The Importance of Leadership and Learning Organizations

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In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, leaders will be called upon to deal with multifaceted emerging threats within a global context. Leaders will be required to understand, learn and adapt certain requirements to properly perform their duties. The purpose of this paper is to examine military leadership and determine the desired qualities that allow a leader to lead organizations through difficult and challenging environments to solve complex problems. This paper will explore the characteristics and competencies of future leaders in context with Army leadership doctrine and investigate the need for adaptive military leaders and their ability to transform organizations into learning organizations. The paper will also look at shared leadership and the power of the group to solve complex problems. The concepts and approaches described within this paper provide leaders a direction to transform their organizations into learning organizations using the collective systems to change specific Army practices that allow rapid growth, change, and innovation.

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The Importance of Leadership and Learning Organizations

> It is neither the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

—Charles Darwin[1]

In today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, leaders will be called upon to deal with multifaceted emerging threats within a global context. Leaders will be required to understand, learn, and adapt certain requirements to properly perform their duties. The purpose of this paper is to examine military leadership and determine the desired qualities that allow a leader to lead organizations through difficult and challenging environments to solve complex problems.

This document will define and discuss the characteristics and competencies of future leaders in the context of Army leadership doctrine as well as look at the initiative to develop the Army's leaders of the future. Mission Command explores the need for adaptive military leaders and their ability to transform organizations into learning organizations that allow rapid growth, change, and innovation. The paper will also investigate shared leadership and the power of the group to solve complex problems. Finally, the paper will examine the changes a Battalion Commander implemented to a traditional Army Recruiting Battalion to fully leverage the organization and allow it to change rapidly within its environment in order to be successful.

The concern with the implementation and training of the strategies and theories discussed below for developing future leaders may prove to be difficult with the upcoming budget reductions, constrained resources, and an emphasis on conformity within the services. This period could potentially lead the Army into a state of leadership survival at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. As the force continues to draw-

down in Afghanistan and troop strengths decline, this may create a sense of instability. Leaders may be forced to move away from the concept of Mission Command and the ideas of decentralized leadership, preventing the flexibility to make changes to organizations and assume risk in order to discover new efficiencies. The military may slip back into a zero-defects mentality, in which leaders cannot make mistakes without the possibility of career ending repercussions.

Another factor is advances in technology that allow senior leaders to influence or micromanage, subordinate organizations, diminishing their uniqueness and flexibility as an organization. The combination of career-oriented, risk aversion with this micromanagement will reduce the Army's ability to grow, change, or be innovative.[2] At a time of draw-down and resource constraints, leaders must take the appropriate measures to prevent the force from slipping back into a military culture of control and processes. It is the individual leaders in the coming days, months, and years who must prevent the force from slipping back into a top down, zero-defects military. This is the Army's great leadership development challenge.

An Army Leader may be an ambassador in the morning and a warrior in the afternoon. Without capable leaders, the military cannot face the challenges of a multifaceted VUCA environment. The leaders of today must be agile, creative, adaptive, and multi-skilled. The Army leadership field manual 6-22 describes "an Army leader as anyone by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility who inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals. Leaders motivate people both inside and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization."[3]

Army doctrine offers viewpoints about adaptive leadership, the elements to meet the challenges of a VUCA environment, and the importance for a leader to adapt. The success of an adaptive leader is based on balancing attributes, traits, beliefs, values, and skills. These characteristics are developed and refined throughout the lifetime of a leader by the environment, through his education, and from his experiences. Attributes describe who a leader is.[4] Traits are recurring qualities of a person.[5] Beliefs are those things ingrained and what we hold to be true. Values are important as they consist of those qualities that allow a person to make the right decision in any situation.[6] Skills are the knowledge and abilities gained to perform the required duties to complete a task. Overall, leadership is fundamentally about a leader's ability to inspire, encourage, and assist a group in achieving a task.

There are two fundamentals to adaptability. First the leader must develop, in each new circumstance, the ability to recognize the central tasks vital for successful performance.[7] Then, he must be able to change by maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses.[8] In order to do this, leaders must test formerly held thoughts and beliefs by embracing new experiences.[9] Adaptability is facilitated by 1) open-mindedness, which is defined here as the ability to analyze different alternatives before moving toward a conclusion; 2) prudence in evaluating and taking risk; and 3) resilience in the wake of setbacks. [10]

The Interim Brigade Combat Team Organizational and Operational (O&O) Concept defines an adaptive leader as "a leader who can influence people by providing purpose, direction and motivation while operating in a complex, dynamic environment of uncertainty, and ambiguity to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."[11]

Leaders at all levels must cultivate the aforementioned specific competencies in order to operate successfully in today's VUCA environment as future adaptive leaders. Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, delivered a speech to The United States Military Academy in February 2011 in which he expressed the importance and the need for adaptive leaders who would have a broad understanding and range of skills to operate in the full spectrum of conflict.

> Indeed, the Army has always needed entrepreneurial leaders with a broad perspective and a diverse range of skills. As President Kennedy put it, speaking on these grounds half a century ago, "your military responsibilities will require versatility and adaptability never before required in war or in peace." And for an era of full spectrum conflict, when we confront security dilemmas that Kennedy called "new in intensity, ancient in origin," America can succeed only with leaders who are themselves full-spectrum in their thinking. The military will not be able to train or educate you to have all the right answers – as you might find in a manual – but you should look for those experiences and pursuits in your career that will help you at least ask the right questions.[12]

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22 makes numerous references to adaptive leadership. It describes adaptive leaders as leaders of change, who scan, monitor, assess, and understand the situational environment.[13] Adaptive leaders need the skills to adjust rapidly in a changing situation.[14] This explanation suggests that a leader can make improvements to meet changes in the situational environment. Leaders base their knowledge on experiences, education, and insight that they have acquired over the years. ADRP 6-22 also implies that there are critical competencies for adaptive leadership: critical thinking, creative thinking, displaying comfort with ambiguity, a willingness to accept prudent risk, and ability to adjust rapidly while continuously assessing the situation.[15]

Stephen J. Gerras defines "critical thinking as the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increases the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe

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thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed."[16] This discipline encompasses the consideration and makeup of those essential thoughts that are inherent in all ways of thinking and is integrated into a unit of connected systems that include scientific thinking, morale thinking and philosophical thinking among others.[17]

Creative thinking is defined as the ability to produce new ideas that are valued by others.[18] Leaders at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels must facilitate creative thinking within their formations to adapt rapidly to changing situations and to solve complex problems to remain viable in today's VUCA environment.[19] The key to success is the leader's ability to facilitate dialogue both inside and outside the organization to transmit new ideas. In Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, creative thinking includes synthesis (rearrangement of ideas into a new whole) and evaluation (judgment based on evidence).[20]

Comfort with ambiguity is the ability of the leader to operate smoothly in an uncertain or vague environment to accomplish an assigned task. This occurs when the leader realizes the problem and visualizes how to best integrate ends (objectives to be accomplished), ways (concepts, methods, and strategies to accomplish the objectives), and means (resources required to achieve the objectives) in employing military capabilities to address the problem. General George W. Casey Jr. expressed in *Army Magazine* in 2009 the role of the Army of the Twenty-first Century and the importance of the development of a versatile force to meet the broadest range of requirements.[21]

The leader's ability and willingness to accept prudent risk is defined as knowing when to proceed vigorously or when to precede incrementally using experience, wisdom, and conceptual abilities to make a sound judgment.[22] As a result, leaders must

consider second- and third-order effects and have a clear understanding of the commander's intent prior to moving forward in executing a task. In this VUCA environment, leaders create or exploit opportunities after careful examination and analysis to mitigate the probable dangers in order to seize the initiative.[23] When faced with an equally adaptive enemy, leaders must have the mental capacity to cope with the conditions in which they find themselves to achieve decisive results.[24]

Finally, the leader's ability to adjust rapidly while continuously assessing the situation requires flexibility. The leader can quickly analyze the situation and decide on the proper course of action.[25] Today's leaders must be agents of change and know when and how to adapt for success, especially when adaptations may produce the desired results.[26] This flexibility allows leaders to contend with situations in front of them with the assets available to them. They are able to manage a variety of tasks with different priorities and demands.

The Army is re-engineering the methods and procedures needed to produce the next generation of doctrine that will meet the demands of an ever-changing environment. The lessons learned from the past eleven years of conflict and the potential uncertain security environment of the 21st century has guided the Army to make "adaptability" an essential attribute for each of its leaders.[27] The Army's 38th Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, spoke to the Army War College student body on August 13, 2012 about strategic leadership and the strategic environment. He stated that the education and development of present and future leaders will be essential for dealing with the challenges that we will face. General Odierno also laid out the future requirements of the force in a newsletter "*Marching Orders: America's Force of Decisive*

Action" in which he outlines his intent for a versatile, agile, and responsive force to meet the future security challenges in a VUCA environment.[28] One enhancement to come out of this re-engineering is a concept called Mission Command, which will serve as the Army's baseline for training and education.

The Army defines Mission Command as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."[29] Mission Command employs the task and systems to integrate and synchronize the war-fighting functions that enable leaders and organizations to achieve a desired end-state.[30] Leaders are empowered to make their own decisions on how they will accomplish the commander's intent within given boundaries. Joint doctrine defines "commander's intent" as "a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end-state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned."[31] In the execution of Mission Command, leaders follow six principles:

- Build cohesive teams through mutual trust.
- Create shared understanding.
- Provide a clear commander's intent.
- Exercise disciplined initiative.
- Use mission orders.
- Accept prudent risk.[32]

With the proper application of the above principles, leaders should have the ability to adapt to fast changing, complex, poorly structured problems in order to shape the outcomes and overcome challenges in today's VUCA environment.

Since Mission Command's inception, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, have established the Mission Command Center of Excellence (MC CoE) in late 2010. The purpose of MC CoE is to integrate mission command doctrine, organization, training, materiel, and leader development with education, personnel, and facility (DOTMLPF) solutions across the entire Army.[33] MC CoE is essentially a one-stop shop for leaders to either provide lessons learned in order to transfer knowledge back to the force or to hone individual leader skills in the art and science of Mission Command. Not yet fully operational, MC CoE is moving toward complete implementation across the operational force in 2013.

The Army is instituting Mission Command as its foundational document in leader doctrine, empowering leaders and giving them the freedom to make decisions and solve complex problems while acting within the senior commander's intent to achieve mission success, it will provide these future leaders a competitive edge in dealing in today's VUCA environment. The past eleven years of persistent conflict leaders have adjusted to the environment in which they found themselves handling a whole host of situations and determined their performance to be effective. This experimental learning will continue to serve the Army well as it transitions out of Afghanistan and becomes the Army of the future, capable of responding to the demands of the Nation.

As the operational environment continues into an era of uncertainty and complexity, leaders must work both inside and outside their organizations to develop the best possible solutions to confront the challenges of the future. A military organization is a structure characterized by a division of labor and specialization, set apart by sub-unit organizational units based on written regulations, specialized skill sets, a clear hierarchy, and the acceptance of general rules in order to accomplish a task. The next section of the paper will focus on organizational leadership, the importance for organizations to rapidly adapt and to attain efficiencies in order to gain advantage.

ADRP 6-22 defines organizational leadership as leadership which occurs at intermediate sized units such as "battalion through corps levels, civilian leaders at the directorate through installation levels and Army civilians at the assistant through undersecretary of the Army levels."[34] These organizations set policies and institute the command climate to better facilitate subordinate leaders and units.[35] Organizational leaders influence hundreds to thousands of personnel through their subordinate leaders and staffs as well as conducting face-to-face contact.[36] Strategic leadership is defined as the process to achieve a "desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and building consensus."[37] Operational and strategic leader attributes and competencies are the same as those of the direct level leader with differences being in the inherent duties and responsibilities at each of those levels.[38]

In this era of persistent conflict, leadership at both the operational and strategic levels requires that leaders understand that they, themselves, are systems as complex as the one they are moving forward.[39] The higher the leader rises in responsibility, the

greater the uncertainty, and risks. Leaders will rarely, if ever, have a complete picture of all the factors in a situation. This lack of intelligence will cause them and their organization to adapt in order for them to succeed in this challenging environment.[40] In order for our organizations to remain relevant in the twenty-first century, we must develop organizations capable of learning based on a continuous assessment of the complex situation.

Peter Senge best describes learning organizations in his book *The Fifth Discipline*; "learning organization - an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future."[41] Simply put, it is a group of people creating, acquiring, transferring, and retaining knowledge and then acting to modify behavior to respond to those insights. Peter Senge proposed the following five disciplines that make up the characteristics of a learning organization; personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking.[42]

The first discipline, personal mastery, is defined "as the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively."[43] This commitment by the individual does not assure organizational learning but without individual learning, organizational learning cannot occur.[44] Personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills. It is the ability to learn from experiences and identifying what is significant to us and being capable of seeing reality more clearly.[45] Peter Senge refers to personal visions as the results one wants.[46] Individuals realize what matters most to them because they are committed to their own learning. Peter Senge says the strategy is simple. Just be a model for the organization and things will change moving you toward a learning organization.[47]

The second discipline Senge describes is mental models. He defines it "as deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action."[48] These models must be challenged by altering our way of thinking in order to shape behaviors and principles. In creating a learning organization, members of the team will need to open up and expose their thinking to the other members in order to find the best possible solution to a complex problem.[49] To achieve this, a future learning organization will need to make key decisions based on collective understanding of its members to remain relevant and viable in today's VUCA environment.

Shared vision, the third discipline, is defined as a mental image of what an organization will look like in the future.[50] Every member of the organization must be an effective advocate of the vision and share it with others. The leader must understand and share the desired end state in order to provide direction and purpose.[51] A vision's measure of effectiveness is the organization's ability to accomplish its present and future missions in a VUCA environment.[52] An example of a vision statement for a corporation is as follows. "Amazon's vision is to be earth's most customer centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online."[53] To be valuable, a vision should be clear and concise. It should convey a sense of purpose, goals, plans, and programs, which are mutually shared within the organization.[54] When successful, a vision will generate enthusiasm, commitment, and direction.[55] A shared vision can lead people to do great things. However, the vision must be continually reinforced to ensure that the message stays alive within the organization. Generally speaking, a vision is perceived to be long lasting

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from inception. However, due to changes in the VUCA environment, it may become necessary for the vision to be realigned in order for it to remain relevant.

In the fourth discipline Senge expresses that "team learning is the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire."[56] "Dialogue" is the key word to team learning in that it suspends assumptions of its members and allows the team to think together.[57] A learning organization uses its team members to share information and the lessons from experiences to accomplish the organization's purpose.

The fifth and final discipline, described by Senge, conveys that "systems thinking is a systems approach to create a general theory that could identify the existence of laws that might apply to similar structures in different fields."[58] He describes it as "a discipline for seeing wholes."[59] "It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots."[60] In short, systems' thinking is a compilation of thoughts which are applied within a structure and are based on a principle that the individual elements incorporated in the framework influence one another throughout the whole system and interact with other systems rather than in isolation.[61] As an effective leader, the ability to understand the complexity of multiple systems and processes will be paramount to the success of the organization.

Peter Senge points out that systems' thinking is the fifth discipline that combines the other disciplines into a coherent body of theory and practice.[62] The ability to understand and see the whole system will illuminate reality as it is and how it can be changed. When the five disciplines are merged, they do not necessarily produce a

learning organization but instead, open a path that allows an organization a new capacity for efficiency, innovation, and adaptation.

Amidst organizational changes required in a rapidly evolving and volatile environment, leaders must think differently about their organizational structures, systems, and practices. Leaders will need to build a coalition of core team members to help with vision and communication. Hierarchical organizations with inflexible authorities and structures struggle to be effective in a rapidly changing environment.[63] The importance of centralized vs. decentralized organization and the importance for leaders to move to a combination of centralized and decentralized methods to produce more relevant results and develop a capacity to handle a complex changing environment will be described in the next section of the paper.

As the new Army concept of Mission Command is implemented, its design is to force decisions to lower echelons, moving the Army to a more decentralized philosophy and leaving higher echelons free to work critical decisions that only they can address. A centralized organization is best defined as a structure where you have a clear leader who is in charge and has decision making authority, whose decisions are communicated down the structure, expected to be accepted by all, and then implemented consistent with the leader's decision.[64] In a decentralized organization you have a structure where there is no single decision making authority; rather you have a structure that empowers decisional influence at all levels within the hierarchy.[65]

In the book, *The Starfish and the Spider*,[66] the authors describe decentralized and centralized organizations as exemplified by a Starfish and a Spider. The starfish is characterized as a decentralized organization representing a network of cells. In the

ocean, if an arm is removed from most starfish they are capable of regenerating an entirely new organism from a single arm.[67] Each of these will develop a neural network reflecting the pattern existing in the parent organism.

On the other hand, a spider is an organism that has eight legs similar to a starfish with multiple arms. However, they are completely different. The spider is so centralized that if its head is removed, the entire organism dies because there is no regeneration of vital parts.[68] For the most part, the spider is capable of functioning with one leg missing, but reduces greatly its ability to survive.

In the new Army framework, leaders will empower their subordinates to construct the most effective organizations. Leading through others does not signify that the commander or supervisor gives up his authority or responsibility of the organization. However, at any time, he can step in and temporarily take control in order to get the organization back on track.[69]

General Stanley McChrystal commanded Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and is known for developing an organization that revolutionized how a decentralized organization operates effectively. He discussed four concepts and how they function.[70] The first concept, "strict hierarchical decision-making," does not work because organizations are not capable of directing other organizations. However, what works is a "shared consciousness" where everyone operates with "smart autonomy" focusing on the whole institution.[71] The second concept, "information ownership," is ineffective when personnel withhold information from the organization and elect not to share it. Instead, organization should implement the open systems concept where there is constant flow and sharing of information throughout the organization.[72] The third

concept, "organizational equity," fails because individuals have their own ideas on how to execute a plan. What is effective occurs when individuals operate within the context of the larger idea.[73] The fourth concept, "command and control," is inadequate when leader's micro-manage and force their will upon the organization. What is successful is building trust that encourages autonomy.[74]

The concepts and theories mentioned above are at a critical junction as the Army contends with new challenges while attempting to implement a new doctrine of how leaders will be required to lead in the future. General Odierno, the Chief of Staff of United States Army, testified to the Armed Services Committee on February 12, 2013 and articulated the impacts of both the continuing resolution and sequestration on the force.[75] He indicated that the Army faces unprecedented budget reductions caused by the 2013 defense budget continuing resolution and the potential implementation of sequestration under the 2011 budget control act and articulated that these cuts would affect the professional development, training, and readiness across the force.[76]

Unfortunately, if the fiscal problem cannot be averted, then the Army's professional development programs as well as its ability to change the culture will be in jeopardy, potentially preventing the future development of adaptive leaders that have the capability to promote learning organizations. Leaders at all echelons may slip back to the Army of the 90's where leaders were faced with a zero-defects mentality that stifled imagination and adaptability. This new initiative is critical to the success of how the Army intends to grow its leaders and create organizations that are capable of learning.

Additionally, if General Odierno's concerns become reality, implementation of Mission Command could be derailed. Leaders might no longer challenge ideas or assumptions and would remain firm on current organizational structures and hierarchies that stifle innovation and prevent the necessary dialogue required to come up with new ideas. In the Army, the culture defaults to predictability and leaders avoid risk, and stick to the status-quo in addressing decisions in order to keep a low profile and not be relieved or potentially fired. Mission Command requires a comprehensive shift in the organizations culture and values.

The following case study is a personal account of how a Battalion Commander implemented several of the concepts described above using adaptive leadership, and organizational learning to transform the Sacramento, California, Recruiting Battalion from a tactical-operational environment into an operational-strategic environment by making fundamental changes within the organization to achieve mission success. The Battalion success directly relates to the organization's ability to see all aspects of its operational environment. The key to achieving an operational advantage is dependent on the organization's collective thinking and its ability to share effectively pertinent information (open system), which ensures the right Recruiter is at the right place at the right time and properly resourced and supported to gain the best qualified applicant for enlistment into our Army.[77]

The task organization of the unit directly affects its ability to communicate, coordinate, and synchronize its efforts. The organization of the Battalion provides each of the functional areas a collaborative approach to planning. This allows the functional area to integrate and synchronize the wide range of capabilities into full spectrum

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recruiting operations. The synergy of the organization depends in large part on a shared understanding of the operational situation. The Battalion Headquarters is responsible for ensuring this common understanding of the situation and communicating that vision to the individual Company Command Groups (CCG) and higher headquarter elements.

The Sacramento Recruiting Battalion Headquarters transformed its compartmented structure (See Figure 1) into three functional areas that operate in a synchronized, predictable manner to ensure timely analysis, planning, and execution of all recruiting operations across the battalion's area of operation. The functional areas are Command Group, Operations Center (OPCEN) and the Support Center (SUPCEN) (See Figure 2). The restructured battalion organizational framework illustrates a collective systems approach to maximize the effectiveness of leadership and communication that allows rapid growth, change, and innovation in support of the mission. The success of this proposed battalion structure is contingent on its ability to communicate, synchronize, and predict environmental changes. It is also a function of leadership ensuring that the organization maintains focus on mission goals and objectives to achieve success.

The organizational restructuring of a US Army Recruiting Battalion enhances section focus and significantly increases the communication of each individual section, thus creating a more effective, proactive, and efficient organization. This refined framework of the recruiting battalion streamlines the activities and functions under two primary directorates: the Operations Center (OPCEN) and the Support Center (SUPCEN). The reorganization provides a higher level of focus on the critical support
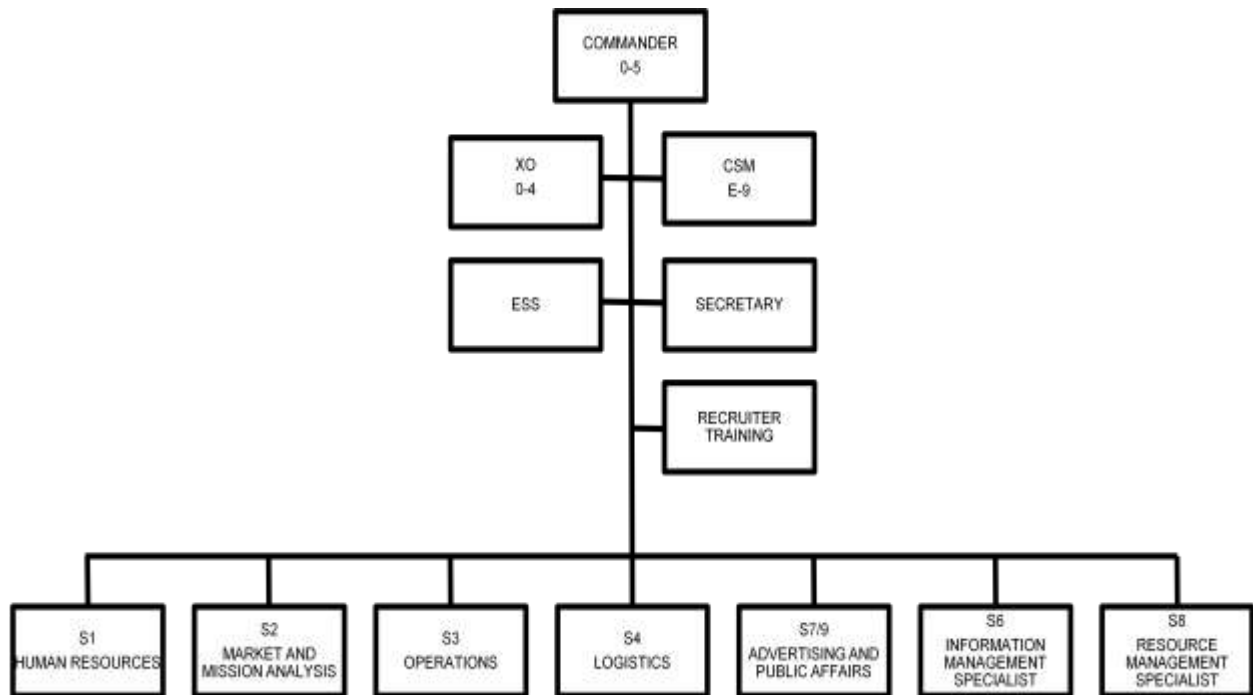
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Figure 1. Standard Recruiting Battalion Organizational Chart[78]
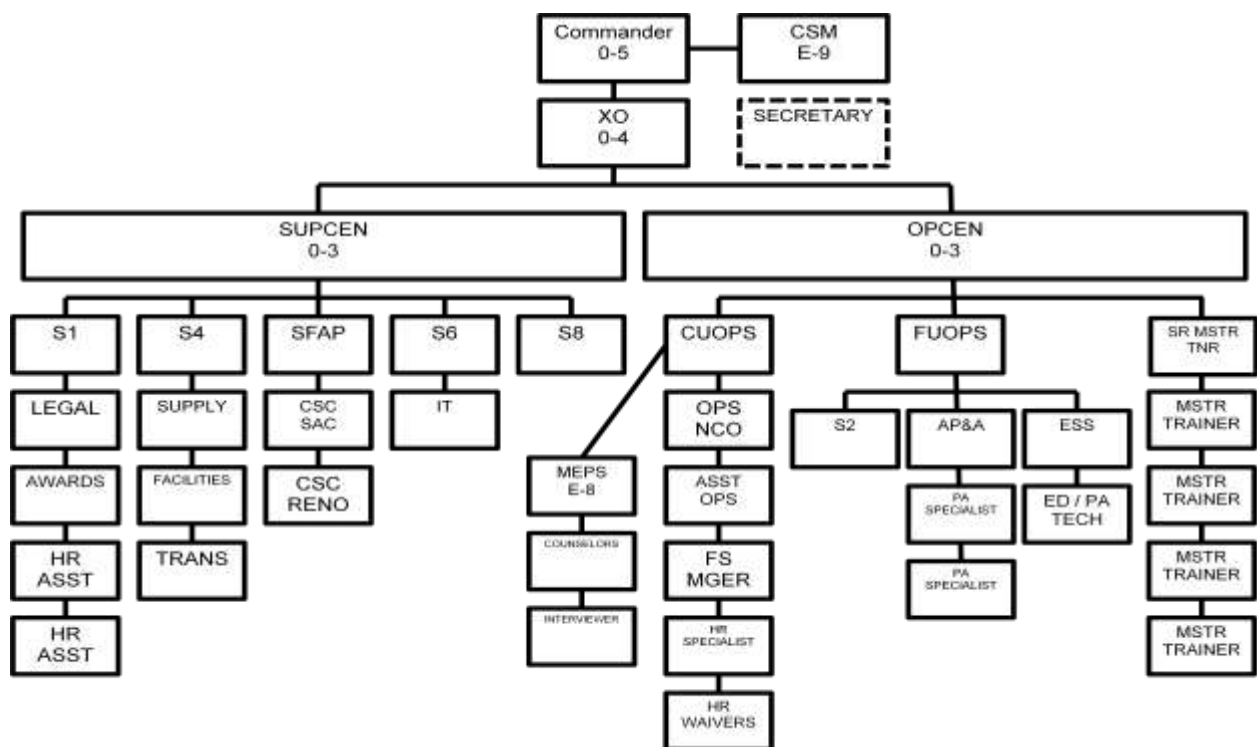

Figure 2. Restructured Recruiting Battalion Organizational Chart

Function's of the recruiting battalion. This structure provides an enhanced ability to direct operations based on analysis of mission requirements and current operations as well as forecasted changes of the market area in support of the commander's vision and mission success.

The Commander provides the vision and intent to the staff. The staff conducts a thorough analysis and synchronizes efforts to achieve the desired effects. Following the commander's review and approval, the staff issues the appropriate directives to its companies. This is challenging due to the geographical dispersion of a recruiting organization and the span of control of each of the units. Company Command Teams operate on a well understood Commander's Intent. In this operational environment, the subordinates must have confidence that they can take the initiative to accomplish their assigned missions with integrity, even in the absence of direct guidance.

The Battalion Executive Officer directs the staff planning under the guidance of the Battalion Commander and the OPCEN and SUPCEN staff sections. The OPCEN develops the battalion campaign plan. The campaign plan consists of the school year plan, marketing plan, and annual training plan. The SUPCEN staff verifies that there are sufficient resources to support operations and conduct parallel planning to make certain all support requirements are identified and planning timelines are established to guarantee feasibility and completeness. Critical to the success of recurring events is the ability to quantify clearly measures of effectiveness to assess the execution phase of the operation and to ensure adequate time to make necessary adjustments to achieve mission accomplishment.

A predictable and continuous communication plan is critical to the successful accomplishment of the recruiting mission. The Battalion's Staff Battle Rhythm establishes the foundation for all communication and planning meetings in support of the commander's vision and intent. These critical meetings ensure all key personnel within the battalion have the ability to gain direct guidance from the Battalion Commander and that all sections are represented in the short-range, mid-range, and long-range planning and operational updates. The Battalion Executive Officer maintains responsibility for synchronization and prioritization of efforts for each of the staff directorates.

On a bi-monthly basis, the OPCEN and SUPCEN directors conduct meetings with each of their staff personnel. The OPCEN meeting provides the opportunity to synchronize the efforts of the CUOPS, FUOPS, and master trainer's section. The SUPCEN meeting reviews all long and mid-range planning support functions within the battalion. Each of the meetings review the updated priorities from the commander's huddle and provide the opportunity for each of the staff members to present his updated staff estimates to the directors.

The command and staff serves as a Battalion staff update to the CCG's on administrative and logistic support issues. The fusion meeting focuses on operations six weeks out for BN staff and CCG detailed synchronization. The Monday, Wednesday, and Friday conference calls focus on production, seventy-two hour projections, tasking, and training updates as needed. The Executive Officer huddle occurs once a week and serves as a review of both the status of the staff section priorities established during the commander's huddle and opportunity to address CCG's issues.

The above transformation of the recruiting battalion, which took place over a two-year period, allowed efficiencies, innovation, and adaptation through learning and collective knowledge permitting the organization to achieve its goals. The battalion was successful in its ability to recruit the best and brightest using precision because it adapted and learned how to switch from a traditional command and control organization in which everything was top driven to a collaborative leadership organization in which all subordinate leaders in the organization were able to provide feedback to the system that allowed the organization to adjust to the environment creating the conditions for success. This degree of freedom and trust allowed flexibility for individuals to make decisions in line with the overall vision of the battalion, balancing the individual and collective power of the organization, which created the success.

The United States Army has begun a transition from a top-down command structure to shared leadership and organizational learning which encourages autonomy late in the Twentieth Century. The concept has resonated throughout the Armed Services and has been effectively employed in Afghanistan for several years. Today, training is going on at the basic level and in the spirit of sharing, a consensus is formed concerning the outcome of team actions.

In order for the army to implement the abovementioned concepts, both senior and junior leaders must establish a mutual respect and trust for one another. The combined leadership, at all echelons, will be essential if the Army is to move together in this era of uncertainty with reducing budgets, constrained resources, and an emphasis on conformity to continue to allow leaders the versatility, adaptability, and initiatives to move their formations forward. This is the time for leaders at all levels to step-up and

take charge and implement these new concepts of leading even when faced with uncertainty.

Even in this time of ambiguity, there are mechanisms that the Army can implement to assist with changing the culture. The first step is to reengineer the officer evaluation system (OER) so that it addresses the characteristics, values, and skills that reward adaptive behavior and sensible risk taking. Second, tie promotions and key assignments to those OERs, giving them to those leaders who have displayed the adaptive characteristics and skills identified through the OER system. Third, immediately incorporate the adaptive leadership concepts discussed above into the Army's professional military education institutions to prepare leaders for uncertainty. These three steps, while not all inclusive, provide a powerful tool for initiating change to Army culture. Further research is strongly recommended to find additional methods to strengthen the implementation of this new leadership approach.

The tough leadership challenges that lay ahead and the need to change the characteristics and competencies of future leaders to a more collaborative leadership approach will be significant in changing the culture of the Army. Leaders must transition to this new dynamic way of executing leadership where leading is shared and uses the collective whole of the organization. Future leaders must view their organizations as systems working as a community that shapes and influences the environment in which they find themselves. The concepts and approaches described in this paper provide a direction to transform organizations into learning organizations, which allow rapid growth, change, and innovation. Until this new way of thinking about leadership is institutionalized across the force, it will be left up to individual leaders to implement the

power of the organizational system from which they command to comprise all of the

interacting components and subsystems to solve complex problems in a VUCA

environment.

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