

## 2010 Readership Survey Results

As many of you know, we recently conducted a readership survey to gauge the ongoing value of *Army AL&T Magazine*, to solicit feedback on how to improve the publication, and to identify topics that readers would like to see covered in 2011 and 2012.

First, I would like to thank the 857 readers who responded to the survey. It took some time and effort to do so, and we sincerely appreciate the feedback, especially to our appeal for suggestions on how to improve *Army AL&T Magazine* and ideas for future articles. Second, I want to express my gratitude for the insight, creativity, and fresh perspectives that respondents brought to the table.

Of the 828 respondents who stated that they read *Army AL&T Magazine* regularly, almost 91 percent rated the overall quality of the publication between good and excellent. While proud of that response, we did not overlook the fact that another group totaling almost 5 percent rated the content as merely fair, and that almost 1 percent rated the content as poor. Nor did we fail to recognize that even the most congratulatory respondents made recommendations for how to improve the publication.

To keep *Army AL&T Magazine* informative, relevant, and compelling, we are committed to satisfying as many reader concerns and recommendations as possible. Given the scope of the publication's mandate, the direction we receive from our Editorial Advisory Board, and the wide variety of professionals who read *Army AL&T Magazine*, we realize that we will never meet all requirements in a single issue. Over the course of a year, however, we set out to cover major topics of interest to our readers. Some of the more frequently recommended topics include career development for both civilian and military personnel; the impact of acquisition, logistics, and technology (AL&T) activities on the lives of deployed personnel; and best practices and candid lessons learned.

We also received several editorial recommendations, from perspectives we might consider more frequently to better ways to distribute the magazine. Some of the more common include:

- Provide more “voice from the field” perspectives. As one respondent stated, “I want to know what our [S]oldiers think about their equipment—what they like, don't like, things to improve, features to make their lives easier, what they don't have now but need, and what they have now but don't use.”
- Include vantage points of the average AL&T Workforce member. While attention to leadership is obviously essential, perspectives of others in the workforce are important as we present an all-encompassing examination of AL&T subjects—as one reader put it, “field interviews [with workforce members]

other than supervisory.” Another advised us to consider “military and civilians in the workforce—not the top brass—to highlight accomplishments of the younger workforce.”

- Ensure that readers are aware that the publication is available in electronic format as well as hardcopy. Obtaining a hard-copy magazine can sometimes prove a burden, as indicated by 24 percent of respondents who advised that *Army AL&T Magazine* is difficult to acquire. With the publication also available electronically (at <http://asc.army.mil/altmag>), readers can access current and archived issues 24/7.

In addition, we noted areas where we still have room to improve.

Regarding the magazine's clarity of writing, 81 percent of respondents rated our writing as either clear or very clear. While almost 40 percent rated this aspect “5 out of 5,” approximately 41 percent rated the publication's writing clarity at “4.” This indicates that there is still room for improvement. The nature of many AL&T subjects covered in the magazine is complex, but we will work to ensure that the complexities are addressed in sufficient detail without succumbing to the techno-jargon and rhetorical flourish that so often render such articles tedious or difficult to comprehend.

Readers would also prefer more straightforward assessment and reporting. As one respondent stated, “be brutally honest on why programs succeed or fail.” We recognize that readers gain more from forthright program assessments, and we will remain vigilant to avoid stylistic or substantive hyperbole.

And while several respondents recommended cutting back on what is perceived as “marketing” or “self-congratulatory” writing, others commented on the critical role the magazine plays in communicating the importance of the AL&T community to warfighters, the Army, DOD, Congress, and the public. Communicating the value of what we do as a community is undoubtedly necessary and an important function of the magazine. However, self-promotion must be approached carefully and will always come second to factual reporting. We will focus on straightforward writing and reporting, with lower tolerance for self-aggrandizement.

To all of our readers, then, and with a heartfelt “thank you” to those who participated in this survey, we pledge in the coming months to redouble our efforts to remain your principal connection to all things Army AL&T.

We will continue striving to deliver a top-quality publication every issue, through fully researched, well-written, germane, and informative articles, interviews, and columns. Again, my thanks to every reader who responded, and to all readers who look to this magazine for pertinent, compelling information and discussion.

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