

Third TRADOC Town Hall Focuses On Talent Management

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NCO Journal

November 3, 2016



In the early days of Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport's 30-plus year career, the young staff sergeant who was on drill sergeant duty was already weighing the merits of impressing his promotion board by getting an associate's degree. It took hours of hard work as well as a lot of peer support, but the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command made it to sergeant first class. He never looked back.

Talent management was the focus of TRADOC's third town hall Thursday, Nov. 3, at Fort Eustis, Virginia, where panelists including Davenport addressed how noncommissioned officers can get ahead in today's Army.

"It's about how you identify the very best noncommissioned officer to do these other things to make them a more well-rounded, experienced NCO, and expose them to different things as well," Davenport said.



With the Army still in the middle of downsizing its ranks, the Noncommissioned Officer 2020 Strategy aims to prepare and mold NCOs into fully developed leaders. The NCO Professional Development System, which is part of NCO 2020, calls for managing talent to better benefit the Army institution and the individual.

“I think everyone has unique abilities, knowledge and skills,” Davenport told the NCO Journal before taking his seat at the virtual town hall. “What we are trying to figure out is how to maximize that, get the right Soldiers in the right job. Not only a job but also in broadening opportunities, and there are many of them. No longer can NCOs be just drill sergeants and recruiters. They can go work with industry, and they can do academic fellowships. We are really trying to open up the aperture to develop NCOs.”

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey warned NCOs that promotions will be based on talent management during the Association of the U.S. Army annual meeting in Washington, D.C., last month.

“We are going to promote people based upon talent, and we will slot people for advancement in the United States Army based upon talent,” Dailey said.

Davenport acknowledged that NCOs have had a lot of information thrown at them about NCO 2020, but he said that’s why the series of TRADOC town halls were developed. They offer an opportunity for Soldiers to get their questions answered from senior NCOs and to have issues placed into context for them.

“Their voice and their opinion matters,” Davenport said. “After all, there’s 391,000 of us Soldiers (that’s across the active component, Guard and Reserve) and I happen to be one. [With the other panel members,] we are a very small percentile of this group of NCOs who are trying to set the course for the next 20 or 30 years for our NCO Corps, and

acknowledge all the great gains and all the sacrifices and the great work that NCOs have done, build upon the success.”

At a time when staying relevant in today's Army is crucial, Davenport had some advice for NCOs pondering their futures in the Army.

“Stay current, read and ask questions of those who can make the decisions or give you the proper answer,” he said. “Don't hesitate to engage senior leaders. Don't hesitate to engage the branch managers, and take advantage of all this stuff. In this day and age of social media and virtual town halls, leaders are very accessible. You need to take advantage of that.”

The NCO Journal will have more news from the town hall in the coming weeks. Until then, you can watch the entire broadcast at: <https://youtu.be/xdXGuYSv7Fc>