

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I just read Lieutenant-Colonel Michael Rostek's article on Defence Management, "A framework for Fundamental Change? The Management Command and Control Re-Engineering Framework" in your Winter 2004-2005 issue. I read it with particular interest, not simply because I have known Mike for many years, but because I was an unwitting participant in the grand ruse that was re-engineering. In the mid-1990s, I was tasked to do a re-engineering study of Photo and Graphic Arts services used by CFB Borden and its outlying units. The aim, I was told, was to make the *process* more *efficient*, and, ultimately, that would save us money and allow us to focus on operations, which in Training Command meant teaching students. Unbeknownst to me, the base commander at the time was not really interested in streamlining and making more efficient the Photo and Graphic Arts *processes*. With pressure to live within his dwindling means, he was simply interested in the cost savings part.

I tackled the task with vigour. I assembled a *work group* of *stakeholders*; I was appointed a *mentor* who had a civilian background in *Total Quality Management*; I hired an (ex military) *consultant*; I attended a National symposium on *Alternative Service Delivery*; and toured many CF schools' and units' graphic arts sections to learn their *best practices*. After many months of neglecting my primary duty, of touring the country on temporary duty, and of paying the consultant, the results were in: We could quite easily centralize and

consolidate the Photo and Graphic Arts sections into a one-stop, *customer-focused* Service Centre. This would free up for operations many military Person Years (P/Ys) currently being spent on photo and/or graphic arts in an uncoordinated *stove-pipe* manner at their parent schools and/or units. I was convinced re-engineering worked. My little study was going to liberate a dozen or more military P/Ys and we were going to become more efficient.

In the end, the base commander seized upon the fact that the Base Graphic Arts Section was under-employed, since each school was doing its own work of this nature, and he chose to *right-size* two civilian graphic artist positions. This would reduce his Civilian Wage Envelope (SWE) by perhaps \$100,000 per year. That way, he explained, in an era of devolved budgets, he could afford to cut the grass on base. Conversely, eliminating or refocusing military P/Ys saved him nothing.

I would like to thank Lieutenant-Colonel Rostek for succinctly articulating in his cogent paper the sour taste I've had for so long. My Certificate of Achievement for leading the re-engineering team is framed, but I do not hang it on my wall, nor do I mention it in my CV.

Major Pierre M. Royer, CD
J5 Plans (KFOR desk)
Allied Joint Force Command Naples



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