

Defense Management Institute Releases Study of the Department of Defense's Chief Management Officer

ALEXANDRIA, VA (August 2023) — The [Defense Management Institute](#) (DMI) released a study of the Department of Defense's (DOD) Chief Management Officer.

The new study, "[Strengthening Defense Management](#)," provides a history of the Department's Deputy and Chief Management Officer (D/CMO) from 2008-2021 and management lessons from that experience. It was sponsored by DOD's Performance Improvement Officer/Director, Administration and Management. The study provides background on the motivation for creating the positions, surveys the accomplishments of each of the office holders, examines cross-cutting issues, discusses the reasons for the elimination of the office, and details major findings and management lessons.

Some of the management lessons emerging from the Department's experience with the Chief Management Officer include:

- Any organizational solution to improve enterprise-wide management and business reform in DOD confronts inherent structural obstacles.
- Less may be more when providing congressional specification of organizational change details.
- Success in defense management reform is sensitive to the personalities, experience, and skills of individual leaders and the quality of their relationships with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense.
- Accountability for success must be paired with a commitment to continuity in organization and resources over reasonable time periods.

The study found that, "despite achieving success in some of its initiatives, the D/CMO can be fairly considered an organizational experiment that failed to achieve its goals. There was not a single reason for this failure, but rather several important contributing factors. The office's eventual demise can be explained by institutional factors and/or personal factors." The paper concludes with several lessons for the Department should it again attempt to strengthen management by creating a senior official dedicated to defense reform.

DMI is an independent research organization dedicated to assisting the Department of Defense find solutions to the immense management challenges it faces. It was established by the DOD and is operated by the Institute for Defense Analyses.