



ASK THE SEI: BRIAN GALLAGHER

What is the SEI's long-term strategy for cross-functional integration across the various SEI competencies?

-John Mishler, Naval Air Systems Command



Brian Gallagher is the director of the SEI's Acquisition Support Program. He is responsible for building teams from across the SEI's disciplines to support the needs of the DoD and other government agency acquisition programs.

Let me use an example to frame the question in more concrete terms. Col Sampson has a problem. She is responsible for the acquisition of a new joint distributed command and control system to be used by all DoD components. Her concern is in her developer's ability to create an architecture and a development process for integrating legacy, COTS, and new components in a distributed environment such that the data and commands are secure and accurate. She knows the SEI has expertise in process, architecture, COTS-based systems, performance critical systems, and network survivability, but how can she pull from the entire SEI body of knowledge to help her solve her problem?

We at the SEI recognize the complexity of today's modern systems and the need to apply best practices from the entire engineering body of knowledge to help address the issues and risks associated with acquiring and building these systems. On Oct. 1, 2002, we established the Acquisition Support Program (ASP) with the purpose of helping acquisition organizations increase the likelihood of delivering

new capabilities into the hands of operational users by applying the right mix of SEI and other technologies to meet their objectives.

Central to the operation of the ASP are the chief engineers: one for the Army, one for the Navy, one for the Air Force, and one for the Civil Agencies. Each chief engineer is responsible for quarterbacking and integrating the SEI's efforts for their respective customer base. Equally important, they also are responsible for coordinating across services, ensuring the identification of DoD-wide acquisition trends, and applying common solutions where appropriate.

Each customer engagement is led by an SEI technical lead who is responsible for ensuring that the customer's needs are met by building cross-discipline teams from across the SEI. The technical lead is also responsible for capturing knowledge learned from the engagement, integrating it with lessons from similar activities, and transitioning this learning for the good of the entire acquisition community.

To ensure that we focus on issues important to our customer base, we established strategic impact programs (SIPs) with the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and civil agencies. A SIP is a multi-year strategic partnership, part of the strategy of a senior acquisition official who is committed to an integrated improvement program within a particular acquisition community and industry base. In a November 2002 memorandum, the Honorable Claude Bolton, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology and the Army's Acquisition Executive, announced that he "chartered the Software Engineering Institute...to be 'at point'" in a joint effort to "promote a dramatic improvement in the acquisition of software-intensive systems."

No longer is the SEI focused solely on the development and maturation of new and improved software engineering technologies. With the formation of ASP, we are also customer focused and applying our expertise in the engineering of software-intensive systems to solve ever more complex engineering challenges brought to us by our strategic acquisition partners.