Strategy Research Project

Winning Teams for a Complex World

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Class of 2016

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A
Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 01-04-2016	2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Winning Teams for a Complex World

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
Colonel Steven J. Adams
United States Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Dr. Richard Meinhart

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.
Please consider submitting to DTIC for worldwide availability? **YES:** ☒ **or NO:** ☐ **(student check one)**
Project Adviser recommends DTIC submission? **YES:** ☒ **or NO:** ☐ **(PA check one)**

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Word Count: 6,449

14. ABSTRACT

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15. SUBJECT TERMS
Leadership, Command Climate, Self-Assessment, Trust, Commitment, Purpose, Communication, MSAF360

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU	UU	32	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(w/ area code)*

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8/98), Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

Winning Teams for a Complex World

(6,449 words)

Abstract

Winning in a complex world requires more than highly trained, educated, and experienced individual soldiers and leaders. While our greatest asset is the American Soldier, the Army is a team of teams and winning depends on how effectively Army leaders are able to harness the collective knowledge and power of teams to achieve success. Cohesive and effective teams provide a competitive advantage to the Army as it navigates through a complex and rapidly changing strategic environment. Building winning teams requires growing effective leaders, creating a positive command climate, and placing a greater focus on the team rather than the individual. From a review of academic leadership concepts, effective leaders focus on trust, commitment, purpose, and communication when developing quality teams. To better develop the next generation of Army leaders to build winning teams for a complex world, the Army should mandate command climate surveys at the Brigade and Battalion level; update ADP 6-22, Army Leadership, to reflect a greater emphasis on teams; and mandate that leaders conduct a follow-up personalized assessment with professional coaches as part of the MSAF360 Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback.

Winning Teams for a Complex World

An Army is a team. It lives, sleeps, eats, and fights as a team.

—GEN George S. Patton[1]

Winning in a complex world requires more than highly trained, educated, and experienced individual soldiers and leaders. While our greatest asset is the American Soldier, the Army is a team of teams and winning depends on how effectively Army leaders are able to harness the collective knowledge and power of teams to achieve success. As a guiding principle of Mission Command, building cohesive and effective teams provides a competitive advantage to the Army as it navigates through a complex and rapidly changing strategic environment. With reductions in force structure and overall end-strength, the Army must develop the most effective and high-performance teams to accomplish the toughest missions. This paper provides team focused recommendations to Army senior leaders to consider in order to better prepare the Army for 21st century challenges.

To explore the vital role of winning teams in enabling Mission Command, this paper will briefly describe the current strategic environment. The paper will then focus on defining winning teams and their relevance in enabling Mission Command before examining how the Army currently addresses teams in senior leader guidance and doctrine. From a review of academic leadership concepts, I will identify key themes the Army needs to consider to build winning teams for the future. Finally, the paper will conclude by providing recommendations to enable the Army to capitalize on team-focused competencies to create a strategic advantage in today's complex world.

Strategic Environment

In the 2015 National Military Strategy (NMS), General Dempsey opens his

forward with "Today's global security environment is the most unpredictable I have seen

in 40 years of service."[2] The NMS defines the strategic environment as complex and

rapidly changing driven by globalization, the diffusion of technology, and demographic

shifts.[3] These drivers allow people and ideas to travel further and faster than ever

before. Technological innovation is providing unprecedented capabilities to smaller

states and even non-state actors. Growing youth populations in weak and failing states

are straining their state's resources and causing challenges in neighboring states as

individuals move across borders in search of a higher standard of living.

According to the 2015 Army Vision, the United States will likely face an unstable,

unpredictable, increasingly complex global security environment shaped by the

following emergent trends: the rise of non-state actors, an increase in hybrid threats,

state challenges to the international order, and expanding urbanization.[4] Non-state

actors, enabled by ease of worldwide communications and driven by ideologies that are

separate from the state, are challenging stability in states with weak governments.

Hybrid threats, which combine the effects of conventional and irregular forces as well as

terrorist and criminal activities, increase the environment's complexity. States like

Russia and China are challenging the international order for the same fundamental

reasons that Thucydides identified nearly 2,500 years ago: fear, honor, and interests.[5]

Over the next decade more of the population will relocate into urban environments

causing overcrowding and increased competition for jobs. This will challenge states to

provide the essentials of subsistence and security to their populations. The Army

Operating Concept goes further to define complex as "an environment that is not only unknown, but unknowable, and constantly changing."[6]

Anticipating how to address future conflict is a significant challenge but one that Army leaders must continue to plan and prepare for regardless of its complex and ambiguous nature. As our first President and Commander-in-Chief recognized, "to be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving the peace."[7] Winning in a complex world depends upon how effectively Army leaders are able to harness the collective knowledge, skills, and attributes of the team to achieve more than ever possible at the individual level. Building cohesive, effective, and winning teams provide a competitive advantage in solving the wicked problems that lie ahead.

Why Teams?

Twenty-first century complexities necessitate a greater understanding of how to truly develop effective Army leaders across many areas. While the Army has made great strides in producing highly talented leaders with unmatched skills during the past fifteen years of war, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, it is worth exploring the idea that the Army is generally more focused on individual leadership skills than on developing leaders capable of building winning teams. Simply developing talented individuals is not enough to be successful in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world.[8] Winning in a complex world requires effective teams that are able to harness the collective efforts of teams to achieve higher levels of performance than would ever be possible by an assembly of individuals.

A collection of quality individuals formed together does not by itself make a team; it takes much more than that. This is what General McChrystal refers to as the dream team fallacy in which a team is not just the sum of its parts and simply having talent is

not enough.[9] Teams require more than raw material to be effective. A team requires strong, committed leaders and team members that understand how to work effectively together to accomplish challenging missions in the most difficult circumstances. They attain a special relationship where the contribution of each team member is complementary to the common goal. In his book *The Wisdom of Teams*, J.R. Katzenbach provides an excellent definition of team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."[10] This definition captures the essence of a true team; hence the challenge then is how to turn an ordinary team into one that reflects this definition.

The Army is a very large organization that is comprised of many different units with numerous skills sets that work together to achieve a common purpose of fighting and winning our nation's wars. Some would even argue that the Army is a team of teams. There are countless examples of professional teams that perform at very high levels and others that perform at very low levels. Many Army leaders are remarkable at turning an average unit into a highly successful one. Unfortunately, a low percentage of Army leaders still do not possess the requisite leadership skills to develop high performing teams.[11] Army leader development programs that focus too much on individual leadership skills and not enough on the leadership skills necessary to build winning teams may be a root cause.

Many organizations talk about the importance of teams and teamwork but primarily reward individual achievement and promote people who sometimes resist the idea of tying their performance to that of others.[12] Empowering subordinates or other

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team members puts control in the hands of others. For many junior and mid-grade officers, they achieved success by closely managing and completing tasks without a tremendous need to rely on others to share in the workload. However, as a leader continues to rise and the future operating environment becomes more uncertain and complex, the individual leader is less likely to be able to address this complexity. The leader must then be able to leverage the collective power of a high performing team, that is, if the Army has taught he or she that people and teams truly matter.

Leadership and Team Behavior

Significant research suggests that successful leaders perform both task and person-focused leadership behaviors; however, behaviors oriented towards the person have approximately double the effect on team productivity when compared to task-focused behaviors.[13] Both are extremely important because organizations want to get results and accomplish their stated mission or goals. Nevertheless, people are the invaluable resource that must be trained and educated to successfully accomplish increasingly difficult tasks over time. "People are the basis of all military organizations, and military operations occur as human interactions."[14] If the team is to deal effectively with complexity and uncertainty, they must be given the opportunity to do so by leaders that value their contributions and aid in their personal development.

Leaders that focus almost solely on task-focused behaviors are still often successful. However, too great a focus on the task can come at the expense of people. If the people become undervalued then the entire performance of the team will start to break down. Nevertheless, this creates a dynamic in which the leader drives the completion of all tasks. "Many leaders get to the top by imposing their will on others,

even destroying people standing in their way."[15] Absent the presence of this leader, the team is no longer effective.

Findings from the 2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL), which surveyed 16,796 active duty and reserve component Army soldiers and 6,469 Army civilians, indicate that only about two-thirds of leaders are rated effective at developing subordinates.[16] One third of an Army of more than a million soldiers is a significant number of soldiers that are not having their developmental needs met. Nearly half of those surveyed also indicated that their counseling was too infrequent and only about half felt that the feedback they did receive was useful.[17] It is not easy for some leaders to look directly into the eyes of their subordinates and clearly articulate their strengths and weaknesses. An Army leader deficiency in developing others is not a new phenomenon; it persists as the lowest rated leader attribute and competency since the CASAL began in 2005.[18] Nevertheless, the Army cannot afford a third of the force receiving inadequate leader development. The future force must be better and more effective than today in order to be successful in an increasingly uncertain world with declining resources.

Negative Leadership

While Army leadership is generally viewed as extremely positive, approximately 15 to 20 percent of leaders are considered negative or counter-productive.[19] Army leadership is defined as the "process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."[20] Negative leadership has a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of individual and team performance. Poor leaders destroy morale, commitment to the team, and personal motivation. When individuals are put down, intimidated, or simply dread coming to work

each day, job performance and unit cohesion suffer. When negative leadership is taken to the extreme, it is labeled toxic leadership.

Research on toxic leadership proliferated in the last decade based on 2011 Army survey findings that more than 80 percent of Army officers and sergeants had directly observed a toxic leader within the last year and about 20 percent of respondents had directly worked for one.[21] Toxic leadership is even defined in the latest publication of Army Doctrinal Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership,* as a "combination of self-centered attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance."[22] Dr. George Reed refers to a toxic leader as a poison to the unit that destroys the teams they lead, erodes unit cohesion, and creates a negative command climate.[23]

There is no doubt that toxic leadership exists in the Army as well as in other large organizations. What is not as well known is how truly destructive toxic leadership is to team performance. Dr. Christine Porath and Dr. Christine Pearson are leading experts on dysfunctional behavior at work and have polled several thousand managers and employees from a diverse range of U.S. companies about their experiences. Among those affected in the workplace by negative behaviors, 48% decreased their work effort, 66% felt their performance declined, and 78% said their commitment to the organization declined.[24] This is a significant loss in productivity that merits careful consideration. While the Army must demand results from its leaders, it cannot do so with negative leaders that cause individuals and teams to decrease their performance. Subordinates in abusive environments are likely to simply comply with the leader to avoid unnecessary conflict.[25] "It is important not only to accomplish the mission but also lead

in a way that engenders the respect and commitment of followers."[26] Toxic leadership is completely incompatible with building winning teams and the Army mission command philosophy.

Mission Command

In the 2012 Mission Command White Paper, General Dempsey states that "our need to pursue, instill, and foster mission command is critical to our future success in defending the nation in an increasingly complex and uncertain operating environment."[27] Under the Army's mission command philosophy, commanders are expected to "exercise authority and direction using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders."[28] Exercising mission command is essential to the U.S. Army Operating Concept (AOC) to win in a complex world because it harnesses the collective power of teams to accomplish complex missions.

The principles of mission command are: "build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk."[29] Listed first among those principles, building cohesive teams based on mutual trust is clearly an essential element of mission command. Even though mission command is a commander driven process, it depends heavily on the flexibility and discretion of empowered junior leaders to take the initiative. "Every Soldier must be prepared to assume responsibility, maintain unity of effort, take prudent action, and act resourcefully within the commander's intent."[30] If mission command depends on cohesive teams, how are the Army's senior leaders addressing teams in their guidance and current doctrine?

Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) (2013)

The ALDS provides the Army's approach to developing leaders to meet the security challenges of tomorrow. It accurately reflects that leader development is the most important way to prepare the Army for an uncertain future. It states "leader development is the deliberate, continuous, and progressive process – founded in Army values – that grows soldiers and Army civilians into competent, committed, and professional leaders of character."[31] The strategy also discusses the critical components of leader development as training, education, and experience that is a shared responsibility between the institutional Army, the operational force, and the individual.[32] It further stresses the grave importance of leader responsibilities to develop their subordinates by setting the example, counseling, and mentorship.[33] The ALDS provides outstanding guidance for the Army to develop its leaders but only mentions the word "team" four times. Further, the ALDS acknowledges in the introduction that leaders must be able to build teams, but it never articulates actually how this is done nor the leadership skills required to make it happen. Since individuals spend the majority of their time in the operational force, it is here where the Army must focus their efforts on developing leaders to build teams.

U.S. Army Operating Concept (AOC): Win in a Complex World (2014)

The U.S. Army Operating Concept provides the intellectual foundation for building the future Army. The central idea for the Army, as part of a joint, interorganizational, and multinational team, is to protect the homeland and engage regionally to prevent conflict, shape security environments, and create multiple options for the Nation's leadership while presenting adversaries with multiple dilemmas.[34] The AOC identifies the overarching problem as how to "Win in a Complex World" in which

the complex environment is defined as unknown, unknowable, and constantly changing.[35] Unlike the Army Vision and ALDS in which "team" is only mentioned a few times, the AOC uses the word "team" a total of forty-six times. It recognizes that the complex operational environment requires adaptive leaders and cohesive teams that are able to thrive in conditions of uncertainty.[36] Teams are necessary to collectively solve problems that individuals would be unable to solve themselves. Teams outperform individuals and increase the odds of winning by optimizing overall performance and creating a position of relative advantage as they work toward a common purpose. While the AOC clearly highlights the importance of teams as the Army exercises mission command, it does not address how to develop leaders to build teams.

<div align="center">Army Vision (2015)</div>

The Army Vision, Strategic Advantage in a Complex World, provides the overarching guidance for building an Army to meet the nation's needs over the next decade. It identifies eight key characteristics for the Army to be successful: agile, expert, innovative, interoperable, expeditionary, scalable, versatile, and balanced.[37] While the need for capable leadership is mentioned throughout the document, "teams" is only mentioned twice. It states that operational headquarters must be able to integrate forces and allow "for the rapid creation of teams to respond to fluid and dynamic situations."[38] The second time team is mentioned is in the final section of the document where it mentions "a professional environment across our Army that promotes and respects the individual dignity of all soldiers and civilians, allowing them to realize their full potential as part of a tremendous team."[39] Overall, the Army Vision does not adequately address the desire or need for Army leaders to embrace building winning teams to achieve a strategic advantage.

Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-0, Mission Command (2012)

ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, specifically addresses the importance of developing cohesive and effective teams. One of the three primary tasks for commanders is to "develop teams, both within their organization and with the joint, interagency, and multinational partners."[40] Teams and teamwork are critical to the success of the mission command system and underpins how mission command is to be exercised in order to achieve unity of effort. People are the most valuable resource, but their value should be measured not in their individual accomplishments, but in their ability to build effective teams that can collectively accomplish the toughest missions. Mastering your basic individual warrior skills is an important baseline for success, but winning requires more. ADP 6-0 provides great advice on how to develop teams by developing mutual trust, creating shared understanding, and creating a positive command climate that encourages initiative, fosters collaboration, and dialogue to promote unity of effort.[41]

Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, Army Leadership (2012)

ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, provides a clear description of leadership and what leaders are expected to be, know, and do. Even though it was published in August 2012, after ADP 6-0 *Mission Command*, it does not provide the same level of emphasis on developing cohesive and effective teams that our mission command doctrine demands. In the foreword General Odierno mentions the word "team" twice, but it only appears once more throughout the entire manual. He states, "being a leader is not about giving orders, it's about earning respect, leading by example, creating a positive climate, maximizing resources, inspiring others, and building teams to promote excellence."[42] He expounds on this by specifying that leaders are to "build agile,

effective, high-performing teams."[43] Overall, the Army's primary doctrinal manual on leadership is more focused on the individual leader than on how to build an effective team.

Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 7-0, Training Units and Leader Development (2012)

ADP 7-0 establishes the Army's doctrine for training units and developing leaders. It does a good job identifying the importance of both but again falls short on how to build an effective team and its relevance in creating a highly trained unit. It is possible to train units to a satisfactory level of competence on a myriad of collective tasks; however, simply conducting collective training does not guarantee that you are building a cohesive and effective team. Collective training is a task-focused event. To achieve something truly great, the leaders of an organization must be able to develop people within the unit to create high-performing teams. An effective team will operate to a higher standard than a unit that focuses merely on tasks and be more prepared to handle the future security environment challenges.

After researching Army strategic leader development documents, my assessment is that the Army probably understands and conducts leader development better than most large organizations. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the Army can do better in articulating how to develop and build teams. Current leader development guidance and doctrine covers just about every skill and attribute necessary in Army leaders and reflects a noticeable increase in the value of teams. However, only ADP 6-0 offers any real advice on how to develop leaders to build effective teams.

Building Winning Teams

When General Mark Milley assumed responsibility as the 39th Chief of Staff of the Army in 2015, he identified readiness as the Army's number one priority.[44] This was a

departure from the previous Chief's number one priority – leader development.[45] While both priorities are critically important to creating the best possible Army, readiness seems to reflect more of a collective (or team) aspect, while leader development implies a greater emphasis on the individual.

There are countless leadership experts with extensive research on great leaders and the significant value of teams. The importance of developing top-notch leaders in the Army is well documented. Research also shows that teams hold greater potential than groups of individuals trying to work together. A great leader can synchronize the efforts of a team to produce a synergistic effect that is far greater than the contributions of each individual. Building winning teams is multifaceted and requires growing effective leaders, creating a positive command climate, and a greater focus on the team rather than the individual, all of which are now examined to provide greater insights for Army leaders.

Effective Leadership

Effective leadership is the key ingredient in determining if a team becomes a winning team. "People are the basis of all military organizations, and military operations occur as human interactions."[46] Winning teams are developed through trust, effective communication and interpersonal relationships. Leaders influence their organizations to accomplish the mission, share in their hardships, and take care of their soldiers. Leaders must be empowered to make decisions, given the opportunity to make mistakes, and valued for their contributions. Members of an organization are far more likely to give their absolute best effort if they are truly invested in the team, its direction, and where their voice is heard and valued.

According to Daniel Goleman, an internationally known psychologist, the fundamental task of leaders is to create positive feelings in those they lead in order to bring out their best performance.[47] This works by appealing to people's emotions. According to Goleman, the most effective leaders share one critical bond; they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence.[48] Emotionally intelligent leaders develop a great sense of their own capabilities, limitations, and exercise initiative to achieve their goals. They also have a tremendous understanding of their subordinates and take the time to develop a true relationship with them. Without emotional intelligence a person can be extremely smart and highly trained but will not be an effective leader.[49]

A 2010 study on leadership lessons at division command level corroborates this argument. The findings suggest that the single most differentiating factor between effective and ineffective leaders is interpersonal skills.[50] The findings also determined that even though intellectual competence was essential, cognitive abilities did not significantly influence whether a leader was considered effective or not.[51] This is significant to the Army and its approach to leader development. My assessment is that the Army puts a tremendous amount of effort into training and educating leaders but does not spend nearly as much time coaching and teaching emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills as a core skill.

Effective leaders often vary in their approach but tend to share many common traits. In the book *On Becoming a Leader*, Warren Bennis submits that the best leaders have a guiding vision, passion for the job and the people, curiosity, daring, and integrity that forms the basis for trust.[52] According to Bennis, the underlying issue in leading is trust to not only get people on your side but to have them remain there as well.[53] In

Better Under Pressure, Justin Menkes believes that the three most important traits to get the best out of people are realistic optimism, subservience to purpose, and finding order in chaos.[54] In *Positive Psychology at Work*, Sarah Lewis believes that positive leadership is authentic leadership, defined as being confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, ethical, and future oriented.[55] Others, like McCann and Selsky, state that agility and resiliency are two critical attributes for attaining superior performance during turbulent times.[56] They expound on this by determining five critical capabilities to build agility and resiliency, which are being purposeful, aware, action oriented, resourceful, and networked.[57]

The 2014 CASAL findings identified seven factors that best determine whether an Army leader is considered effective. They are "leading others, building trust, demonstrating sound judgment, developing others, leading by example, demonstrating confidence and composure, and creating a positive environment."[58] One could argue that only demonstrating sound judgment and demonstrating confidence and composure are individual type factors, while the other five are based on interactions between a leader and subordinate element all of which are related to building teams. The mission needs to come first, but the people must always be treated with dignity and respect to realize their full potential. There are strong analytical relationships between perceptions of leader effectiveness and the leader's ability to build trust and exercise mission command.[59] Establishing a positive command climate in which the organization's members can thrive cannot be understated.

Positive Command Climate

Creating a positive command climate is essential in developing a high performing, winning team. A command climate is based on how members feel about

organizational factors such as "job performance expectations, fairness of rewards and punishment, flow of communication, care for subordinates, and the example set by the organization's leaders."[60] The climate is often viewed as the personality of the organization that can change based on the current leadership. Leaders can have an immediate impact on the command climate of a unit based on their behavior, how they interact with others, and the tone they set.

Command climates can either set the unit up for success or doom it to mediocrity or even failure. Studies have affirmed a strong correlation between the quality of organizational climate and unit productivity.[61] Individuals want to be part of the team, to be challenged, and to contribute to the organization's success. Climate affects motivation, work effort, work quality, commitment, and the trust and confidence that soldiers have for their leaders. While retention of talented leaders is an enduring issue for the Army, maintaining a positive command climate goes a long way in retaining the most talented leaders and building effective teams.

AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, charges commanders with the responsibility for establishing a positive climate, developing disciplined and cohesive units, training and professional development of their soldiers, and caring for their well-being.[62] Company level commanders are required to administer a command climate survey within 30 days of assuming command, again at six months, and annually thereafter.[63] However, the survey is not required for commanders above the company level like battalion and brigade level commanders. This poses a slight risk since some leaders with poor command climates do manage to make it to senior grades. Battalion and above Army leaders have greater autonomy to take action and often experience

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increased levels of pressure to succeed. Assessing their command climates seems

reasonable to hold them accountable in some measure for maintaining a positive

command environment as well. Recent history is wrought with examples of senior

leaders losing their way. It is far better for the Army to identify potential leadership

issues in battalion and brigade commanders before they are given even greater

influence over a significant amount of people.

There are strong relationships between having a positive command climate and

being able to effectively implement the mission command philosophy within your

organization. LTG H.R. McMaster suggests there are four key continuities in the nature

of war; war is political, uncertain, human and a contest of wills.[64] Consequently, human

interactions play a critical role in the conduct of war. Treating people with dignity and

respect and taking care of them directly affects their feelings toward the organization. A

positive command climate facilitates team building, encourages initiative, fosters

collaboration, and creates mutual trust and understanding among the organization.[65]

These desired effects are also guiding principles of the mission command philosophy.

Creating a positive command climate is accomplished through a number of

different methods all working together to shape how members feel about the

organization. Successful organizational climates have leaders who exhibit concern for

the welfare of subordinates and set the example in competence, character, and

commitment. They set high performance standards, communicate effectively, empower

subordinates, and work toward the accomplishment of shared team goals.[66] Leaders

create conditions where subordinate input is valued, there is freedom to take the

initiative and make honest mistakes, and honest feedback is provided to develop

leaders.[67] Good climates normally have disciplined, cohesive teams and trusted leaders.[68]

Another interesting method to create a positive command climate and a constructive work environment is the idea of using positive psychology. Do the team members focus on the positive aspects of the organization and seek to proliferate the good stuff, or does it focus primarily on preventing bad things from happening? Most people have been around leaders that always think the sky is falling. There are also the ones that tend to harp on the bad things or complain about everything that is happening in the organization. They often have a long list of people to blame for these shortcomings like the previous chain of command, the ineptitude of their leaders, or the deficiencies in their subordinate leaders. Nevertheless, taking stock of the positive aspects of your team can pay tremendous dividends. Recent studies have shown that positive organizational behavior generates positive emotions among its members that leads to higher levels of performance than those that focus on the organization's weaknesses.[69] Building a positive command climate is about bringing out the best possible performance of your team. Positive leadership that values the organization's members, communicates effectively with them, and build relationships of trust, unlocks the true potential of the team and its members.

Team Focus rather than Individual Focus

According to LTG Robert Brown, Commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, the Army's success hinges on the ability of our leaders to build effective teams.[70] With a reduction in manpower and increasing fiscal constraints, the Army must make the most out of available resources. Leader development is critical to the Army; however, there is still a small population of leaders that do not understand the

leadership skills required to build an effective team. It is false to assume that since the

Army organizes its people into units that they are automatically a cohesive team.[71]

Teams are much trickier to build and maintain due to powerful but delicate team

dynamics.[72] Teams require a lot of effort to build and consistent leadership to sustain.

Evidence shows that teams outperform individuals and groups, especially when

performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences.[73]

Team leadership skills are not exactly the same as basic leadership

competencies.[74] Leading teams requires a greater emphasis on people-focused

behaviors to manage team dynamics, appeal to emotions, and strengthen relationships.

Creating and maintaining an effective team is hard work because success depends on

everyone working together to achieve a common goal. Leading teams requires

significantly more time and personal investment in developing others. "Great leaders

seek to fulfill their own potential but equally seek to fulfill the potential of those who work

for and with them."[75]

In the book *The Wisdom of Teams*, Jon Katzenbach discusses the true potential

of teams to increase performance. During extensive research he discovered key

lessons about teams and team performance that are summarized below:

1. Significant performance challenges energize teams;
2. Organizational leaders can foster team performance best by building a strong performance ethic with clarity of purpose and goals;
3. Self-preservation and individual accountability can work counter to team performance;
4. Discipline – both within the team and across the organization – creates the conditions for team performance.[76]

Steve Buchholz and Thomas Roth, in *Creating the High Performance Team*, took

a hard look at what constitutes a successful team and the skills needed to build them.

They argue that effective teams have strong leadership, positive work cultures,

alignment of purpose, and are characterized by good communication, trust, and commitment to achieve group synergy.[77] It is not only the individual abilities of each person that counts, but their work as a team to achieve results. The combination of these efforts creates synergistic effects, defined as the "simultaneous actions of separate entities which together have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects."[78] This is not a new phenomenon, but it does not seem to be the norm either. Too often groups fail to achieve a true team dynamic and realize their full potential. Even though Army leaders are not afforded the opportunity to select the members of their team, they have a duty to develop a team that is able to achieve results and accomplish the mission.

My research identified that effective leaders and teams are focused on trust, commitment, purpose, and communication. Across the board experts agree that trust among the members is a basic necessity in effective teams. "Trust tends to be greater in units where standards are upheld, where unit members are empowered to make decisions pertaining to their duties and are allowed to learn from honest mistakes."[79] The best teams also demonstrate a high degree of commitment to one another and the mission. A critical requirement for a great team is to share a common purpose that drives the team's efforts. And lastly, open and effective communication is a key component to foster high performance. It was extremely interesting to note that people who experience both job satisfaction and open communication perform the best, but even people who are dissatisfied with their job perform better given the opportunity to openly communicate about their complaints.[80]

Recommendations

To develop the next generation of leaders to win in a complex world, the Army must focus more effort on building winning teams. Creating an effective team requires greater time and efforts to develop trust, commitment, communicate effectively, and achieve alignment of purpose. While the importance of teams and leading teams is much more recognized in recent doctrine, the Army must bridge the gap in practice to realize their full potential. The strategic environment requires trained, ready, and effective teams that are able to synchronize their efforts in order to win in a complex world. Therefore, I propose the Army consider making changes to its command climate policy, leadership doctrine, and self-assessment program.

Command Climate Policy

The Army should change AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, to require unit command climate surveys at the Brigade and Battalion level. A positive command climate sets the conditions for high performance by individuals, leaders, and teams. Climate affects every aspect of a soldier's attitude and behavior, which is directly related to building effective teams. To ensure this happens, the Division Commander should review Brigade and Battalion command climate surveys at six-month intervals during their command tour of duty. The survey should focus on the Brigade and Battalion Commander's rated population to include down to Company level for Brigade Commanders and platoon level for Battalion Commanders. While this survey will not directly feed the Officer Evaluation Report, the Division Commander should consider it as another important data point in their overall performance counseling. If nothing else, this type of survey could potentially work to cull out the worst leaders that inhibit building effective teams.

<u>Leadership Doctrine</u>

The Army should update ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, by adding a section on those needed attributes and competencies for effective teams and modifying the Leader Requirements Model (LRM) to convey the increased focus on building winning teams. The Army's primary doctrinal manual on leadership does not adequately address the essential leadership skills needed to build effective teams. Adding a section in this manual on team leadership that addresses specific team leadership attributes and competencies would provide this emphasis and more closely nest with the mission command philosophy.

Leadership attributes are characteristics internal to the leader. Under the "intellect" column in the attributes section, add emotional intelligence. As discussed, research shows that emotionally intelligent leaders are successful because they develop a tremendous self-awareness, understanding of their subordinates, and ability to exercise initiative to achieve their goals. The leadership competencies are the groups of related actions that the Army expects leaders to do. Since leading teams is an action, the following changes need to be made to the model's competency portion. Under the "leads" column, change the second bullet to read "builds mutual trust". Under the "develops" column, add "builds cohesive teams, develops common purpose, and develops commitment." Under the "achieves" column, add "shared understanding and unity of effort". These changes provide greater emphasis on the essential leadership skills needed to build effective teams. The graphic that identifies these leadership attributes and competencies in ADP 6-22 and the recommended changes just discussed are portrayed in Figures 1 and 2.

ATTRIBUTES (current)

Character	**Presence**	**Intellect**
• Army Values	• Military and professional bearing	• Mental agility
• Empathy	• Fitness	• Sound judgment
• Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos	• Confidence	• Innovation
• Discipline	• Resilience	• Interpersonal tact
		• Expertise

ATTRIBUTES (proposed)

Character	**Presence**	**Intellect**
• Army Values	• Military and professional bearing	• Emotional Intelligence
• Empathy	• Fitness	• Mental agility
• Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos	• Confidence	• Sound judgment
• Discipline	• Resilience	• Innovation
		• Interpersonal tact
		• Expertise

Figure 1: Army Leadership Attributes[81]

COMPETENCIES (current)

Leads	**Develops**	**Achieves**
• Leads others	• Creates a positive environment/ Fosters esprit de corps	• Gets results
• Builds trust	• Prepares self	
• Extends influence beyond the chain of command	• Develops others	
• Leads by example	• Stewards the profession	
• Communicates		

COMPETENCIES (proposed)

Leads	**Develops**	**Achieves**
• Leads others	• Creates a positive environment/ Fosters esprit de corps	• Gets results
• Builds mutual trust	• Builds cohesive teams	• Shared understanding
• Extends influence beyond the chain of command	• Prepares self & develops others	• Unity of Effort
• Leads by example	• Develops common purpose	
• Communicates	• Develops commitment	
	• Stewards the profession	

Figure 2: Army Leadership Competencies[82]

Self-Assessment Program

Finally, the Army should consider developing an effective system to provide

professional feedback to Army leaders on their strengths and developmental needs.

Behavioral science research shows that successful leaders are self-aware, willing to

consider other points of view, and open to new and different approaches to problem solving.[83] The Army's current MSAF360, Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback tool, provides leaders with some information to improve their self-awareness. However, the current system does not require leaders to receive professional coaching once they conduct the assessment. This is a vital component that significantly degrades the current system. Mandating that leaders conduct a follow-up session with a coach provided by the Center for Army Leadership (CCL), or hired as new positions at each Army installation, would significantly improve the current system. As a participant in the Center for Creative Leadership course in 2011, the most unique and beneficial portion of the curriculum was a personalized assessment of my leadership abilities by a professional coach. The feedback was based on a battery of self-assessment tests as well as surveys completed by superiors, peers, and subordinates. The Army should study the CCL course further and consider pursing this type of professional feedback for mid and senior grade officers who tend to get less and less constructive feedback over time.

Conclusion

Winning in a complex world requires Army leaders that are able to harness the collective knowledge and power of teams to achieve success. Building winning teams requires growing effective leaders, creating a positive command climate, and placing a greater focus on the team rather than the individual. From a review of academic leadership concepts, effective leaders are focused on trust, commitment, purpose, and communication when developing quality teams. To better develop the next generation of Army leaders to build winning teams for a complex world, the Army should mandate command climate surveys at the Brigade and Battalion level; update ADP 6-22, *Army*

Leadership, to reflect a greater emphasis on teams; and mandate that leaders conduct

a follow-up personalized assessment with professional coaches as part of the MSAF360

Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback tool.

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