

Army Sustainment Receives Secretary of the Army Award

Armey Sustainment, the Army's official professional bulletin on sustainment, was awarded the 2015 Secretary of the Army Award for Publications Improvement (Departmental). The award was presented by Gerald B. O'Keefe, administrative assistant to the secretary of the Army on May 27, 2015, at an awards ceremony at the Pentagon.

The magazine earned the award for improvements made to its production workflow and overall operations from July 2013 through June 2014. This is the seventh Secretary of the Army award received by *Army Sustainment* and its predecessor *Army Logistician* over its 46 years as a Department of the Army publication.

Transformation

Given the current fiscal environment, trends in print publishing, declining print distribution, and the number of readers interested in electronic distribution, it was clear the publication needed to better position itself to enter the digital marketplace. To do that, editorial and production processes needed to be reworked, a strategy needed to be developed, technology needed to be implemented, and senior leader engagement was required.

The goal of the transformation was to make the editing and production process more efficient, reducing the effort required for the print version and freeing up time both in editing and production to channel efforts toward digital distribution. Another goal was to create a division of labor, giving editors more control over their products throughout the print production and electronic distribution process.

Editorial Process

The staff began by moving to a more digital process by making better use of the editing capabilities in Microsoft Word. All copy edits are now tracked using the track changes function. The project editor can address most suggested changes to the article by accepting, modifying, or rejecting the change, which saves time over typing changes into the manuscript—the method that was required when passing and marking paper copies of articles.

Production Process

The staff implemented the use of Adobe InCopy for the editors. With InCopy, the editors make changes to the text directly in the layout, and the training required was minimal. This all but eliminates the requirement for the designer to type in the numerous changes, reduces the number of errors, and allows the editors to ensure that the correct changes are made without having to communicate those changes to the graphic designer.

Digital Media Tactical Plan

In an effort to further develop and engage the magazine's digital readership, the staff developed and implemented a digital media tactical plan that provides the way ahead to increase awareness of the publication's online presence, engage and excite influencers and readers, and convert social media followers to *Army Sustainment* readers and subscribers.

Digital Improvements

The result of the transformation has yielded positive digital results.

Weekly sustainment news. The staff posts sustainment-related news, photos, and videos to the website

weekly, providing readers with more current news. This drives to the website additional visitors who would not otherwise visit. During the award period, 65,700 visitors viewed 129,774 pages on the *Army Sustainment* website.

Automated email distribution system. The *Army Sustainment* website now features a link to an automated email distribution system where readers can sign up to receive news updates and articles when the latest version of the publication is posted. The system allows for easy subscribing or unsubscribing.

It also allows the staff to track reader activity to see which types of news articles received the most activity and to invite readers to participate in discussions on social media. In the past year, the distribution system generated 75,732 views of 827 items with 10,774 clicks back to the site on 800 items.

Social media. Based on a recent readership survey, the print publication's largest readership is 36 years old and older. Through social media, though, the publication's primary audience is 18 to 36 years old. During the award period, the top daily reach for the publication's Facebook page was 17,886 and Twitter was 57,786. At a high point, the publication's Twitter mention reach on June 4, 2014, was 1,782,535. Also in the same period, the publication added more than 1,100 new followers across its social media platforms.

These changes have provided a more efficient editing and production process and increased reach to *Army Sustainment* readers and subscribers. The contributions of the staff were vital to achieving the transformation. **Editor**