving process for Marines and their families, it is important that RAP professionals look for opportunities to hone their skills and increase their knowledge. In this way they can develop their careers and be sure to provide top quality service.

Every Marine Corps installation endeavors to provide skill and leadership training for its employees. Course offerings may vary from place to place depending on changing needs across the Marine Corps. However, the overriding plan is the same: to offer professional, personal, and educational training opportunities for civilian employees. To get specific information on training available at each base or air station, access [www.usmc-mccs.org](http://www.usmc-mccs.org) for links to individual MCCS websites.

In order to keep up with technological advances, workers need regular skill-building classes. Most bases offer a wide variety of computer courses for employees. It is important for RAP professionals to keep their computer skills current. The Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Access, Excel, PowerPoint) is helpful in performing RAP duties including keeping track of Lending Locker inventory, building a patron database, making presentations, and writing reports. E-mail has become a primary source of communication, so Microsoft Outlook has become an essential tool.



### **KEY POINT**

At Quantico Marine Corps Base, the G-6 shop offers free computer software training. See [www.quantico.usmc.mil/g6/training](http://www.quantico.usmc.mil/g6/training) for further information.

Customer service is another area requiring consistent attention and training. Classes such as World Class Customer Service training, Stress Management, Creative Training Techniques, Project Management, Conflict Resolution, Business Writing and Grammar, and Seven Habits of Highly Effective People have been offered. Contact the local Human Resources Training Coordinator at each base for information about specific training opportunities.

### 6.3 External Opportunities

There are opportunities for professional development apart from those offered by MCCA and the USMC Human Resources Training Department. Adult and higher education classes are available at local community and four-year colleges and universities. Local government and school systems often offer adult education classes to the community for a nominal fee. These cover a variety of subjects and may well include computer, presentation, and communication skills.

The Lifelong Learning program hosts accredited colleges who offer classes conveniently located on base. The classes range from computer technology and business administration to human relations, counseling and presentation techniques. A student can take a stand-alone class or string classes together in pursuit of a degree. Many institutions of higher education offer classes and degree programs online. Some offer a combination of meetings in the classroom and online work. This makes it easier to fit professional development classes into a busy schedule.

Organizations also offer opportunities for professional development. Toastmasters International, [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org), is an organization committed to empowering its members to develop public speaking skills. Participating in this organization can help a RAP service provider become more proficient at giving presentations. The Chamber of Commerce will provide information about the locality that will help those new to the community. The Small Business Administration, [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), offers some workshops

and seminars that could benefit RAP personnel. Local realtors may provide information about the housing market in the area. Libraries often sponsor lectures and are a resource for a wide variety of information. Some of these training opportunities are free while others require payment of dues or fees.

### 6.4 Conferences

Professional conferences offer RAP personnel the opportunity to increase their knowledge, keep current on innovations in the relocation assistance field, and network with other relocation service providers. Following are some of those conferences.

- The Department of Defense/Joint Services Relocation Training Conference (DoD/JSRTC) convenes annually to provide relocation assistance training for family center personnel from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).
- The Employee Relocation Council (ERC), [www.erc.org](http://www.erc.org), sponsors an annual National Relocation Conference. Educational sessions are offered. Professionals have the opportunity to network and share ideas and information.
- The ERC also sponsors the annual Global Workforce Symposium. It focuses on both international and domestic workforce mobility issues and provides opportunities to increase knowledge and to network.
- Further, the ERC provides The Learning Zone Webinar. The Learning Zone Webinar can be attended on the web, without leaving the office. Its purpose is enhancing professional development, keeping current with relocation issues, and increasing one's knowledge base. It is offered the first Tuesday of every month.
- Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) sponsors a training conference held in conjunction with the American Logistics Association (ALA), [www.ala-national.org](http://www.ala-national.org), to provide professional development opportunities for MCCS employees. Tracks offered vary year to year.

- Families in Global Transition, [www.figt.org](http://www.figt.org), offers the International Families in Global Transition Conference with the goal of helping relocation professionals assist families in transitioning to a new location, worldwide. The conference provides a forum for networking, sharing of professional ideas and participating educational presentations.

### 6.5 Certifications

Professional certifications and credentials provide credibility and ensure that those who attain them meet the standards set by the issuing authority. The issuing authority is often a professional organization. Some credentials RAP professionals might want to obtain follow.

- Certified Relocation Professional (CRP)  
The Employee Relocation Council, [www.erc.org](http://www.erc.org), established its Certified Relocation Professional Program in 1990. Its goals are to provide a universal measure of industry standards and to encourage professional and self-development. To obtain CRP certification candidates must take an extensive examination that tests their knowledge of all aspects of the relocation industry. Certification exams are offered at the annual conference, as are preparatory study workshops. All Marine Corps RAP personnel are encouraged to seek this certification.
- Global Mobility Specialist (GMS)  
The GMS designation is offered through the Employee Relocation Council. Its purpose is to expand knowledge and professionalism in the workforce mobility industry. It is education-based, and requires three days of training to earn the certification. For more information, please access [www.erc.org](http://www.erc.org).



### KEY POINT

The CRP Exam eligibility requirements include:

Option #1: A CRP candidate must have been a member of ERC for 18 of the last 36 months and must establish membership at the time they submit their exam application if they have allowed their membership to lapse.

Option #2: If an applicant has never been a member of ERC a CRP/SCRP in good standing may attest to a CRP candidate's eligibility provided that the following requirements are met:

- Both the attesting CRP/SCRP and the CRP candidate must be bona fide full-time salaried employees (receive a W2) from the same company.
- The CRP candidate must have two full years of corporate relocation-related experience. This experience does not necessarily have to come from the same company, however, two full years of experience in relocation is required.
- Both the CRP/SCRP and the CRP candidate must be individual ERC members at the time of application and must maintain that membership in order to take the next available CRP exam.

- Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP)

The Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA), [www.eapassn.org](http://www.eapassn.org), established the Employee Assistance Certification Commission (EACC) to administer the CEAP program. The CEAP candidate must take a comprehensive examination to earn the certification.



**KEY POINT**

Eligibility for the CEAP test mandates that candidates meet the experience, professional development hour (PDH), and advisement requirements in either of two equivalent tracks. Candidates may use either track to become eligible.

Track One:

- No EAP-Related Graduate Degree: 3,000 hours of work experience in an EAP setting, obtained over a minimum of two years and within seven years of the date of the EACC application to take the CEAP examination

AND

- At least 60 PDH's, of which at least 10, 20, and 30 PDH's must be in Domains I, II, and III respectively (PDH's and domains are further defined in the candidate handbook)

AND

- 24 hours of advisement gained over a minimum 6-month period.

Track Two:

- With an EAP Related Graduate Degree: 2,000 hours of work experience in an EAP setting obtained over a minimum of two years and within seven years of the date of EACC application to take a CEAP examination

AND

- At least 15 PDH's of which at least 2, 4, and 8 PDH's must be in Domains I, II, and III respectively.

## 6.6 Presentation Skills

RAP personnel make formal and informal presentations. They may be called upon to speak for a group at a “Welcome Aboard” event, a unit briefing, or an MCCA-sponsored activity. Every day they communicate face-to-face with patrons who come to them for assistance with their permanent change of station (PCS) moves. Communication and presentation are skills that RAP professionals can master. They can learn to be excellent public speakers, even though just the thought of public speaking brings fear to the

average person. Following is some information about adult learning theories, presentation styles and tips for training.

### 6.6.1 Adult Learning Theory

Dr. Malcolm Knowles is a pioneer in the field of adult learning. In his studies he discovered that adults learn best when certain core principles are considered. They do not learn as well when they are taught in the same manner as they were taught when they were children. He developed the Adult Learning Model and his theory is called andragogy, in contrast to pedagogy which is the term that refers to the traditional way children are taught in school. Andragogy refers to the way in which adults become engaged in the learning process.



### KEY POINT

The six principles of andragogy are:

1. The learner's need to know. Adults need to know why, what, and how the information will apply to life. Information must be relevant and meaningful to where they are in their lives.
2. The learner's self-concept. Adult learners are considered to be autonomous and self-directed. They see themselves as capable and independent. In an educational or training setting, they may revert to childlike behavior and wait to be taught.
3. The learner's prior experiences. Previous related experiences could affect the current learning situation both positively and negatively. There will be a wide range of life experiences among the participants and much to share.
4. Readiness to learn. Adults are ready to learn when there is a need to know in order to cope effectively with their real-life situation.
5. Orientation to learning. Adults are life-centered in their orientation to learning. The learning may be problem centered or contextual. Adults respond well to materials organized around life situations and the acquisition of coping skills.
6. Motivation to learn. Adults are responsive to some external motivators (e.g. promotion, raise). The most potent motivators are related to internal pressures and personal payoff.

Another key aspect of adult learning theory is an understanding of how adults learn. They may be visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners. The visual learner receives information best through sight (e.g. pictures, videos, and other visual aids). The auditory learner remembers best what is heard. Discussions and lectures appeal to listeners. The

kinesthetic learner is a hands-on person who learns best by doing. Activities and practice appeal to the kinesthetic learner.



#### KEY POINT

The following summarizes learning styles and characteristics:

##### Auditory Learners

- learn best by hearing
- use discussion
- prefer to get information by listening
- remember what they hear and say
- desire to talk through a concept
- remember by talking aloud and through verbal repetition

##### Visual Learners

- learn best through seeing
- use visuals and graphic
- need to see it written down
- prefer written instructions

##### Kinesthetic or Tactual Learners

- learn best through touch
- prefer hands-on learning
- learn better when physical activity is involved
- remember and understand through doing

### 6.6.2 Presentation Styles

If the first rule in public speaking is to know the audience, the second is for the speaker to know his or her own training style. Training styles can be explained a few ways.

Following are some generalities common to four different training styles. The motivational trainer can be characterized as the stereotypical sales person. The encourager is a lot like a coach. The fun trainer likes to be on stage and to entertain. The intellectual trainer is compared to a professor. A presenter probably has one preferred style, but can borrow traits from the others in order to maximize the learning impact on the audience.

### Motivational Trainer (Sales Person)

1. Avoids reducing impact by not disclosing any course material prior to the program.
2. Evaluates learners by giving tests to see how much material is retained by learners.
3. Maintains punctuality of published program agenda.
4. Thoroughly covers all subject matter in the time allotted.
5. Plans and structures course materials in considerable detail.
6. Avoids potentially time wasting tangents by dealing with questions quickly and moving on.
7. Consistently covers the same material with each group.
8. Avoids controversy as a potential distraction or turnoff.
9. Judges trainer's effectiveness by how well the prepared materials were covered.
10. Targets course material to the "average" student.
11. Encourages note-taking by participants.
12. Ends training sessions by summarizing key subject matter.

### Encouraging Trainer (Coach)

1. Begins a program by having participants introduce themselves to one another and share expectations for the class.
2. Sits down with students while training.
3. Judges trainer's effectiveness based on participant's increase in confidence and self-esteem.
4. Shows willing to learn from students by admitting errors or lack of knowledge when appropriate.
5. Makes occasional use of media tools to support primary learning activities.
6. Asks questions designed to guide students to self-discovery of key points.
7. Frequently assesses participants' body language and emotional states and adjusts activities or schedule as needed.
8. Encourages casual or comfortable dress to increase the informality of the learning environment.
9. Often redirects learners' questions to other learners to be answered.
10. Arranges the room to promote group participation.
11. Sequences activities to stimulate and hold learners' attention.
12. Explores reasons learners ask a question to bring out individual concerns or hidden agendas.

### Fun Trainer (Entertainer)

1. Trainer acts as a role model for participants.
2. Arranges the room to have better control.
3. Carefully leads and controls any group discussion.
4. Motivates learners with enthusiastic talks, humorous stories, and entertaining audiovisuals.
5. Maintains a consistent pace of presentation throughout a workshop.
6. Judges trainer's effectiveness based on learners "liking" the trainer and training.
7. Begins program by informing class of trainer's experience or qualifications and trainer's goals for the program.
8. Always stands in front of class.
9. Uses media extensively to increase professionalism of the training.
10. Enhances credibility with participants by answering all questions quickly and professionally.
11. Projects confidence by using effective gestures, posture and vocal dynamics while instructing.
12. Directs participant's attention primarily to trainer and to what is being said or demonstrated.

### Intellectual Trainer (Professor)

1. Informs students of course objectives.
2. Collects information from participants and adjusts the content of the training for each group.
3. Involves learners in activities designed to stimulate critical or reflective thought.
4. Allows learners to influence or prioritize course objectives.
5. Changes course materials or training methods based on feedback about participants' performance changes after training.
6. Explores content-related controversial issues as potential learning experiences.
7. Offers a bibliography of resources.
8. Sends out self-study "prework" materials to spark learners' interest.
9. Judges trainer's effectiveness based on how proficient learners are in performing new skills or applying new concepts.
10. Evaluates learners based on their ability to perform specific objectives.
11. Ends a training session by helping participants to create action plans to apply course content to real-world situations.
12. Encourages learners to challenge outdated course content or questionable material.

### 6.6.3 Trainer Tips

Most trainers want their audiences to enjoy their presentations. In order to keep the listeners' attention, it is wise to adapt one's training style to suit the audience. That may mean stepping out of one's comfort zone and using some of the characteristics of the other styles.

When choosing how to present, it is imperative that the speaker know the audience. Since RAP audiences are primarily adults, it is a good idea to understand how adults learn, whether visually, by listening, or hands-on. Adults are more likely to become interested in a presentation when their preferred learning style is engaged.

An effective presentation will speak to each of those learning styles because that will pique the interest of everyone in the audience at one time or another. Variety and a balance between lecture and activities provide an optimal atmosphere for learning. Adults also enjoy participant-centered learning and they learn best in short bursts of time. Therefore, if it is practical and time permits, it is a good idea to build short breaks into the presentation. A break every 20 minutes would be ideal, but that is not always practical. A break should be built into the presentation at least once per hour.

Following are some helpful tips to remember when planning a presentation. They are the five P's: Plan, Prepare, Pay attention, Practice, and Present.

- *Plan.* Mark the date and time on the calendar. Create the presentation to fit the time allotted. Outline and then write up the presentation using whatever media suits the purpose of the speech (e.g. PowerPoint or overhead transparencies).
- *Prepare.* Know the audience. Be familiar with the equipment (e.g. microphone, PowerPoint, or overhead projector). As far as possible, make sure it is in good working order. Visit the room in which the presentation will take place in order to see the audience's seating arrangement, and the podium, stage or speaking area.

Know the material to be presented. Have extra activities and back-up material ready in case they are needed. Have speaker's notes on hand if needed.

- Pay attention. Use eye contact. Attend to the audience's needs. If everyone is fidgeting and not listening, maybe it is time for a break. Be flexible enough to change things around (e.g. switch the order of the presentation, throw in an activity).
- Practice. Practice, practice, practice. Visualize a successful presentation. Go over every nuance of the speech. Know the material inside out.
- Present. Take several deep breaths before going on stage. Look at the audience. If that is scary, look at a point in the back of the room just over their heads. Try not to read to them or to sound like a robot with a memorized script. Be natural. Move out from behind the podium, if possible. Walk a bit.



### KEY POINT

“It's vital to remember what presentation is all about: It's about meeting needs. It's about completing the circle that revolves around rapport. It's the honest realization and resulting reward of 'I need you. You need me.'”

*I Can See You Naked* by Ron Hoff