



BRYCE BETZ

COMMAND/ORGANIZATION:

Product Manager Force Sustainment Systems, Program Executive Office for Combat Support and Combat Service Support

TITLE: Assistant program manager, Tactical Environmental Control Systems

YEARS OF SERVICE: 4

DAWIA CERTIFICATIONS: Foundational in test and evaluation

EDUCATION: M.S. in health science, with a concentration in the biomedical sciences, Quinnipiac University; B.S. in biology, Lebanon Valley College

X-Y-Z IS EASY AS 1-2-3

When Bryce Betz joined Product Manager Force Sustainment Systems as an assistant program manager in January, he thought he'd be easing into a new role but, much to his surprise, the first six months of his career with the Army Acquisition Workforce was, according to him, full of new opportunities and "action packed, indeed."

While learning about his new role, Betz also took on the challenge of delivering status updates before a panel, and fielding questions. It was not long before he realized he'd need to hone his public speaking skills and absorb as much knowledge as possible, in a short amount of time, because there would be occasions he'd be thinking on his feet.

"I oversee a program that is in the middle of some major milestones within the acquisition life cycle, and I've had to stand in front of the milestone decision authority a handful of times to brief them on our progress and ask for a decision," he said. "Those moments are certainly important, not only for the program's development, but also my professional development as an employee. Public speaking skills, the ability to think and respond to questions, and handling adversity when a decision comes are all put on display in real time during those moments. And that has been super impactful to this point."

That's not to discount his other responsibilities, which are just as impactful. There are numerous platforms used throughout the Army, he said, that require environmental control from our systems for operations in areas of contested logistics, such as medical facilities, shelters and mobile targeting units. "Being able to manage programs that provide that type of cooling and heating capability to the greater Army for improved probability of mission success is something I find extremely satisfying and take pride in."

"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

Betz said he was asked to complete a career road map upon onboarding that really made him think about his career path, personally and professionally, and ways to develop strategies to achieve his desired goals. "It was an overview of where I saw myself for the next 30 to 40 years. That is something that I never had really done, to look at a career timeline on paper in that fashion. It was super impactful to see that if I wanted to get to X-Y-Z, then I need to accomplish 1-2-3 before that in terms of trainings, classes, etc. I took a lot of value out of that particular task and the follow-up discussion with my supervisor after it was complete."

Before joining the Army Acquisition Workforce, Betz served as a scientist and an action officer to the commanding officer at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head

Division for three years, but felt it was time to try something new. “After spending the last handful of years as a Navy civilian in a more technical role, I wanted to make the transition to program management and actively sought this position out,” Betz said. He found and applied for his current position after seeing a post on USAJobs. “Not only was it a move made for the advancement of my professional career, but it also reunited me with loved ones in a different part of the country, so it was a win-win.”

“One of the most appealing aspects of the work within program management, specifically for me, is that there are clearly defined benchmarks like cost, schedule and performance. Although, how you get to a point of success within those metrics can vary greatly. This presents unique challenges and opportunities with each program, and that is something I enjoy,” he said.

Mentoring is another opportunity that Betz has enjoyed. His program executive officer recommended a class on mentorship offered by an outside agency exclusively to Project Manager Expeditionary Energy and Sustainment Systems personnel, which he found beneficial. His biggest takeaway was that even though a mentor is mostly responsible for passing knowledge, wisdom and lessons learned to the mentee, there are plenty of opportunities for a mentor to learn from the mentee throughout the course of those interactions.

“The mentor-mentee relationship is meant to be a two-way street that both parties can benefit from,” he said. “And I think that really changed my perspective for the better; I would definitely recommend the class to those interested.”

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As a 20-something, Betz said, he hasn’t had the opportunity to work with too many people who are more junior than himself. But a piece of advice he would offer to anyone young and just starting out their career is, “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.”

Oftentimes, accomplishing tasks at the working level is a collaborative effort. Scientists, engineers, logisticians and others all have unique perspectives based on their education and experiences. When collaborating in those team environments, he said, it’s

important to use those varying perspectives and ensure that the work is being looked at from every angle. “Seek out the opinions of others. Ask questions. Try to use an alternate perspective. In acquisition specifically, look at the widget or project from the eyes of the end user. Think to yourself, ‘What would a warfighter think of XYZ?’ That is a powerful frame of reference to utilize.”

One of the greatest lessons he said he was fortunate enough to learn early on in his professional career is to accept that things won’t always go your way. “You will be told ‘no,’ you will make a mistake, and you will probably come across a point in time where you think you’ve failed. But you only fail when you stop actively working towards a solution.”

Betz said he applies the proverb “the master has failed more times than the beginner has even attempted” to his work in a fairly straightforward way. “Sometimes you just have to write things down on a whiteboard for a couple of hours in order to see all of the possible angles to a particular situation and explore all possible avenues in order to accomplish a goal.”

Outside of work, Betz believes he is known for always pushing himself to go further. “I enjoy doing things that are challenging,” he said. “I grew up playing sports, and while I was fortunate enough to engage in collegiate athletics at the [NCAA] level, playing sports never stopped for me when school did.” He also enjoys golf, which, he said, is a sport “defined by how badly you miss a shot and is inherently difficult.” Exercise is also part of his daily routine which, he said, takes time and patience; results don’t happen overnight.

“While it’s easy to get frustrated over missing a shot on the golf course or missing a lift in the gym, it’s important to remember that those things are bound to happen eventually, and how you respond to those mistakes is what truly defines long-term success,” he said. “Professional baseball players make fielding errors and are considered elite hitters if they fail seven out of 10 times. The same can be said for work. Everybody makes mistakes and things won’t always go your way, but how you respond to those challenges makes a world of difference in the long-term outcomes.”

—**CHERYL MARINO**