

**Final Report:**  
**Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment (SENA)**  
*Preparing the Senior Enlisted Workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction:**

During the past year, an analysis team conducted the most sweeping study ever within Coast Guard history that concentrated exclusively on our two most senior enlisted pay grades – Senior Chief Petty Officer (E8) and Master Chief Petty Officer (E9). Taken together with the results of previous studies – mainly the Enlisted Career Development Program (ECDP), the Workforce Cultural Audit (WCA), and the Joint Rating Review (JRR), this analysis resulted in a total integrated and comprehensive performance support plan for the entire Coast Guard enlisted workforce.

The SENA study was inherently customer-focused by virtue of the study teams' composition; team members were selected because they best reflected the immediate beneficiaries of this project. These handpicked men and women came directly from Coast Guard field units. At every step, specific data was gathered from actual customers at large. The study team identified the Coast Guard's organizational goals, missions, and corresponding unit needs in order to target the desired performance of the senior enlisted workforce to accomplish those goals and missions. This executive summary provides an overview of the background, challenges, methodology, and findings associated with this study.

**Background:**

This needs assessment evolved as a result of three previous studies that were conceived at the outset of a comprehensive effort to define enlisted performance from initial entry to chief petty officer. The results of these studies were the foundation of the Enlisted Career Development Program (ECDP). The Nonrate Workforce Structural Study (NWSS) and the Chief Petty Officers Needs Assessment (CPONA) began as separate attempts to better develop discrete portions of the enlisted workforce, while the Petty Officer Development Initiative (PODI) was a natural byproduct of the first two analyses. The NWSS analyzed the enlisted accession process up to first unit and the CPONA defined performance expectations of newly advanced chiefs, needs associated with the intermediate pay grades (E4-E6) virtually spilled out. The petty officer needs were captured in the PODI by a team composed of members who were participants in both the NWSS and the CPONA. Put simply, while the NWSS

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defined one end of the spectrum (E1 – E3), the CPONA defined the other end (E7), and the PODI defined the bridge between them (E4 – E6), the SENA team has the responsibility to define performance expectations of E-8's and E-9's. To start this process, the SENA team needed a clear understanding on the Service's expectations of a Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officer.

***What should E-8's & E-9's be doing in order to help accomplish the Coast Guard's missions?***

***What tools do they need to reach their full potential?***

It was apparent that the answers to these questions would provide the perfect opportunity to examine precursory issues given these expectations for senior enlisted; how do we attract the kind of people we need to become Senior Chiefs and Master Chief Petty Officers; and how should we then indoctrinate and assimilate them into the newly defined roles and responsibilities as noted in the SENA charter and the interpreted language of Public Law 85-422?

In May 1958, Congress enacted Public Law 85-422, which established two additional senior enlisted pay grades (E-8 and E-9). Each service was left to define the two new pay grades. Adopting the U. S. Navy's version, the Coast Guard has vaguely used the definition due to the inability to match Coast Guard roles with Navy roles (different missions).

**ADOPTED FROM THE U. S. NAVY**

**Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8):** The role of the Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8) is that of an enlisted technical or specialty supervisor. A Senior Chief Petty Officer functions as an enlisted technical or specialty expert within a rating, serving as the second senior enlisted petty officer within that rating. The primary responsibility is to bring to bear broad training, knowledge, and experience in providing direction and supervision to enlisted personnel engaged in performing the functions and tasks associated with the work for which a rating is responsible. A Senior Chief Petty Officer plans and administers on-the-job and other training programs for subordinates serving within the same specialty. On occasion, there are functions outside the areas of the rating in areas of leadership, administration, and supervision as a senior enlisted advisor in matters concerning enlisted personnel, but the main thrust of supervisory and leadership ability lies in the area of broad technical or specialty expertise that is rating specific.

**ADOPTED FROM THE U. S. NAVY**

Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9): The role of the Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9) is that of the senior enlisted technical or specialty administrator within a rating. The Master Chief Petty Officer, is the senior enlisted grade in terms of military, technical, supervisor, and administrative responsibility and expertise. The primary responsibility is to bring to bear the extensive training, knowledge, and experience in providing senior level enlisted supervision and administration to the entire rating, thereby insuring maximum efficiency of the work force and equipment assigned in the effective accomplishment of the function and task for which the immediate organization is responsible. A Master Chief Petty Officer is responsible for organizing, directing, and coordinating the various programs implemented for the purpose of instruction and supervision of subordinates. In units or at activities where the situation requires, the Master Chief Petty Officer, in addition to his/her normal functions, supplements the officer corps in the overall supervision and administration of personnel and equipment associated with the functioning of the organization to which assigned, whether or not related to a rating. In addition to functioning with a specialty as described, the Master Chief Petty Officer can also be expected, when so assigned, to be capable of functioning effectively outside a particular area of the rating in areas of leadership, administration, and supervision, as a senior enlisted advisor for the command in which serving in matters concerning enlisted personnel.

Since the first Coast Guard E-9 advancement of Master Chief Yeoman Jack Kerwin (advanced to E-9 on 1 November 1958), little has changed in terms of identifying new roles and responsibilities for E-8's and E-9's. Based upon historical data, SENA is the first known body to conduct a comprehensive analysis of our E-8 and E-9 ranks.

Under the guidance of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, the Senior Enlisted Advisory Team (SEAT) conducted a cursory review on the language and contents of Public Law 85-422 and its usage within our current Coast Guard human resource system. Based upon collected data, the SEAT members quickly realized what many had suspected, that the Navy's definition of Public Law 85-422 did not align with Coast Guard organizational missions. As a result, the Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment study was chartered.

**Challenges:**

One of the first challenges facing the SENA team was to examine all current studies within the Human Resource Directorate and link all of the processes and products associated with the elements of developing a Senior and Master Chief

Petty Officer. This involved identifying Coast Guard expectations of E-8's and E-9's as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century in terms of providing the Coast Guard with a final product—

***Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officers  
with the required skill sets to perform their assigned  
roles and responsibilities and prepared to reach their  
full potential in the Coast Guard.***

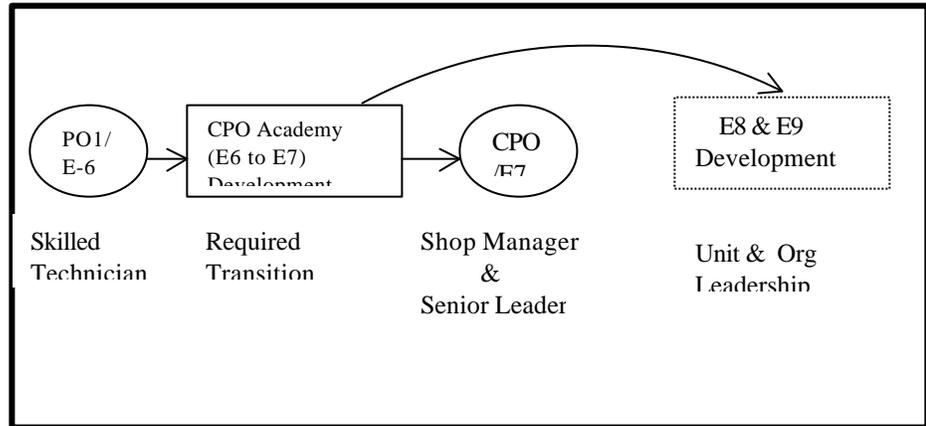
As SENA sought to understand the extent to which Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers work is career enhancing, larger questions arose such as, “what do we mean by career?” “What does this career look like?” One must know what the job entails at the far end of the enlisted career pipeline if one is to determine how to proceed in that direction from the outset of a career beginning as a nonrate (E-1).

Like previous studies, this study began with the end state in mind by asking, What is it that the Coast Guard expects of its senior enlisted personnel and what professional preparation does a selected E-8 or E-9 need to fulfill these expectations? The solutions proposed by SENA will enable all components of the enlisted human resource system to work together for this common purpose and meet our organizational commitment to the American public as trusted public servants.

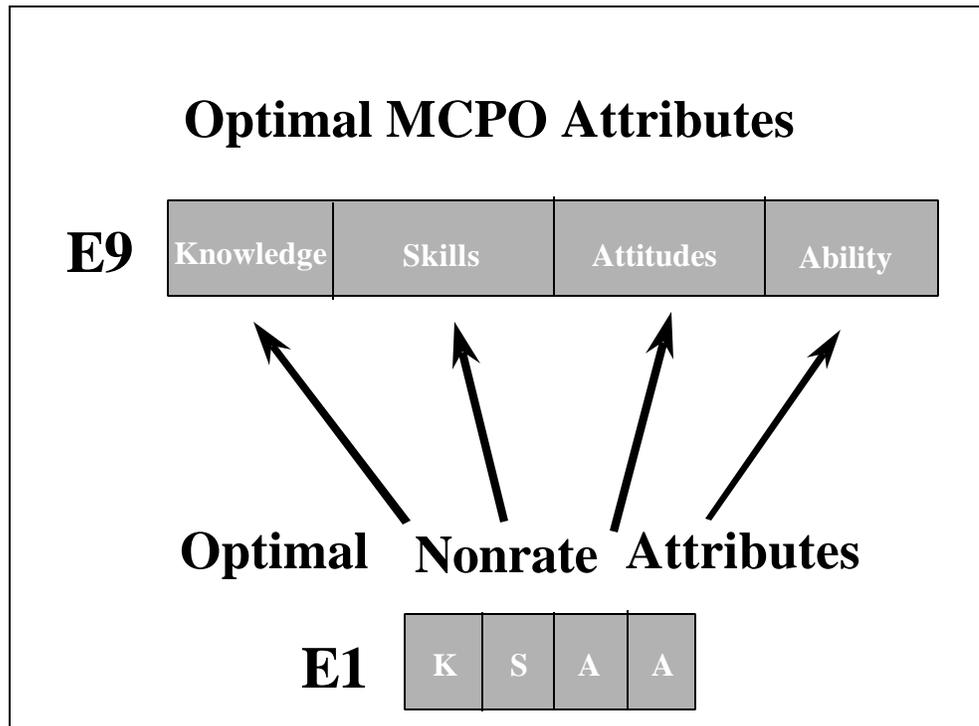
The thrust of studying E-8's and E-9's was partly in response to concerns that emanated from Leadership Workgroup's 1 & 2 (1993-1995). These groups identified many needed changes, but one in particular was the need to better develop our Chiefs' Corps, a key element of which involves around the CPO Academy's existence. While the CPO Academy's old curriculum (1982-1998) met the needs of E-8's and E-9's, not all E-7's, let alone prospective E-7's, were guaranteed an opportunity to benefit from this experience. A finished product of the CPO Needs Assessment was a new attendance policy and a revamped curriculum that aligned the CPO Academy with the performance expected of all new E-7's.

By analyzing the performance requirements and expectations of newly advanced E-7's, the SENA team was able to contrast this outcome with actual knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities (KSAA) of prospective Senior Chief's (E-7's selected for advancement to E-8). Basically, measuring the extent of

the “jump” from chief petty officer to senior chief petty officer and the knowledge, skills, attitude, and abilities that are required.



Finally, as the Enlisted Career Development Program Model took shape, it became apparent that an entire developmental plan from prospective enlistee (E-1) to master chief petty officer (E-9) was being built. In other words, now that the role and performance of nonrates through chiefs had been defined, the successive levels of development from chief to senior chief and senior chief to master chief petty officer had to be incorporated.

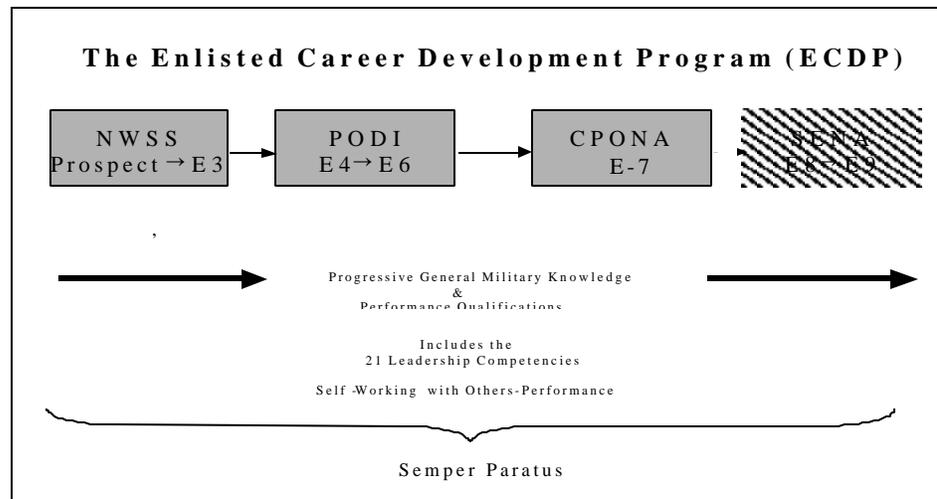


To complete the Enlisted Career Development model, all that was lacking was a sequence of developmental building blocks at the top. Defining this sequence became the mission of SENA.

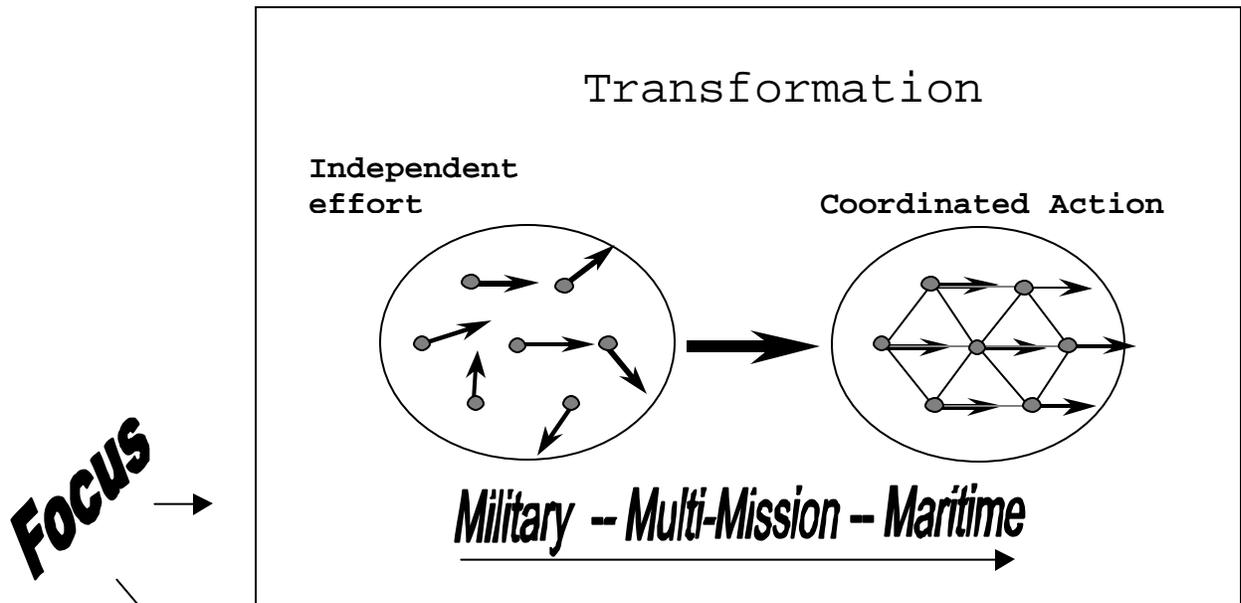
For many, this undertaking was a “huge” task based upon the accepted language of Public Law 85-422; instilled during post-Korean War and pre-Cold War era. Members of Congress realized that additional pay grades were needed to strengthen military readiness. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1958, Congress approved a total of 4 new pay grades: E-8, E-9, O-9, and O-10. The logic to create E-8 and E-9 pay grades were to dissolve a parallel authoritative ceiling, basically “E-7’s supervising E-7’s, who were supervising other E-7’s.” Creating two higher pay grades with a statutory manpower limit would provide a much needed “pyramid.” The law reads: No more than 3% of the enlisted workforce will consist of E-8’s and E-9’s. Generally speaking, our usage has been 2% E-8’s and 1% E-9’s. Today’s Coast Guard enlisted strength is around 27,000 personnel with roughly 540 E-8’s and 270 E-9’s assigned to authorize billets.

Following suit with the Navy, the Coast Guard has utilized their E-8’s and E-9’s as master technicians; with extra years of experience, and as role models; in shaping the newest members of the workforce: Officer and Enlisted.

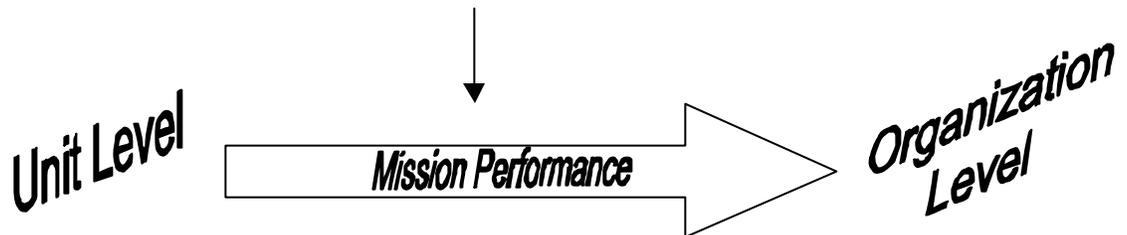
Once the SENA team accomplished it’s charter, a complete analysis of our entire enlisted workforce in terms of identifying knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities would be delivered.



One result of the SENA study would be to focus on a coordinated action of new initiatives in regard to Senior and Master Chief career development.



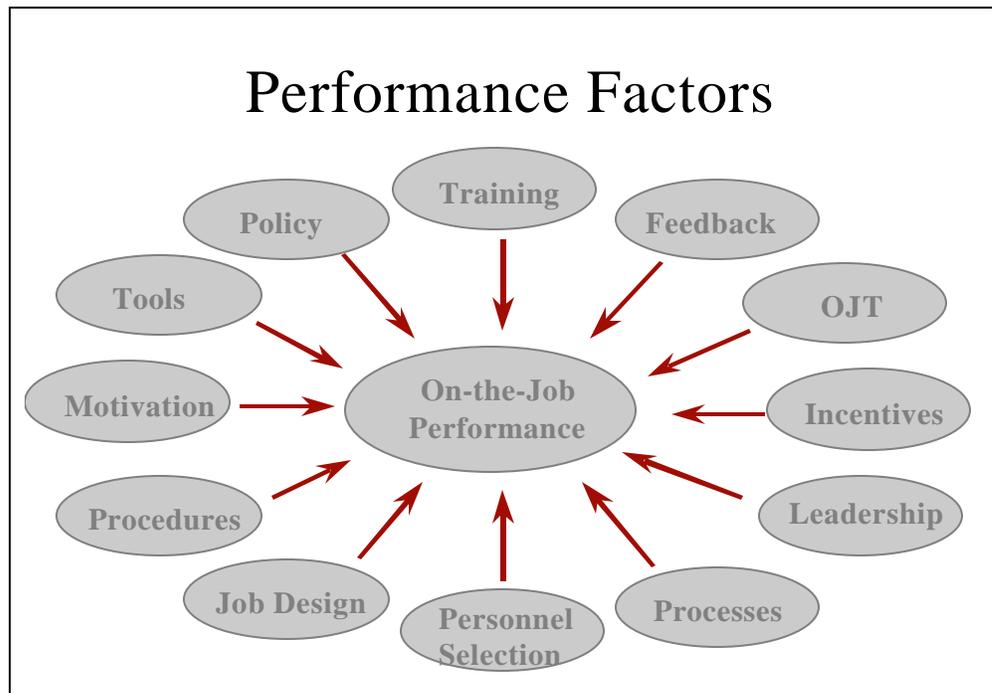
**Building... "Workforce Readiness Skills"**



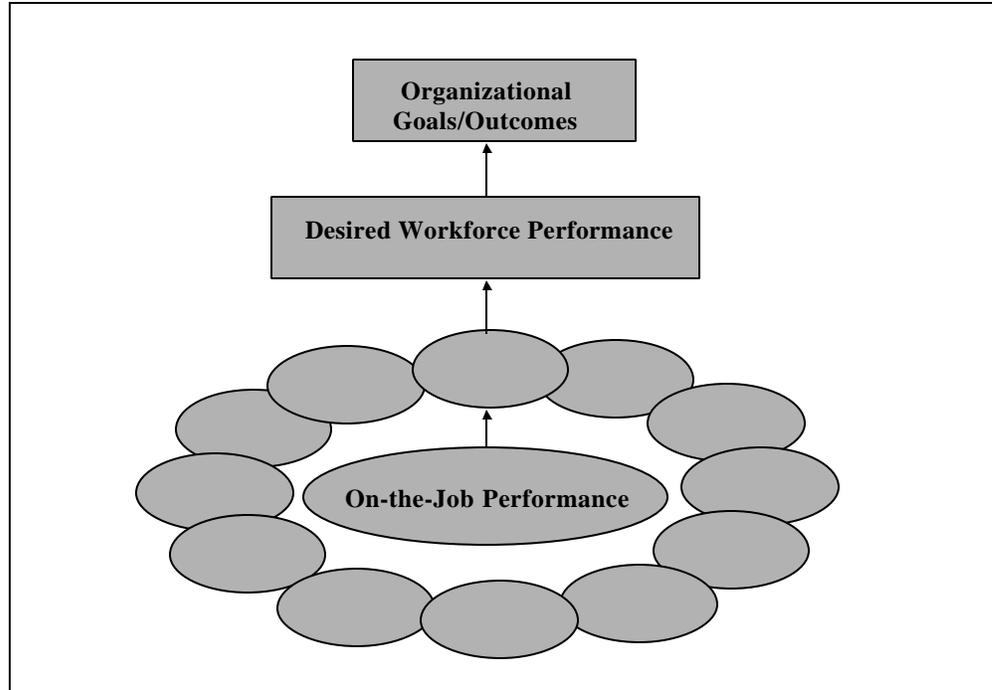
**"Preparation Equals Performance"**

**Methodology:**

Specially selected teams using a Human Performance Technology (HPT) approach conducted the SENA analysis. HPT is a set of methods and procedures, as well as a strategy for solving problems and for realizing opportunities related to the performance of people. It can be applied to individuals, small groups, and large organizations. HPT begins by looking at an organization’s outcomes, which are based upon its mission, strategy and goals, and then it derives from these the desired workforce performance that will achieve the outcomes. Next, the actual state of workforce performance is captured. By contrasting the actual and desired states, gaps between the two are identified and analyses are conducted to determine root causes of the gaps. These root causes may stem from any of three basic groups of origin: knowledge/skills/attitudes/abilities, motivation/incentives, and the environment/resources. Within these three groups there is a universe of factors that influence human behavior in the production of desired outputs resulting in higher outcomes.

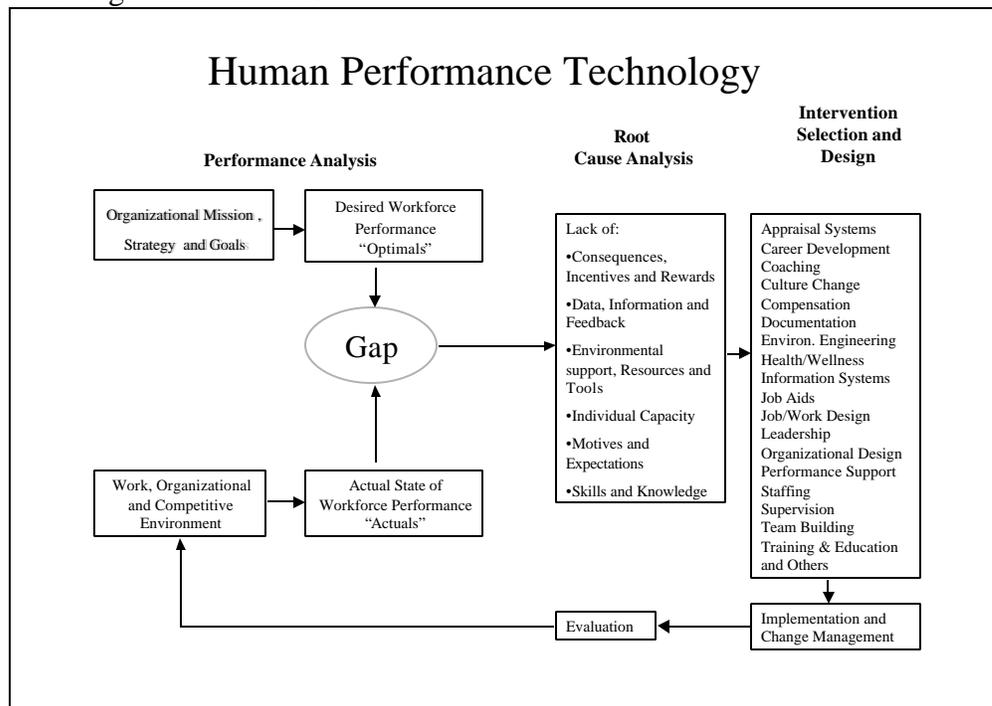


Only when the root cause of a performance gap is properly identified can an appropriate system of interventions be designed and developed to fill the gap.

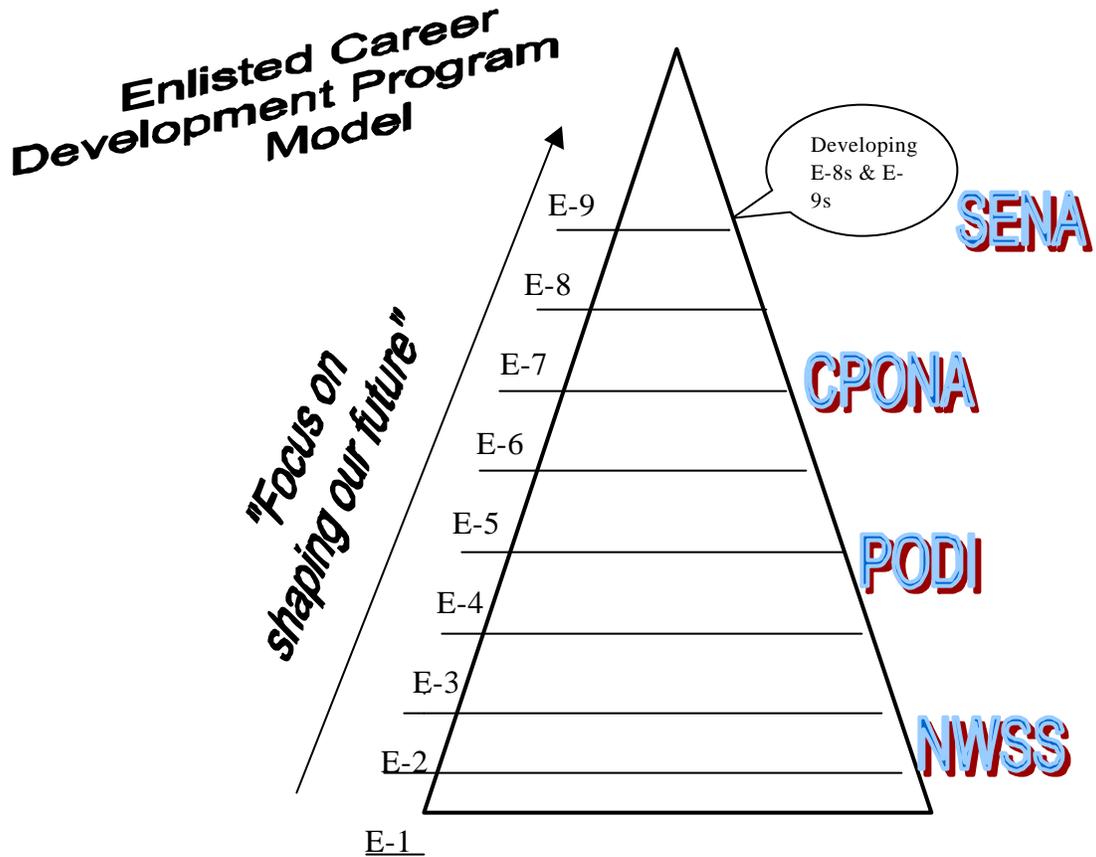


Subsequent evaluation of the results will monitor the alignment between actual and desired workforce performance to ensure that the original gap remains closed and to detect any newly appearing gaps.

Therefore, rather than serving as a mere snapshot in time, an HPT analysis properly done provides a basis for ongoing assessment of workforce alignment with organizational needs.



When concluded, the SENA study will put the steeple on the Enlisted Career Development Program model.



**Filling the..... "tool kit" with  
knowledge, skills, attitude, and abilities  
to be  
"Semper Paratus"**



For SENA, this included: Identifying the Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, and Abilities (KSAAs) with each pay grade and/or independent assignment that Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officers are assigned to:

### **Senior Chief Petty Officer (E-8)**

Optimal Attributes for SCPOs (*desired state*) - Determined the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required for the 21st century senior chief petty officer. This list became the goal of all career-long development efforts and provided the specific components on which to measure the success of the program.

Actual Attributes for SCPOs (*current state*) - Assessed how the current group of chief petty officers about to be advanced to senior chief petty officer compare to our “senior chief (*desired state*).”

Gaps (between the two) - Assessed the current gap we must bridge to develop the *optimal* senior chief petty officer.

### **Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9)**

Optimal Attributes for MCPOs (*desired state*) - Determined the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required for the 21st century master chief petty officer. This list became the goal of all career-long development efforts and provided the specific components on which to measure the success of the program.

Actual Attributes for MCPOs (*current state*) - Assessed how the current group of senior chief petty officers about to be promoted to master chief petty officer compare to our “optimal master chief (*desired state*).”

Gaps (between the two) - Assessed the current gap we must bridge to develop the *optimal* master chief petty officer.

### **Rating Manager (E-9)**

Optimal Attributes for Rating Manager (*desired state*) - Determined the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required for the 21st century rating manager. This list became the goal of all career-long development efforts and provided the specific components on which to measure the success of the program.

Actual Attributes for Rating Manager (*current state*) - Assessed how the current group of master chiefs about to be assigned to a rating manager billet compares to our “optimal rating manager (*desired state*).”

Gaps (between the two) - Assessed the current gap we must bridge to develop the *optimal* rating manager.

### **Command Master Chief (CMC)**

#### **Gold Badge**

Optimal Attributes for Command Master Chief (CMC) (*desired state*) - Determined the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required for the 21st century command master chief. This list became the goal of all career-long development efforts and provided the specific components on which to measure the success of the program.

Actual Attributes for Command Master Chief (CMC) (*current state*) - Assessed how the current group of master chiefs about to be assigned to our “optimal command master chief (*desired state*).”

Gaps (between the two) - Assessed the current gap we must bridge to develop the *optimal* command master chief.

**Command Chief/Command Senior Chief/  
Command Master Chief  
(Collateral Duty – Silver Badge)**

Optimal Attributes for Command Chief/Command Senior Chief/Command Master Chief – collateral duty (CC/CSC/CMC) (*desired state*) - Determined the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities required for the 21st century silver badge - command chief, command senior chief, and command master chief billets. This list became the goal of all career-long development efforts and provided the specific components on which to measure the success of the program.

Actual Attributes for Command Chief/Command Senior Chief/Command Master Chief (*current state*) - Assessed how the current group of chief, senior chief, and master chief petty officers about to be assigned compare to our “optimal command chief, command senior chief, and command master chief.”

Gaps (between the two) - Assessed the current gap we must bridge to develop the *optimal* command chief, command senior chief, and command master chief.

**Findings:**

The Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment (SENA) completed a comprehensive review of Senior Chief Petty Officer and Master Chief Petty Officer performance expectations and requirements. The findings of this needs assessment is vital to the service as it targets the most critical transition point in an enlisted member’s career, the point at which the chief petty officer must evolve from a master technician to the management and leadership positions held by Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officers.

During the course of this project, the SENA team engaged in an exhaustive data collection and analysis effort, gathering information from hundreds of sources. These data sources included extensive benchmarking of each military service; a comprehensive search of relevant literature; 50 interviews with the senior leadership of the Coast Guard; and a myriad of interviews, surveys, and focus groups involving field personnel.

The SENA team analyzed the varied and complex demands placed on

E-8's and E-9's, synthesized the vast body of data and developed a model of an "optimal" Senior Chief, Master Chief, Rating Manager, Command Master Chief, and Command Chief—one who is equipped to meet all demands. This model (encl. 3 - recommendations) is a list of the attributes (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities) that every Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officer must possess regardless of rating or assignment.

### **Concerns:**

Since the creation of E-8 and E-9 pay grades, the Coast Guard management of Senior and Master Chiefs have merely been utilized as "Chiefs" with more experience. Instead of having superimposed two bonafide higher ranks upon the enlisted structure, with commensurate broader and higher competencies, responsibilities, and authority, there have been added, in general effect, merely two higher pay levels in the Chief Petty Officer ranks. Basically, Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers are routinely utilized largely interchangeably with Chief Petty Officers (E-7's), with resultant depressment of the professional prestige and esprit-de-corps of the latter, and professional frustration of the former.

This conclusion was reached based upon a review of all enlisted ratings performance/job qualifications. Of 22 ratings, 96% have only one required performance/job qualification at the E-8 and E-9 level. A clear indicator that shows the importance of building technical skills at the E-4 through the E-7 level, unit technical management at the E-8 level, and organizational level management at the E-9 level. SENA found many senior enlisted assignments were mismatched in pay grades as the result of a human resource management policy – Senior Enlisted Assignment Policy (SEAP). Implemented in October 1992, which allowed E-8's to fill either E-7 or E-9 billets (vice-versa). Although a savings in the AFC20 travel account and a significant assignment benefit to some members and units, overall, this policy caused more harm than good in terms of identifying the exact roles and responsibilities of E-7's, E-8's, and E-9's. The SEAP has been given the title by the field as the "Crazy 8" policy because of inconsistencies in the assignment process.

An inclusive review of SENA's data, revealed that SEAP totally confused the member, the unit, and the organization as who is qualified to fill designated billets and what pay grade is required to perform the tasks. For the enlisted assignment officers, a huge undertaking developed on trying to explain to field commands on why the next assigned member would not be the same pay grade as the previously assigned member (i.e. if the unit had an E-9 assigned, they wanted another E-9.... even though the billet code was an E-7). Currently, many senior enlisted billets are mismatched due to our personnel shortages or

operational commitments, which is understandable. However, a distinction between E-7 to E-8, and E-8 to E-9 must be made.

Using Public Law 85-422 and the Flag Officer interviews as our guide, it was envisioned that Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers would play a much larger role in many of the leadership functions at the unit and organizational levels. However, many Senior and Master Chiefs are precluded from doing so with adequate effectiveness by the statutory manpower limitations on E-8 and E-9 billets (3%) and by their lower position in the rank structure below warrant officers and commissioned officers.

With the continually expanding missions, the Coast Guard has need for, and should make good use in expanding the roles and responsibilities of Senior and Master Chiefs, as bonafide higher ranks above CPO, without functional overlapping with warrant officer or commissioned officer ranks.

The demarcations between E-7 and E-8, and between E-8 and E-9 should be made actual, rather than merely pay differentials. Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers ranks should be built up in level and scope of responsibility and authority, to constitute bonafide higher ranks at the top of the enlisted structure, and to constitute a better career goal for higher caliber men and women, thereby augmenting their abilities at the unit and organizational management levels.

The Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment is empowering to the senior-level enlisted workforce since it has identified and provided for the development of specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities required of Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers. This means that all enlisted personnel who actually deliver the services provided by the Coast Guard will be truly *Semper Paratus* to protect, defend, and serve the nation's maritime interests.

The SENA project is without precedent; this represents the first-ever attempt to bring the senior enlisted workforce in alignment with definite, measurable performance expectations based on organizational and field (customer) needs. The associated data collection and analyses involved nationwide interviewing, surveying, researching, and benchmarking. The analysis team developed systemic interventions and solutions that cross traditional "stovepipe" organizational boundaries so that each recommendation supports the common goal of producing high-performing Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers.

In addition to meeting the mandates of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the team's data-driven HPT process ensures that its results will address the real barriers to mission performance and not merely treat

the symptoms. The benefits of the team’s revolutionary work ultimately will impact the entire Coast Guard enlisted workforce since it affects the way all Coast Guard members view the upper echelons of the enlisted workforce.

### **Summary:**

In summary, SENA defined what the Coast Guard needs from its Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers in order to 1) accomplish the Service’s missions, and 2) become the future enlisted leaders of the Coast Guard. The definitions (encl. 3), provides the basis to determine how the Coast Guard ought to train, develop, and motivate the enlisted workforce toward inspiring to the roles and responsibilities of becoming a Senior or Master Chief Petty Officer.

By starting at the top and looking down, identifying the role of our senior enlisted workforce will provide better alignment of professional development, mission focus, and accountability for performance that will be imbued throughout the organization.

Adopting the recommendations will result in a Coast Guard whose senior enlisted workforce is performance oriented from Day One—an organization that provides Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers a means to learn, practice, develop, and nurture the attributes that will make them successful leaders helping to realize the Commandant’s goal to “build superior competency among our people...and instill superior leadership and management skills at all levels.”

### **Field Brief:**

An initiative was launched to communicate and validate this collection of analyses with other ongoing studies. This effort was carried out by several SENA team members who “steward” the SENA study in terms of communicating the studies’ purpose, findings, and recommendations to the Service at large. Through an unparalleled series of visits to field commands, both large and small, the SENA team presented the collected data and received valuable feedback through various forms. The presentation used outlined the SENA results with the Enlisted Career Development Program model and its correlation to the many other ongoing Studies. Seeking field input in this way established a sense of shared ownership as the members realized that they were part of the process. The field visits not only validated the data of the study but also enriched many of their recommendations.

### **Epilogue:**

The SENA results are ready for implementation. If approved, the Senior Enlisted Advisory Team (SEAT) will assume the next phase to tackle the myriad issues involved in recommending timelines in executing this study’s recommendations in conjunction with other approved studies.

The implementation of this study is an opportunity for the organization to empower our Senior Enlisted Workforce. The field visits revealed a widely held belief that the Coast Guard is indeed the “Guardians of the Sea” with an understanding that its Senior and Master Chiefs want to be challenged and are eager to do the work of the Coast Guard. Enacting the SENA recommendations is a sound business decision and will have a lasting positive impact in terms of enlisted workforce development.

If we truly believe that “*Preparation Equals Performance,*” then we must subscribe that the SENA recommendations will better prepare our “Guardians of the Sea,” that ultimately benefits all Americans who depend on our Service. A complete set of recommendations associated with the SENA study is provided in enclosure (3). All supporting data will be digitally stored for use by those involved in implementation efforts.

## **“Semper Paratus”**

Signed:

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