



All Things Financial Management Episode 12: Director of Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Ms. Audrey Davis

INTRO: Welcome to “All Things Financial Management,” an ASMC podcast sponsored by Guidehouse, where we discuss all things under the auspices of the Comptrollers’ Office and address top-of-mind issues in the Financial Management community.

TOM RHOADS: Good Morning, my name is Tom Rhoads. I'm a Partner with Guidehouse, where I work with clients across the DoD and other government agencies to transform and optimize their financial management functions. I will be your host for today’s podcast.

For those of you who may be new to this podcast series, let me take just a moment to provide some background on the American Society of Military Comptrollers. The American Society of Military Comptrollers, or ASMC, is the non-profit educational and professional organization for individuals – military, civilian, corporate, or retired --involved or interested in the field of defense financial management. ASMC promotes the education and training of its members and supports the development and advancement of the profession of defense financial management. The Society provides membership; education and professional development; and certification programs to keep members and the overall financial management community abreast of current issues and encourages the exchange of information, techniques, and approaches.

And with that, I would like to introduce our government guest for today, Ms. Audrey Davis. Ms. Davis was appointed the Director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) on June 21, 2020. Ms. Davis leads the day-to-day accounting and finance activities of the Department of Defense (DoD). DFAS employs over 11,000 DoD civilian and military personnel at 10 locations throughout the United States, Europe and the Pacific. In 2020, the agency disbursed over \$623.3 billion by processing 137.3 million pay transactions to 6.6 million military personnel, federal civilian employees, military retirees and annuitants; 12.4 million commercial invoices; and 4.3 million travel payments. Responsible for 1,379 active DoD appropriations, DFAS is the trust fund manager for \$619.7 billion in foreign military sales and \$1.27 trillion in military retirement and health benefit funds. Last year, DFAS maintained more than 98 million general ledger accounts containing billions of transactions and handles accounts for worldwide operations and multi-disciplined appropriations of DoD.

Ms. Davis formerly served as the Principal Deputy Director for DFAS starting in January 2012. She also previously held positions with the Air Force to include her role as the Deputy Director, Air Force Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. Prior to that she also held a variety of information technology positions within DFAS, culminating as Chief Information Officer and Director, Information and Technology. From May 2007 to November 2008, she was assigned as the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations and Financial Management Chief Information Officer. From November 2008 to January 2010, she was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Financial Operations, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Comptroller, Headquarters U.S. Air Force.



Ms. Davis began her federal career as a Presidential Management Intern with the U.S. Army Information Systems Engineering Command and served in variety of positions at the U.S. Department of State, including a year in the private sector. Also, she is a 1999 graduate of the National Defense University, Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Ms. Davis, thanks for being here with us this morning. I appreciate your time. We know how busy you are, and we're grateful to have you as a guest on the ASMC podcast.

AUDREY DAVIS: Well, thank you, Tom. It's an honor for me to be here.

TOM: Ms. Davis often we invite our guests to share a little bit about their journey that has led them to their current role. Would you be willing to share a little bit about your journey with us and what brought you to your current role as the Director of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service?

AUDREY: Sure, Tom, I'll try to give you the short version. I started my federal career 37 years ago, 1985, right after I had graduated with my master's degree from the University of Oklahoma. I was accepted into an OPM, an Office of Personnel Management internship program called the Presidential Management Internship Program. That program today still exists, but it's called the Presidential Management Fellowship Program, but then we were called PMIs, presidential management interns, and that started my journey in the federal government. I went to work for an Army Lieutenant Colonel, so my dad helped me pack up my, my car and drove me across country to the East Coast to Virginia. And I started working for the Army in the Information Systems Engineering Command as an intern, learning everything about Army disbursing systems.

It was a two year internship program. As a young 24-year-old at the time, I thought, well I'll learn as much as I can and if I don't like this, I'll just go back to Oklahoma and do something else. Well, I fell in love with the work and learning about technology. Remember, this is 1985, so everyone didn't have a computer on their desk and certainly not in their hand like we do today. And so I got to learn about what it takes to put a computer on everyone's desk and especially those in the financial area who are involved in disbursing funds within the Army. In 1991, DFAS was created. I had already transitioned away from Army and DoD after my two-year internship over to the Department of State. And again, continued to expand and grow in the area of computer security.

And then DFAS was created in 1991 and I found myself, having moved from the DC area to Indianapolis where Fort Benjamin Harrison, which is now a closed base, is just outside of Indianapolis. And decided that after a five-year career in the federal government that I would quit. I moved from DC to Indianapolis because I had gotten married and my husband's job moved, and just figured I would look for something else after five years, knowing that, I had career status and could come back if that was a desire, because I hadn't really committed to this federal service as a long-term professional opportunity. So after living in Indianapolis and working for about a year for a private contractor, also supporting, now DFAS, which had just stood up an inherited the financial mission and from all of the Military Services, but in Indy at Fort Benn, which was closing from the Army and was picking up that dispersing system. I



found myself in a situation where, DFAS was looking for experience and expertise on all these financial systems that they had just inherited. And I knew enough about the Army's disbursing system, that it was an area of experience and talent that I had that DFAS was willing to hire. And so, I went to work for DFAS in 1992, a year after DFAS was stood up. And through a variety of systems, roles disbursing civilian, running CIVPAY operations getting into acquiring information technology, working in acquisition for several years. I began to look around and thought that I could. So now I'm like 10 years into working for the federal government and now DFAS and thought this could be a long-term profession for me. And so then I had the opportunity to move back from Indianapolis to DFAS headquarters when it used to be in the DC area. So, I moved back to DC to work at DFAS headquarters in the CIO, the Chief Information Officer's shop, and then had the opportunity to go away to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces which is now called the Eisenhower School over at the National Defense University. So here I was, a year away at school learning about national defense strategy and how to resource it. And so I finished that after a year with an additional master's degree in national resource strategy and came back to DFAS and was soon then promoted to my first senior executive job in December of 2000. So over 20 years ago, I'm going on 22 years at the end of this year as a senior executive. And as the Deputy Chief Information Officer in DFAS the formal title was Deputy Director of Information and Technology.

Soon after that, the current CIO retired and then I got promoted into the CIO job. I did the CIO job in DFAS for six and a half years. And by 2007, I wanted to continue to learn and grow in my career and had the opportunity to move over to the Air Force. And I went to work in Air Force financial operations as the deputy for financial operations for the Air Force with part of my portfolio was Air Force financial systems as well. And Air Force was in the beginning stages of implementing their current ERP, DEAMS. And so I worked there for a couple years and one of the things I learned about working at the Air Force was that the Air Force likes to strategically use their talent in different areas. And so, after a couple of years there, my boss the Director of Financial Operations departed and actually went to work for DFAS and I became the Director of Financial Operations for the Air Force and got to do that for another year and a half or so.

And then the Air Force called me and said, "We want you to do something else, Audrey." And was given the opportunity to work on the air staff for the Assistant Vice Chief of the Air Force as his deputy in his other role as the Director of Staff. So I became the Deputy Director of the Air Force Headquarters Staff and that was a relatively new role that the Air Force had developed to have a senior civilian in that role to support the assistant vice chief for the Air Force. And it wasn't a job that I was looking for but it ended up being one of the best jobs of my entire career.

I got to directly support the Secretary and the Chief and the Vice Chief as well as my boss, the Assistant Vice Chief of the Air Force in all matters Air Force, and really kind of took me out of my comfort level of systems, financial systems and financial operations, and thrust me into the operational Air Force and having to learn about flying hours and total force management. And I grew a tremendous amount and learned so much. And I believe to this day, it was because of that role in my five years at the Air Force that I was asked to come back to DFAS in January of 2012 to become the Principal Deputy Director of DFAS working for the then director Terri McKay.

And then fast forward nine years as being the Principal Deputy Director of DFAS, Terri McKay retired, the director retired, and I acted for about six months while, um, the search process was in play for



finding a new director of DFAS. And six months into acting, I was asked to become the director of DFAS. And I just have to tell you, I pinch myself every day because this wasn't like I laid out a plan, over a 30-year career to become the director of DFAS, but I believe all of the roles that I had the opportunity to serve in throughout my career led me to this place.

TOM: It's interesting, Ms. Davis, I mean, the first thing that I think I have to share is, it's so nice to talk to someone who started their career without a computer on every desk, because I did too, and it's getting rare to find that now.

AUDREY:

I probably just shared a little bit about my age with you.

TOM:

Yeah. I just dated myself accidentally. But no, it's exciting, and what a career, so many neat diverse experiences, which has prepared you for your current role. And I think one of the other things that really touched me was the fact that you're an inspiration for all of us, learning that you entered federal service through the Presidential Management Intern Program and now you're the director, probably the largest financial operation center in the world. I think it's an amazing journey and an inspiration. So thank you so much for sharing that with us.

AUDREY: Absolutely.

TOM: So Ms. Davis, I'm not sure if all of our listeners understand the incredible size, scope and scale of DFAS' operations. In preparing for our conversation, I pulled some information from fiscal year '21, which I think is amazing. And just want to share a little bit of that with you. So in 2021, DFAS processed 155 million pay transactions, paid 11.9 million commercial invoices, made 4.2 million travel payments, made 613 billion in disbursements, made 147 billion in intragovernmental payments, maintained 77 million general ledger accounts, accounted for 1,411 active DoD appropriations, managed 23 billion in accounts receivable, managed 1.4 trillion in military retirement and health benefits funds and managed foreign military sales cases reimbursed by federal governments valued at \$639 billion. I guess that supports my earlier claim that DFAS truly has to be one of the largest financial operations centers in the world. It's an amazing effort and the size, scope and scale is incredible.

AUDREY: Tom, yes. You are correct. We are the largest financial operation in the entire world. And I just have to tell you I remember one of the things that, the director of DFAS said the one just prior to me, Terri McKay. She said, when she became the director of DFAS, she felt like the weight of the world was on her shoulders. And I just have to tell you, I didn't fully understand or appreciate that comment at the time that she made it, but I live it every day that I get to lead the largest financial operation in the world. And when I first became an SES the director of DFAS then was a gentleman by the name of Tom Bloom and he always used to say that he had the best job in town being the director of DFAS. And I embrace



that and absolutely agree. This is the best job to have in the entire Department of Defense, and when we say in town, in this national capital region.

And the workforce that enables the operation of DFAS that really supports financial operations for the entire Department of Defense set up to improve financial services and standardize financial services and reduce the cost of financial services within the department of defense is the best workforce and leadership team I have had the opportunity to be a part of and engage with across my entire career. And I just have to tell you that I often will say the leadership team, that I have and the entire DFAS workforce, 11,000 of them are the best workforce, I believe, in the entire federal government and the Department of Defense, and I would put them up against anyone.

TOM: It's so great to hear the pride that you have in your team, and clearly, they're doing a great job with the numbers that we just read earlier. Ms. Davis let's talk about some of your recent activity. It looks like DFAS recently launched its five-year strategic plan at the beginning of fiscal '22. How does it support the National Defense Strategy?

AUDREY: So thank you for that question Tom. At first, I would say that if you think about what the end goal is for the entire financial community within DoD, which DFAS is a major player in we're here really to help unify and like I said earlier, standardize and simplify the enterprise services that support the enterprise financial services that support the defense mission. And recently I was a part of a panel in the rollout of the DOD financial management strategy, and the director of Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment on the joint staff said "As I look at every problem that we have, I see it as our ability to serve the customer and the customer for all of us is really at the pointy end of the spear at the ships at sea with the squadron, soldiers on the ground and meeting the operational needs of the war fighter."

So, the linkage of the DFAS strategy to the National Defense Strategy, I think is absolutely key and really goes to a statement that is included in the fact sheet that came out. It's the only unclassified description of the National Defense Strategy that's out there today. But the statement included in there is that the National Defense Strategy with its comprehensive and integrated review ensures tight linkages between strategy and our resources. So from that standpoint, when you think about the defense priorities are to defend the homeland, deterring strategic attacks against the United States, our allies and partners, deterring aggression and building a resilient joint force and defense ecosystem. The DFAS strategy in executing the financial operation mission on behalf of the Department of Defense and all of our components within DoD really is the helping with the execution in the financial stewardship the execution of those resources to enable the Department of Defense to execute the National Defense Strategies in the four priorities I just summarized.

TOM: Thank you, Ms. Davis, for sharing that. I also noted that OSD recently released the DoD financial management strategy. So, two questions, first, does the DFAS strategy align with the DoD financial management strategy? And second, can you tell us what your four priorities are and share how they support the DoD financial management strategy?

AUDREY: Tom, absolutely. So an answer to your first question does the DFAS strategy support the DoD financial management strategy? Absolutely. The DOD financial management strategy was developed in a



collaborative way amongst all the components within DOD, DFAS included. So while we rolled out, our current five-year strategy out in October of last year, we were in close collaboration with the DOD FM strategy and able to ensure that we were, in alignment with our strategic priorities and the goals and initiatives that were exercising, as a part of our strategy. And especially as we laid out the first-year business plan to execute the DFAS strategy. So, absolutely tightly aligned. And I often, ask the question and review the strategic initiatives that we have underway, not just in light of, are they accomplishing the goals and outcomes we expect from our DFAS strategy, but what's that linkage back to the DoD FM strategy, and how are we enabling the success of the overall DoD FM strategy?

So, with that regard, let me just real quickly just mention the four DFAS priorities, and then draw a linkage of those with the five DoD FM strategic goals. So, the DFAS four strategic priorities are, one, to strengthen customer partnerships to work closely with each of our customers on helping them to be successful with their strategic goals and objectives. And then secondly, we talked a minute ago about the strong workforce within DFAS and how proud I am of them. Well, our second priority is to invest in our people. So, ensuring that they're equipped with all the right tools and skills and knowledge, to be able to execute the mission of DFAS and providing financial services, but also to be able to partner with our customers and support our customers and help them be successful.

Our third priority is to enhance our overall performance because as a share service provider, we don't want to sit back on our laurels and pat ourselves on the back and say, yeah, we did a great job. We got out all those payments billions of dollars of payments last year, and say, we're done with it. We have to continue to be better. So, we're constantly looking at our overall performance from a cost, schedule, and accuracy standpoint and looking for how can we improve and enhance our overall performance. And then finally, the fourth priority is to modernize the business environment. So modernize in a way that simplifies it, reduces systems takes advantage of emerging technologies and capabilities that really helps in all of the other areas, enhance our performance increase the skill level and expertise of our workforce and better serve our customers.

So let me just real quickly highlight the linkages of our priorities with the DoD FM strategy. And I'll do that from the standpoint of the DOD FM strategy and take it in the order that their priorities are laid out or from a DOD perspective. So, the first FM strategic goal is to invest in people and that aligns or our is, actually the first FM strategic goal is to cultivate a skilled and inspired FM workforce, which aligns with the DFAS to invest in people priority. And within the DOD FM strategy it talks to the skills that are needed to be successful 10 years ago, are different from the skills that we need to remain successful over the next 10 years. So the DoD FM strategic goal focus is all on ensuring our passionate and dedicated workforce is trained, prepared, and motivated.

And within our our DFAS invest in people priority we're focused on increasing our skill sets in the data analytics area, and in fact, have just recently taken advantage of the newly created office of personnel management occupational series for data analytics. The 1560, series. And we're starting to recruit for data scientists and analysts within that career series, so that we can add that expertise to our workforce. Just as one example of how we're investing in our people. And then from an overall leadership standpoint, we're assessing the data literacy of our leadership team. We talked about how long I've served in the federal government and a lot of the technology we're using today wasn't even available, or



thought of back when I started my career. So, we need to continue to evolve our leadership team as well as the broader workforce from a digital perspective and literacy perspective.

So just a couple of areas that we're focusing on identifying gaps and so that we can close those gaps and develop our overall workforce. The second FM strategic goal is to optimize taxpayer dollars for the highest value outcomes, which links directly to our enhanced, the DFAS enhanced performance priority and the DoD FM strategic goal in this area really it focuses in on the bread and butter for FM workforce. I mean that's why we're here as federal servants as financial stewards of the resources that we're entrusted with every day. And so, it's our job and our obligation to optimize the taxpayers dollars to the highest value outcomes for the department. And recently the Deputy Undersecretary Comptroller, Ms. Kathleen Miller stated, honing in on and focusing on budget execution to visibility is critical. And this means that through better visibility and access to authoritative data, we have the opportunity to improve our accuracy and timeliness and reduce the number of labor hours that we spend on repetitive task.

And so one of the ways that we're supporting this through our enhanced performance priority is that we're looking ahead to fiscal year 26 as a part of this strategic priority to achieve, cost schedule and performance targets through the delivery of efficient, value-added services. And two initiatives that we're working on in this area at this fiscal year in particular include one that we've just recently began the implementation of at the beginning of April, is transit the current contract pay system that many people know as MOCA, uh, for both Air Force and Navy to daily reporting. And then the Navy ashore to daily reporting in our deployable disbursing system. And these efforts are improving added ability for both the air force and the navy by simplifying in streamlining dispersing processes and eliminating unmatched disbursements. In other words, providing better visibility and access to authoritative data.

The third FM strategic goal is focused on increasing the integrity of financial results which links directly to our strengthened customer partnership priority that we're focused on in DFAS. The DoD FM strategic goal in this area is really about achieving the department-wide audit. And while some success has taken place, we've had a tremendous amount of success over the past several years, there's still much to be done. So again, looking ahead to fiscal year '26, we're looking to implement innovative customer-oriented solutions to improve efficiency and partnership with each of our customers in this area of audit, because the audit really is about while there's a report card, if you will, an opinion provided by an independent auditor it really is about strengthening the controls in our processes in our systems and becoming more efficient in the delivery of financial services and the accountability of the financial resources that we're entrusted with.

And so we're intentionally partnering with our customers to support their audit roadmaps that they have developed and engaging with them on developing customer-oriented solutions that will allow them to strengthen and really strengthen for the entire department our financial management controls and improved processes. And so by strategically targeting material weaknesses we're making progress toward an unmodified opinion component by component within the department. And this year we're working in close partnership with both the Air Force in DISA to downgrade the fund balance with treasury material weakness for each of them which in the end will, is about improving processes, transparency and strengthening our internal controls and having better visibility into our cash processes and alignment with the department of treasury.



The fourth financial management strategic goal is focused on simplifying and optimizing the end-to-end business environment. And this links directly to the deepest priority, modernize the business environment. And so, the DOD FM, goal in this area is about rapidly decreasing vulnerable systems, increasing cybersecurity and investing in modern technological solutions. And under Secretary Miller recently said that the department has long been challenged by non-compliant, non-secure technology that impedes our efforts to streamline and integrate operation, and also leads us to not have the most accurate DoD financial information. And so, this goal is about changing that environment and within DFAS, we're focused on modernizing our environment by focusing on commercial cloud deployment reducing legacy systems. Our last five-year strategy, we were successful in eliminating 20 legacy systems. And we have as a part of this current five-year strategy to eliminate another 15 systems two of which will be eliminated this fiscal year. So, we're already well on our way to that 15 reduction goal.

And then finally leveraging more current technology like robotics process automation and artificial intelligence in a cognitive services technology way. And so, we're looking to optimize our end-to-end processes within DFAS and DOD by leveraging by eliminating old systems, but leveraging emerging technologies. And then finally the fifth FM strategic goal is to empower data-driven, fiscally informed decision-making, and that goal links also to our priority with strengthening customer partnerships. So, the DOD FM goal in this area is that financial transactions will be created, or are created every time we do business across the department. So the need for standards around data management, data quality, governance, and the application of analytical processes is critical.

In this strategic priority strengthen customer partnerships and in support of that goal we're leveraging the advanced data analytics for business insights leveraging the Advana tool which is the consolidation of not just financial data, but, a lot of the data within the Department of Defense and specifically we're using it to supporting partnership to support the audit efforts of each of our customers and leveraging that data capability as the full universe of transactions for each of our customers, and migrating any reconciliations of data to that environment, to ensure that we have strong data integrity, which really, well, underpins the execution of this strategic goal. So, I took a lot of time to talk, not just about our four strategic priorities, but the linkages to the DOD FM five strategic goals. But hopefully that gives you a feel for how tightly linked and how we're executing within the framework of both.

TOM: Thank you, Ms. Davis for taking the time to do that. You can really see how synergistic they are. And one of the things that jumped out to me was how you started, and both plans actually start with investing in people. And I read an article from an organizational psychologist that said people are more important than ideas because people create ideas. And I think by having that as your platform, those innovative ideas are going to come from your people, which are going to inform, better the increase the ability to strengthen customer partnerships, enhance performance, and modernize the business environment. So, I thought it was very insightful how you connected those two together. Ms. Davis, we've talked about the DFAS, how the DFAS strategy aligns with the National Defense Strategy and the DoD Financial Management strategy. Equally important is that the execution of the strategy must create value for your customers. How is DFAS's strategic plan supporting its customers in achieving their goals?

AUDREY: Yes. So, I mentioned a couple areas and let me just add a few more because we have initiatives strategic initiatives underway that really are supporting all of our customers, the major military services,



as well as the defense agencies within the department. So, one of the ones I mentioned earlier was our support to both Air Force and DISA in helping them to reduce the material weakness and fund balance with Treasury this fiscal year. So, we're well on track with that. Of course, it's up to the auditors to grade our work at the end of the year. But we are tightly monitoring that, working in close partnership with both Air Force in DISA to support them in being successful in downgrading that material weakness this year. The United States Marine Corps just implemented the Defense Agency Initiative, which is an ERP that has been implemented across what we call the fourth estate, all defense agencies. DFAS is going on DAI at the end of this year this fiscal year.

And so, we're supporting the United States Marine Corps as a part of their migration to DAI and helping them be successful in using DAI to actually build Marine Corps trial balances for financial reporting and being able to deploy and support their audit success in the coming years. And then for the Army we're specifically working with them on a capability that was developed to help streamline and reduce the amount of errors and improve the turnaround time on travel payments to our service members and their families. It's a capability called SmartVoucher, and we're deploying that to all Army locations, including Fort Hood, Fort Stewart and overseas locations, and expect to be complete with that by the end of this fiscal year.

I mentioned our reduced legacy systems initiative a large part of that success that we've had in the past has been through our close partnership with the Navy because their strategy was to reduce the multiple general ledger systems that they had within the Navy and get to a single general ledger system. Well, in that close partnership we were able to reduce much of our 2020 systems that we've already retired a lot of them was because of that partnership with the Navy. And, and one of our current initiatives that we're working on to improve data and our data accuracy is the implementation of soft edits in our departmental reporting system for key attributes that will help improve our overall DoD data integrity. And we began a partnership with the United States Core of Engineers, and we were able to implement these soft edits and begin to, instead of getting in missing or bad data coming into the financial reporting system to clean that up.

Now the Core of Engineers has had a clean audit opinion for several years now. And so, this clean-up of their data was critical for them and fit nicely and they were able to become what we call a pathfinder in this effort of developing and using soft edits. There may become a time where we'll take these soft edits and turn them into hard edits. So, if we get bad data coming in, we'll reject it, but we don't want to break processes. We want to, work to improve and strengthen them before we have to go to that next step of a hard edit. And so we just recently, after the success we had with the core of engineers we looked at all of the ERPs within the department that are on our standard financial infrastructure data SFIS at the level 10, SFIS 10. So, all of those organizations who are on systems at SFIS, we were able to implement these soft edits for. And through training with the components, Air Force, Navy, Army, we're helping to educate them on, what data is missing, what data is wrong, and inform them through these soft edits, where the errors are occurring so that they can be corrected at the source.

And then when the data comes in through their trial balances, from their ERPs into the departmental reporting system, the data will flow in cleanly. And it will not only just streamline our processes but reduce the amount of reconciliations that have to be done and, manual work that will have to be done and will just be done in a more automated and efficient way. So I think I covered all of the military



services and a few of the defense agencies were in close partnership with DLA as well as the major commands SOCOM, helping them with the development of their universal transactions and improving their reconciliation processes in TRANSCOM as well. So DFAS is often identified as critical to, all of the component audits, and we take that role very seriously and want to be an enabler for each of our customers in, foster their success.

TOM: It was really nice to hear how you're able to partner with your customers regardless of where they are in their financial improvement journey, even organizations that have a clean financial statement opinion, you're still finding the ability to provide value to them. Ms. Davis, we like to wrap up each episode with some advice for our early careerist that are listening. Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give early careerist who are just starting their career?

AUDREY: So the advice that I would give to early careerist, first, I would say, enjoy the journey. There's no cookie cutter approach to anyone's career. Everyone is unique. Everyone brings unique skills and expertise and knowledge to whatever mission you find yourself in. And I would say first, I would say, find a way to embrace the mission that you're supporting and enjoy the journey because we spend, we spend a lot of time in our work lives I mean, it's over a third of our lives, right?

And it's just it's a lot of time not to enjoy it. And if you're enjoying the work that you do you're going to bring a level of passion and energy and innovation and insight to it that will be able to propel improvements and success in everything that you do. So that would be my first advice, enjoy the journey. Find a way to embrace the mission and be passionate about it.

The second would be to be open and flexible to the opportunities that come your way and whatever that means for you. If you're asked to take on a new project, take on that new project because you're going to learn and grow. If you're asked to get out of your, your comfort zone, that's when you do learn and grow and expand and you, and you gain a broader insight and perspective that helps you bring that to any new problem, or challenge that you might have to solve. And you can look at it in a different way and work with others to continue solving problems and moving forward.

So, my second advice would be, be flexible and open to new opportunities and growing and taking on new challenges and doing new things. Never stop learning, and I think that's part of being willing to take on new challenges and opportunities. And when your boss or a senior leader comes to you and says, I need your expertise in an area that you're not familiar with, be willing to take, to not just take a chance on, on working on the project that you're being asked to move to, take a chance on yourself and be open and willing to grow in that experience. So be flexible throughout your career so that you can do that.

And then finally, I would say continue to network and get to know people along the way. I often say that I don't know who my friends would be if I, if I wasn't working, because many of my long-time friends and mentors are people that have either been former bosses or former colleagues. And you just sort of forge a relationship with people that you're in the trenches with and that when you, when you've solved really hard problems together and you get to know each other, those become lasting and long-time friendships, in many ways, mentors, to you along your journey, people who have different experiences and perspectives that can help you when you're in need of a different experience and perspective. And



there are lots of ways to network and get to know people certainly in the office environment, but also joining professional organizations. And there are a lot of them out there.

I know for me being involved in ASMC and AGA and AFCEA and there just are a number of ways to engage your colleagues in different environments, than the actual, work environment. So those are probably the three top areas. And if I was going to add a fourth, I would say, find ways to give back because we're entrusted with a tremendous amount of responsibility and resources in this environment. And I just tell you, I feel extremely blessed in the career that I've had. If I wasn't out, out for the year that I was out during my career, this would be my 37th year. I'm coming up on 36 years of career service. And I've had, an awesome, awesome career and I'm looking forward to a few more years as well.

And I would just say that I feel like we have an obligation to give back and help others. So be willing to give someone else a hand and bring them along and give them advice and give them some of your time, give them your ear to listen to and just give back so that. One of the things I learned very early in my career is to never leave whether it's a job, or a project I was working on the same way that I found it. Leave it better. And way that you do that is that you work on continuous improvement of yourself and the environment, and then give back to allow others to do the same thing,

TOM:

Ms. Davis, I think that's great advice for all of us. Thank you so much for, for sharing that. And I know how busy you are, and I just really do personally, and on behalf of ASMC want to thank you for your time today and supporting the ASMC All Things Financial Management Podcast. So thank you very much.

AUDREY: Thank you, Tom. It was a pleasure and my apologies for going long.

TOM: It was wonderful. I really appreciated it. Thank you.

AUDREY:

Absolutely. Thank you. And, and thank you for inviting me to join you.