**Innovation Symposium 2017**

**Transformation to an Exponential Organization (ExO): Improving the Capability Development Process Using the Tenants of an ExO.**

On behalf of Lieutenant General Robert S. Walsh, Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration (CD/I) thank you for your interest and participation in this year’s Innovation Symposium. We at the Warfighting Lab and CD/I look forward to hosting you and engaging with you on the future of the Marine Corps.

One could argue that our current organization is limited by ineffective institutional processes that stifle performance across the Marine Corps, both in combat and the garrison environment. Our processes were developed based on an industrial-age model of efficiency and in a time when innovation was largely driven by government Research and Development (R&D). Today however, our adversaries (peer/near-peer competitors, non-state actors and hybrid threats) are able to leverage resources, innovation, and flexibility at levels that were only once the province of a superpower’s capability. Adversaries are able to symmetrically and asymmetrically perform as ExOs, potentially outpacing US forces. We must seriously consider whether the Corps lacks the appropriate organizational energy and focus to meet future force requirements given the current and forecasted future environment.

As we move forward, we must recognize that the Marine Corps must perform as an ExO; this includes our institutional combat readiness and our supporting functions. Defining exponential performance by itself does not create exponential results however. With that in mind, this year’s innovation symposium will explore Big “L” Learning (i.e. organizational-level transformation). Specifically, this event will focus on how we as an organization can improve the Marine Corps Capability Development (CD) process. Our ultimate goals at this event are to:

1. Promote positive organizational transformation
2. Improve innovation and future force development
3. Inform the Service & harness its efforts
4. Enhance unity of effort and foster a community of interest
5. Identify the systems and processes that prevent the Marine Corps from making the leap to becoming an ExO (and to make recommendations accordingly)

This document provides amplifying guidance and overall intent for this year’s innovation symposium. Its purpose is to provide a common understanding and expectation among participants, speakers, facilitators, and working group leads to ensure the most positive and effective outcome.

During the symposium, participants will be asked to explore two problem sets in order to generate meaningful outputs that may influence future CD within the Marine Corps. The first problem, which you will explore on day one is: “What would the Marine Corps look like as an ExO, and what is required to enable that?” After being introduced to ExO concepts, you will be asked to discuss how an exponential warfighting force might think, fight, function, communicate, train, and equip itself, and what performance metrics must supporting functions meet to enable an ExO Marine Corps. This first question is meant to be broad to help participants “break the ice” in their working groups and to demonstrate their understanding of the ExO concept, determining its linkages to our own organizational structure. Outputs from problem one will be briefed early on day two before senior leadership and the plenary group.

The second problem is: “Through the lens of the Force Development Strategic Plan (FDSP) and the Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA) process, what does the CD enterprise look like under the construct of the ExO? To enable an exponential combat development enterprise, what changes are required in the supporting and related functions?” These questions drive to the heart of this year’s symposium. Participants are urged to bring their considerable and collective experience and expertise to the table to recommend exponential practices related to enhancing CD. CD is the approach to conceptualizing and developing the future force, to include how we train and educate Marines and Sailors. However, such areas as acquisitions, budgeting, procurement, contracting, and IT processes are also open to consideration. Outputs from problem two will be briefed to senior leadership at the end of day two.

Finally, outputs from this symposium are non-attributional, meaning attendees should not identify any statement made by a guest speaker, sponsor or other attendee, with any particular speaker. The purpose of non-attribution is to encourage open, frank and professional discussion where all feel comfortable in speaking their mind and offering opinions that contribute to the overall effort. Our goal is to solicit thoughts and ideas from all attendees that may benefit our organization. The success of this event lies mainly on the quality participation and output from this year’s attendees. The more everyone puts into this event, the more everyone will get out of it. With that said, here is some additional information on this year’s guest speakers:

**Mr. Peter Wicher** is Director of Strategic Relations at Singularity University. Peter has held senior executive positions in Silicon Valley in the semiconductor, consumer electronics, education, and systems industries.  Working with both start-up and public companies he has managed international organizations and built relationships with numerous multi-national clients and partners. He holds bachelors and master’s degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from UC Berkeley, an MBA from Berkeley’s Haas School of Business, and an MS in Special Education from St. Joseph’s University. He will speak on the exponential rate of change which universally affects key enabling technologies such as robotics, AI, genetics, energy, etc. and how that is radically changing the world.

**Dr. James Canton** is CEO and Chairman of the Institute for Global Futures, a leading think tank he founded in 1990 that advises business and government. He has held academic appointments at NASA, the Kellogg School of Management, MIT’s Media Lab, the Potomac Institute, and he has served on the International Advisory Council, Economic Development Board for the State of Singapore, been an advisor to the National Science and Technology Council as well as the US Departments of State, Defense and Health and Human Services. He will reinforce the message of exponential change and focus on how that change is driving risk (from non-state and peer competitors) for the United States military and its allies.

**Mr. Nick Davis** is Vice President for Corporate Innovation at Singularity University. For the past 15 years Nick has worked in a combination of executive education, corporate innovation and building and leading multiple high growth start-ups. He attended The Ohio State University where he majored in Political Science with a minor in Theatre. He is an alumni of the UCLA Anderson School of Management, as well as The Esade Business School’s program in Open Innovation and Entrepreneurship. He is also a veteran of the US Navy where he worked in Military Intelligence. He will speak on the characteristics of organizations that are able to exploit exponential change and thrive in that environment to out-perform the competition by an order of magnitude.

Here are some additional references:

***Exponential Organizations*** by Salim Ismail

***The Singularity is Near*** by Ray Kurzweil

***Abundance*** by Peter Diamandis

***Future Smart*** by James Canton

***Extreme Futures*** by James Canton

http://www.mcwl.marines.mil/Symposium/

http://exponentialorgs.com/

http://www.globalfuturist.com/

http://www.singularity.com/charts/page17.html

http://www.kurzweilai.net/

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Semper Fidelis.