

Discovering similarities between the military and freight rail

Kelly King



Director of Network Planning
Kansas City Southern
Kansas City, MO
10 months in the industry
5 years in the military
Base: Fort Drum, NY

As a 2005 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point who later served in Iraq and South Korea, former army Captain Kelly King feels at home when working at Kansas City Southern (KCS) headquarters in Kansas City, MO. "I didn't know anything about the industry, but found it had a similar working environment to the military," says King, now director of network planning for KCS. "The work is 24/7 and it's a close knit community. Everyone is responsible, everyone is important and everybody counts."

King came to KCS through [Orion International](#), a military recruitment company. After three weeks of job hunting, she landed an interview and was hired by the railroad. "Veterans are hard-working, adaptable and have vast experience in the planning, coordination and execution of operations, making them perfectly suited to the freight rail industry," says Mike Starich, Orion's president.

Promoted to the network planning position in September 2011, King now coordinates train movements of bulk commodities like rock, coal and grain, matching the right trains with the

right customers. Scheduling leave for five to six hundred soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division in Iraq gave King solid experience in managing people, a skill she's had to rely upon in her new job. "In the military you all work together as a team," she says. "It's very important that you foster the one goal, one team mentality."

At the end of the day, King goes home to her husband, an army captain assigned to Fort Riley, KS, and their first house, a four-bedroom colonial they hope to fix up and fill. Luckily for her, the KCS job makes her eager to go into work each day. "As in the military, many of my coworkers have 20-plus years of experience, and people like me have a lot to learn," she says. "My daily goal is to be an active and productive member of the team, to come in and give everything I have."

<http://www.aar.org/Military-Faces/King-Kelly.aspx>