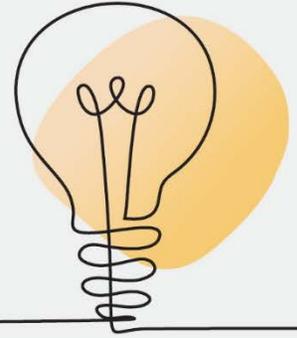


# Podcast transcript

## Institutional readiness in the face of COVID-19: The experience of National Defence | Recovery



June 2020

### *Musical intro*

#### **Yvon Audette:**

Welcome to part three of our podcast, Institutional Readiness to COVID-19: The Experience of National Defence. In part two, we learned about the resilient core of National Defence and the great example of the technology enablement that they undertook in order to make that happen.

#### **Yvon Audette:**

I'm your host today, Yvon Audette, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of KPMG's Management Consulting Practice in Canada. And over the course of the series, we'll be speaking with Len Bastien, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer, Sophie Martel, Director General of Information Management Technology & Strategic Planning, and Major General Andrew Jayne, Chief of Staff, Information Management and Incoming Cyber Force Commander for the Canadian Armed Forces.

#### **Yvon Audette:**

As a quick recap, I want to make sure everybody is oriented to the KPMG four phases of this pandemic. I'm just going to give a brief overview for context in the discussions to follow.

#### **Yvon Audette:**

The four R's include reaction, how to respond to the crisis, resilience manage through the uncertainty, recovery, identify the opportunities, and new reality, adapt to the new world.

#### **Yvon Audette:**

In this installment, we're going to explore the recovery phase with Major General Andrew Jayne. So Major General Jayne, what conditions were set before COVID-19 to really put you in perfect response for the recovery phase, as we described?

#### **Major General Andrew Jayne:**

Yvonne, thank you very much. From our perspective, and from a military perspective in the group, the conditions that we set was to, as I spoke about before, establish a central

operations center based on one of our divisions. And we manned that to make sure that all of our critical communication systems were functioning and available, ready to support CAF operation, and departmental business. As you've heard, the majority of our workforce stayed at home, we needed them healthy and ready to come in when necessary. And only those that absolutely needed to be at work to support those critical services came in. And this overall was a small portion of the Force.

#### **Major General Andrew Jayne:**

We established two teams working on two weeks shifts to run this operation center. And they participated in all the planning efforts with the Canadian Armed Forces. They were there to make sure the communication systems kept running, and to make sure that they did that we pulled people from lower priority work and quickly reoriented them to these important tasks.

#### **Major General Andrew Jayne:**

We determined that some services were designed for a different reality, as you've heard before. For example, video conferencing capabilities were predominantly available just in our workspaces, in our offices. And teleconference capabilities were quickly maxed out. And so the available remote connections to a primary platform were in very, very high demand. And I think we were able to respond very, very well to that.

#### **Major General Andrew Jayne:**

And so after protecting our people, enabling that connectivity and remote work to support operations and the ongoing business really was our primary focus.

#### **Yvon Audette:**

Thank you very much. Sounds absolutely fascinating. So Major General Andrew Jayne, many commercial organizations have found that like the Department of National Defence, and Canadian Armed Forces, have had to pivot quickly to a more

centralized command and control-like governance model to ensure the coordination necessary to rapidly adapt.

**Yvon Audette:**

We'd like to hear what has happened, or is ongoing in Canadian Armed Forces exclusively, that all organizations could learn from. Can you share anything with us that is not confidential about the planning that you underwent?

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

I guess I would start by saying that establish hierarchy and planning process to deal with large catastrophic events. And so we didn't really have to adjust our processes, our system of command and control, or planning. We just had to kick it into high gear and orient it towards this problem set.

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

We've already started the planning for recovery, but we're not quite there yet. But as we start to envision how people are going to come back to work, for people to come back, be safe, contribute, and carry on with the business of Defence and our operational missions, it's quite an undertaking.

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

But I guess the thing I would say is that it's a natural reaction for people, for many businesses and organizations, to try to quickly return to the old way of doing business. And I think in times like this, it's very understandable and natural.

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

However, we really need to take this new reality into account. There will be a new normal. And returning to the old way of doing business is neither practical, nor progressive. And so I think some of the systems and the processes that we've started already, and that you've heard about, are going to play a huge part in this new reality.

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

We've begun to imagine returning to work, and increasing the ability to telecommute. And that's guiding our thoughts. We're continuing to enable Defence team members to work remotely, either from home, or any other location. And this provides increased flexibility and resilience for the Canadian Armed Forces, and for the department.

**Major General Andrew Jayne:**

So many of the things we do are hands on, as you might imagine, they involve teams, they require personal contact and interactions, but I would say for every CAF member or Defence team member that we can remotely enable, we're lowering the risk to them and to the remainder of the team. And I'm quite pleased to see these advances, and I look forward to the future.

**Yvon Audette:**

Thank you so much for sharing your story major general. When you were talking, it really had me reflect on the KPMG story, and how we quickly mobilized across the organization. I talked a little bit about the rollout of Teams for 9,000 employees. We, over a 24 hour period, the consulting practice a little over a thousand people across the country, established a series of pods, and pods in groups of 20, either functionally or regionally, that allow us to stay connected to our people. So thank you very much for really reminding me of what feels like a year ago, but it was only actually less than eight weeks ago.

**Yvon Audette:**

And thank you to everyone, better than any organization the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces understands the need to be institutionally ready for anything, and will be a North Star for others to follow. We look forward to hearing more of your story in our next installment, Part Four: The New Reality.

*Muical exit*