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**LEADERSHIP: MORE THAN MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT**

**BY**

**COLONEL PETER J. VARLJEN  
United States Army**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Leadership: More Than Mission Accomplishment**

by

Colonel Peter J. Varljen  
U.S. Army

Colonel William Barko  
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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## ABSTRACT

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There is increasing discussion and concern over the quality of Army leadership. The fact that there is growing disenchantment indicates a problem under the premise that perception is reality. The Army can neither confirm nor deny it has a leadership problem or even claim that good, sound leadership is practiced. This is because the Army does not comprehensively or officially measure the process of leadership or organizational effectiveness. Instead, it concentrates solely on evaluating mission accomplishment. Because the Army chooses to ignore organizational effectiveness and leader development programs, the most predictive outcome of its leadership philosophy, training process, and evaluation emphasis is a leadership and trust crisis. This paper compares Army leadership to a leadership competency model and demonstrates that the current leadership crisis was inevitable. It then focuses on possible solutions that build on previous successful Army programs as well as lessons learned from effective, smaller scale military and commercial programs. Without correcting the problem across the entire Army and at every level, change will be excruciating slow, if possible at all. The price may very well be the loss of at least one generation of future, effective leaders and possibly a slide back toward a hollow army...again.



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## LEADERSHIP: MORE THAN MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT

The aim of leadership is not merely to find and record failures in men, but to remove the causes of failure.

—W. Edwards Deming

### IS THE ARMY IN THE MIDST OF A LEADERSHIP CRISIS?

There is an increasing amount of discussion and concern over the quality of military leadership these days. If you believe what is being written, there is:

- a serious generation gap between the baby boomers and the younger generation, labeled Generation X, resulting in a dramatic increase in captains leaving the Army,<sup>1, 2</sup>
- an increasing lack of trust between junior and senior officers according to Army surveys of majors attending the Command & General Staff College,<sup>3</sup> and
- an increasing number of senior officers selected for battalion and brigade commands who turn them down citing disillusionment with command climate and senior leadership.<sup>4, 5</sup>

These incidents indicate that many senior leaders today either do not have the interpersonal skills required or moral conviction necessary to practice sound leadership.

So, is there any credibility to these charges? The fact that there seems to be a growing disenchantment with leadership indicates a problem under the premise that perception is reality. Moreover, even in its own defense, the Army can neither confirm nor deny it has a leadership problem or even claim that good, sound leadership is the norm. This is because the Army chooses not to comprehensively or officially measure the process of leadership development and the effectiveness of its organizations. Instead, it concentrates solely on evaluating the *product* or whether the mission gets accomplished.

The cascading effect is:

- the Army emphasizes mission accomplishment over the full spectrum of leadership competencies;
- thus mission accomplishment is rewarded over good leadership;
  - leadership training and supervisor reinforcement is limited and inadequate,
  - therefore leaders are not fully developed;

- comprehensive leadership is not practiced; instead the overwhelming focus is on getting the job done, often at the expense of the organization and people; and
- therefore subordinates get disillusioned, resulting in a leadership crisis.

In theory, the Army has it right with its popular slogan, "*Mission First, People Always.*" However in practice, it chooses to prioritize *mission first* and just does not get around to the *people always* as applied to organizational effectiveness and leader development programs. The most predictive outcome of this leadership philosophy, training process, and evaluation emphasis is a leadership and trust crisis. This is empirically confirmed by junior officers voting with their feet and other negative command climate indicators.

This is nothing new. As General Kroesen, former CINCUSAREUR, points out, the Army has gone through at least six distinct periods in our history since WWI where trust and confidence in the senior leadership has been an issue causing the "best and brightest" to leave in droves.<sup>6</sup> So what are the lessons that we have not learned and what can be done to institutionalize change so this problem will not repeat itself in the future?

The new edition of FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, published in 1999, strongly emphasizes mission accomplishment as the key responsibility of a leader. As a way of introduction, the new manual points to General Douglas MacArthur's warning that "our mission...is to win our wars... there is no substitution for victory; that if you lose, the nation will be destroyed..."<sup>7</sup> Yet, this manual, for the first time, equally emphasizes that "being 'just' technically and tactically proficient may not be enough (and) that the Army would need leaders of competence and character who not only acted to accomplish their mission but also acted to improve themselves, their leaders, their unit, and achieved excellence."<sup>8</sup>

This balance in focus acknowledges the current leadership deficiencies and the updated approach goes a long way to correctly characterize what good leadership ultimately should look like. However, this is just the first step. What the Army has repeatedly failed to do is adequately emphasize the full spectrum of leader attributes, skills and actions. Instead it has focused on a few of the competencies while allowing the others to atrophy.

Setting the framework to discuss these deficiencies, Figure 1 below illustrates a leadership model based on FM 22-100. It depicts the supporting competencies that are the foundation of an Army leader: BE, KNOW, DO. As with any structure, if too many of the supporting pillars or foundation become weak, the entire structure eventually crumbles. This is the key concept that both previous and current Army senior leadership have failed to grasp.

Each of the Army Chiefs of Staff throughout history have claimed that leadership is key to military success, but have failed to recognize that unless all the competencies are fully developed simultaneously, the leadership structure in the Army is destined for collapse. This is what has caused the cyclical leadership crisis in the past and it is what is causing the current crisis.

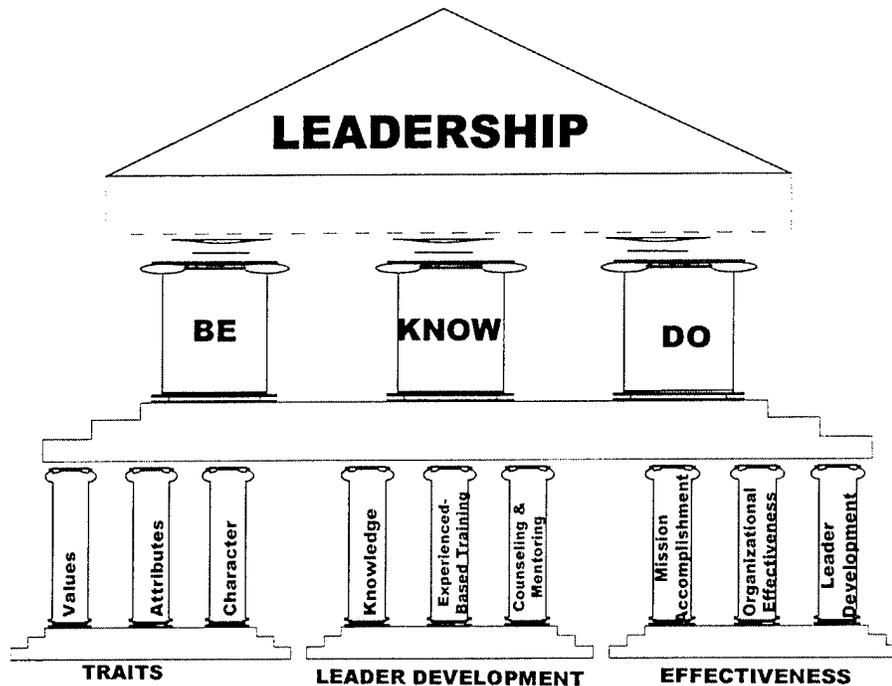


FIGURE 1 -- LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY MODEL

This paper compares leadership in today's Army to the above leadership competency model and demonstrates that the current leadership crisis was inevitable given current policies and processes. Although this paper will deal exclusively with officer leadership because of the highly publicized controversies surrounding officer dissatisfaction and retention, many of the concepts apply to the enlisted and civilian components as well. Additionally, it then focuses on possible solutions that build on previous successful Army programs and from smaller-scale, existing military and commercial programs that are very effective. Without correcting the problem across the entire Army and at every level, from our most junior cadets to our most senior generals, change will be excruciating slow, if possible at all. The price may very well be the loss of at least one generation of future effective leaders and possibly a slide back toward a hollow army...again.

## THE PROBLEM

### MEASURING LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS:

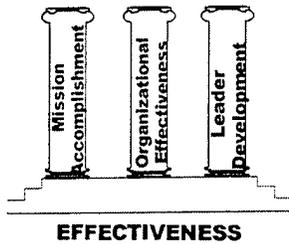


FIGURE 2 --  
EFFECTIVENESS

In FM 22-100, leadership is defined as “influencing people – by providing purpose, direction, and motivation – while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization”.<sup>9</sup> Yet if one looks at the majority of individual evaluation reports, the emphasis in most cases are those things that are easy and quantifiable to measure -- mission accomplishment and physical improvements to the organization. What is routinely omitted is the other, more nebulous half of leadership – providing purpose, direction, motivation and the people aspect of improving the organization.

Admittedly these “soft” aspects of leadership are hard to evaluate. How does one measure whether a commander effectively mentored and developed leadership skills in a subordinate, especially during a one or two-year rating period when the results may not manifest itself for many years? How does one measure the effectiveness and command climate of an organization over the long haul when leaders rotate every year to two? Most importantly, how does one measure subordinates’ trust and confidence in leadership at the time a superior’s evaluation is due? Some will say, “good leaders will always accomplish the mission.” Yet, history is full of examples of people who accomplished the mission who were not good leaders. Apparently, this phenomena is the case today with many of our senior leaders according to surveys of captains leaving the service, resident CGSC students, and those declining command.<sup>10, 11</sup>

Ultimately, success cannot be measured by just accomplishing the mission. The long-term effectiveness and efficiency of units and, more importantly, the fullest possible development of our leaders dictate that some form of evaluation of these leadership competencies also be emphasized, measured, and be equal in determining success. Although the new Officer Evaluation Report (OER) reflects the need to evaluate character and leadership attributes/skills/actions by adding them to the form, there is no clear measurement standard nor is it currently attributable to the success or failure of the ratee. Thus, the value of these measurements is questionable at best. The old adage from General Bruce Clark, “an organization does well only those things the boss checks,”<sup>12</sup> is true when applied to leadership processes. Unless the organizational effectiveness and leader development aspects achieve some parity in how the Army measures success, priorities and behaviors will not change.

**EVALUATING LEADERSHIP – THE OER:**

In the most recent Chief of Staff update on the OER, General Shinseki said, “selection boards clearly indicate that the OER is giving them what they need to sort through a very high quality officer population and select those with the greatest potential to lead our soldiers... (however), feedback from the field, on the other hand, indicates the OER is not yet meeting our expectations as a leader development tool.”<sup>13</sup> This dichotomy says it all. By asserting that the current OER gives promotion and command board members *exactly* what they need for making selections, it de-facto makes mission accomplishment the sole criteria for success and therefore relegates to incidental the importance of organizational effectiveness and leader development.

The OER, as currently designed, cannot adequately measure the entire spectrum of leadership competencies as outlined in FM 22-100. One reason is because the only portion that gets any credibility is the rater’s and senior rater’s evaluation on “specific aspects of the performance and potential for promotion” (Figure 4). This consistently equates to accomplishing the mission. Then, because most boards have so little time to evaluate each record, they almost exclusively consider the senior rater’s rating over the rater’s, who in the vast majority of cases knows the individual best. Thus, the limitations of the selection process dilute even this limited evaluation. Moreover, this is further exacerbated by then attempting to normalize the rating across a bell curve through center-of-mass ratings. Granted, this appears to be a valid tool for reducing rating inflation, but is a poor substitute for honest, well-rounded evaluations that include all leadership skills.

PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM (Rater)					
CHARACTER Disposition of the leader: combination of values, attributes, and skills affecting leader actions					
a. ARMY VALUES (Comments mandatory for all "NO" entries. Use PART Vb.)	Yes		No		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1. HONOR: Adherence to the Army's publicly declared code of values					5. RESPECT: Promotes dignity, consideration, fairness, & EO
2. INTEGRITY: Possesses high personal moral standards, honest in word and deed					6. SELFLESS-SERVICE: Places Army priorities before self
3. COURAGE: Manifests physical and moral bravery					7. DUTY: Fulfills professional, legal, and moral obligations
4. LOYALTY: Bears true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, the unit, and the soldier					

FIGURE 3 – OER PART IV A

Although Part IV a. (Figure 3) of the OER indicates a recognition of character and Army values, it only pays lip service to truly measuring these aspects and in fact marginalizes them by making them a go or no go check. Moreover, this go/no go mentality largely contributes to the current perception of a *zero defect* Army because there is no recovery from a “no” check. In his article “Military Leadership into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Another “Bridge Too Far?,” General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., asserts, “The Army does not enforce guidelines about leadership style except at the

+ PART V - PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL EVALUATION (Rater)	
<small>a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE RATING PERIOD AND HIS/HER POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION</small>	
<input type="checkbox"/> OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, MUST PROMOTE	<input type="checkbox"/> SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, PROMOTE
<input type="checkbox"/> UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PROMOTE	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <i>(Explain)</i>
<small>b. COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION. REFER TO PART III, DA FORM 67-8 AND PART IVa, b, AND c DA FORM 67-5-1.</small>	
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>Most board members indicate that when reviewing an OER, there is so little time to look at each evaluation closely. Therefore the order of priority is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- look left; all blocks must be outstanding, best or "yes,"</li> <li>- look at center of mass rating (Part V (b)),</li> <li>- read senior rater's comments (Part V (c)), and</li> <li>- if time, read first and last line of rater's comments (Part IV (b)).</li> </ul> </div>	
<small>c. IDENTIFY ANY UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE OF VALUE TO THE ARMY THAT THIS OFFICER POSSESSES. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT THROUGH LTC, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE</small>	
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>The skills and expertise portion of this block has demonstrated little value in promotion consideration or future job selection.</p> </div>	
PART VII - SENIOR RATER	
<small>a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PROMOTION POTENTIAL TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE</small>	
<input type="checkbox"/> BEST QUALIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/> FULLY QUALIFIED
<input type="checkbox"/> DO NOT PROMOTE	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <i>(Explain below)</i>
<small>b. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)</small>	<small>I currently senior rate _____ of (licor(s)) in this grade A completed DA Form 67-8-1 was received with this report and considered in my evaluation and review <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <i>(Explain in c)</i></small>
<input type="checkbox"/> ABOVE CENTER OF MASS <small>(Less than 50% in top box; Center of Mass if 50% or more in top box)</small>	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>This block is unquestionably the most important subjective evaluation on the form; however, interpretation is frequently based on choice of key words or superlatives.</p> </div>
<input type="checkbox"/> CENTER OF MASS	
<input type="checkbox"/> BELOW CENTER OF MASS RETAIN	
<input type="checkbox"/> BELOW CENTER OF MASS DO NOT RETAIN	
+	<small>d. LIST 3 FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT THROUGH LTC, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.</small>

FIGURE 4 – OER PARTS V, VI, VII

extreme edge of the acceptable behavior envelope... (and thus) permit a potentially unhealthy range of leader behaviors.”<sup>14</sup> So, do we really believe that every accessed officer enters active duty either with or without honor, integrity, courage, loyalty, respect, selfless-service and sense of duty or does not? Are there no degrees of each? Can these values not be learned, developed, or improved upon? Does someone who fails in one of these areas and has the opportunity to learn from it not become stronger and more reliable than someone who has never been tested? None of these questions are addressed in our current evaluation form, much to the detriment of our profession and its integrity.

Additionally, even the Army definition of leadership, which emphasizes *improving the organization*,<sup>15</sup> creates an ethical dilemma. This definition implies that keeping an excellent organization excellent is not enough, but must be *improved*. Not only is this unrealistic, but it encourages an environment of creative interpretation to show, at least for the OER, a façade of significant improvements. Unfortunately, in striving to achieve this façade, both motivation and integrity often become compromised.

Moreover, the fixation on superlative ratings (e.g. “the absolute best of all six of my battalion commanders”) leads to a self-centered, *on my watch* mentality. The natural tendency is toward exclusive emphasis on mission accomplishment often at the expense of organizational effectiveness and the people themselves. This is further exacerbated by short tours where *making a mark* is often prioritized over what is best for the organization in the long-term.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, this becomes possible because organizational effectiveness and command climate does not officially factor into the definition of success.

Finally, nowhere on the OER forms is there a specific requirement to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization nor the quality of the subordinate leader development. Though these aspects can and often are included in the performance evaluation, it only is included if it happens to be a criteria of the boss. These competencies are not systematically emphasized or evaluated Army-wide. The deficiencies in these areas are particularly voiced loud and clear as leader shortcomings by both captains and CGSC students surveyed.<sup>17,18</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the latest version of OER is beginning to address in Part IV b. (Figure 5) the need to evaluate the individual leader attributes, skills, and actions.

Yet it appears that the Army has no clear concept on how to accomplish this as reflected by:

- the lack of guidance or criteria in filling out this portion of the form;
- no indication as to how the information derived will be used; and
- no feedback on how the ratings fit into the overall evaluation of the officer.

b. LEADER ATTRIBUTES / SKILLS / ACTIONS: First, mark "YES" or "NO" for each block. Second, choose a total of six that best describe the rated officer. Select one from ATTRIBUTES, two from SKILLS (Competence), and three from ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP). Place an "X" in the appropriate numbered box with optional comments in PART Vb. Comments are mandatory in Part Vb for all "No" entries.									
b.1. ATTRIBUTES (Select 1) Fundamental qualities and characteristics	1. MENTAL	YES	NO	2. PHYSICAL	YES	NO	3. EMOTIONAL	YES	NO
	Possesses desire, will, initiative, and discipline			Maintains appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing			Displays self-control; calm under pressure		
b.2 SKILLS (Competence) (Select 2) Skill development is part of self-development; prerequisite to action	1. CONCEPTUAL	YES	NO	2. INTERPERSONAL	YES	NO	3. TECHNICAL	YES	NO
	Demonstrates sound judgment, critical/creative thinking, moral reasoning			Shows skill with people; coaching, teaching, counseling, motivating and empowering			Possesses the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions		
4. TACTICAL								YES	NO
b.3. ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP) (Select 3) Major activities leaders perform: influencing, operating, and improving									
INFLUENCING Method of reaching goals while operating / improving	1. COMMUNICATING	YES	NO	2. DECISION-MAKING	YES	NO	3. MOTIVATING	YES	NO
	Displays good oral, written, and listening skills for individuals / groups			Employs sound judgment, logical reasoning and uses resources wisely			Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward mission accomplishment		
OPERATING Short-term mission accomplishment	4. PLANNING	YES	NO	5. EXECUTING	YES	NO	6. ASSESSING	YES	NO
	Develops detailed, executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable			Shows tactical proficiency, meets mission standards, and takes care of people/resources			Uses after-action and evaluation tools to facilitate consistent improvement		
IMPROVING Long-term improvement in the Army / its people and organizations	7. DEVELOPING	YES	NO	8. BUILDING	YES	NO	9. LEARNING	YES	NO
	Invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders			Spends time and resources improving teams, groups and units; fosters ethical climate			Seeks self-improvement and organizational growth; envisioning, adapting and leading change		

FIGURE 5 – OER PART IV B

More importantly, these ratings are totally subjective and trivialized merely by checking a block with no further constructive elaboration. This is particularly troubling because there are so many objective tools and processes that the Army are sporadically using and could use to provide a much more balanced evaluation such as: command climate surveys, organizational inspection results, and 360-degree leadership assessment tools.<sup>19</sup> As long as the boss is the only evaluation that counts, it is doubtful that organizational effectiveness or leader development will ever receive its appropriate share of emphasis, time or resources.

### EVALUATION CONCEPT FLAW -- TOP DOWN AND ONE-DIMENSIONAL:

The current evaluation system, which is the primary determinant of assignment, promotion and military school selection systems, is much too one-dimensional. By using a top-down rating approach, the preponderance of effort and evaluation point to how well the boss is kept happy; in other words, did the mission get accomplished. Obviously this prioritization of the commander's intent is critical to military operations and there is no attempt here to diminish this aspect. However, to make it the only criterion for measuring success:

- leads to prioritization of the individual (both the boss and the subordinate) over the organization;
- provides an inaccurate total picture of leadership abilities and potential;
- serves as a disincentive to developing counseling, mentoring, and organizational effectiveness skills;
- compromises integrity by avoiding honest, face-to-face assessments;

- discourages tough, long-term organizational development/team-building processes; and
- encourages zero-defect tolerance environment.

To correct these negative trends, evaluations must be expanded to include a multi-faceted approach that takes into account the perceptions of subordinates, peers, and the state of the organization *together with* the boss' perceptions and the record of mission accomplishment. Adding other dimensions to the rating process is cumbersome at best and will take time and experimentation to develop. Additionally, implementing this 360 degree feedback will require building considerable confidence in the process to overcome perceptions of jealousy by peers or revenge by disgruntled subordinates. However, until a multi-dimensional approach is institutionalized, the Army cannot combat the perception that leaders are self-serving, short sighted, out of touch, unethical and avoid risk.<sup>20</sup> More importantly, it will solve the long-term morale, organizational effectiveness and leader development shortcomings that are becoming increasingly evident in the Army profession.

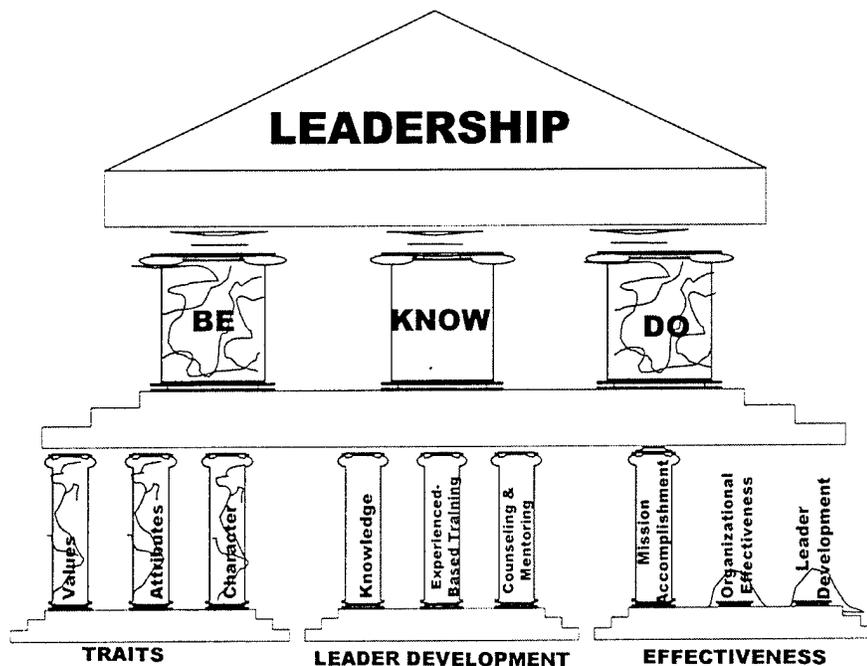


FIGURE 6 – MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

In summary, Figure 6 shows the current state of the “DO” pillar of the leadership model as well as its affect on the “BE” pillar. There is no question that mission accomplishment is a strong pillar that is supported by the current OER. Mission accomplishment is what gives the Army its identity and therefore its focus. However, little attention is paid to defining or

measuring organizational effectiveness and leader development. It is these crumbling pillars that are reflected in the current command climate within our junior officers and subordinate units.

Consequently, the current OER process and emphasis on individual accomplishment are starting to reflect cracks in the otherwise very solid leadership pillars of values, attributes and character traits by bringing into question integrity, loyalty, personal courage and selfless service. The question is, how deep must these cracks become before these pillars also begin to crumble?

### LEADER DEVELOPMENT:

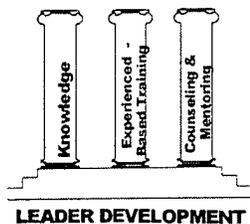


FIGURE 7 –  
LEADER  
DEVELOPMENT

Leadership cannot be learned solely from a book. Although being well read is essential and provides the foundation of leadership understanding, most educational specialists agree that experience-based training is the most effective method for any action-based skill.<sup>21</sup> It is for this reason that the Army's leadership training focus is flawed.

For most of the Army, leadership training in its schoolhouses is currently ninety percent book learning and ten percent experienced-based learning. The exceptions seem to be specialty training such as the Ranger Course, Special Forces Qualification Course and Escape and Evasion Course to name a few. In these, the candidate not only learns the technical and tactical skills, but experiences, as close as possible, the full spectrum of personal leadership and emotional challenges. Imagine trying to explain, even to another soldier, what it is like to go through Ranger or SF operations? Can you even begin to imagine what it must be like to be a POW without realistic, experienced-based training? Or what it feels like to have the bends from not decompressing properly in a deep dive if one did not experience it in a decompression chamber. Lecture alone just does not make the cut; leadership must be experienced to be effective. The differences between academic and experienced-based training is evident in the significantly superior performance, cohesion, and obvious esprit-de-corps of these specialty units. Additionally, even when applied to troop leading procedures during a mission-oriented Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) exercise, it is the highly realistic and stressful joint experiences that make the training effective.<sup>22</sup> Imagine, the quantum leap in effectiveness across the Army if this concept was applied to the way organizational and leadership development skills are learned.

Today, leadership training of our officers, starting with ROTC through the Officer Basic Course and all the way up through the Army War College is almost exclusively book learning. Though some excellent experience-based opportunities do exist at summer camps, training exercises, and rotational leadership positions, especially at West Point and in ROTC, throughout a career, this training is inadequate in terms of content, intensity and personal accountability. Moreover, even this limited experience-based training seems to diminish drastically once on active duty where training is almost exclusively classroom based. The apparent philosophy is to teach the FMs and reinforce them through case studies augmented with a plethora of examples of great battle captains throughout history. The Army then says, "go forth, emulate what you have read and be successful leaders". It just is not that easy. This sets a good foundation, but what is missing is the practical, individual experience.

One argument often given for not providing these training opportunities is that the real leadership teaching and learning begins in the unit under the watchful eye of a company commander or platoon sergeant. But if the Army does not cultivate or evaluate the full spectrum of leadership skills, what then is being passed from one generation of leader to another? The empirical answer is that there is no consistency. What is being passed on is a hodge-podge of interpretations, theories and practices that vary from unit to unit and within a unit under each rapidly rotating leader. Admittedly, there are many examples in the field where officers have it right and good on-the-job training and mentoring is happening effectively. Unfortunately there are many more cases where leaders have it wrong and are doing a disservice to their subordinates either through ignorance or neglect or both. Apparently, there is no consistent Army standard for the conduct of counseling or mentoring and therefore leadership throughout the Service is hit or miss at best.

#### **REINFORCING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND COUNSELING:**

The leader who chooses to ignore the soldier's search for individual growth may reap a bitter fruit of disillusionment, discontent and listlessness. If we, instead, reach out to touch each soldier – to meet needs and assist in working toward the goal of becoming a "whole person"—we will have bridged the essential needs of the individual to find not only the means of coming together into an effective unit, but to means of holding together.

—General Edward C. Meyer, Former Chief Staff, United States Army

In referring to counseling and mentoring, FM 22-100 specifically states, "subordinate leadership development is one of the most important responsibilities of every Army leader. Developing the leaders who will come after you should be one of your highest priorities."<sup>23</sup> The

value of both is dedicated, quality time to listen, discuss and develop the junior leader; to help them develop goals, review performance, and plan for the future. Perceptually, the difference is that mentorship is professional-based with an emphasis on general, long-term personal development. Counseling differs primarily in that it is job specific in nature and focuses on the short-term improvements and development. FM 22-100 lists both mentoring and counseling as cornerstones to basic leader development. However, leaders at all levels agree neither is performed routinely or adequately.

General Ulmer observes:

“... mentoring and coaching have long been in the Army lexicon, but their routine use is a localized phenomenon, highly dependent on the interests and skills of unit leaders. There is no meaningful institutional motivation for being a good coach, yet that skill is highly prized by subordinates at every level.”<sup>24</sup>

This assessment is born out by recent articles and military surveys of junior and mid-grade officers. General Shinseki also reports:

“officers continue to say that they are not being counseled. Commander’s counseling is key to leader development and remains one of the most important things we do to develop future leaders of our Army. We all need to do better in making this part of the OER function better so that we reinforce our leader development principles.... We must slow things down and reenergize the formal and informal counseling of our officers, especially our junior officers...who are feeling particularly pressured to leave the force.”<sup>25</sup>

The Army’s difficulty in implementing mentorship and counseling programs is evident by its lack of an overarching structure that is supportable in a rapidly changing, large geographical area. This is especially true in a culture where stability in relationships is fleeting and difficult at best. Furthermore, little or no progress in this area can reasonably be expected because there is a lack of experience-based training in developing individual interpersonal skills at any of the routine career courses.<sup>26</sup>

There is considerable procedure training, especially in the junior level schools – forms are explained, students go through the mechanics, and they academically work through case studies. But where are the hard, uncomfortable, and risky encounters in which a student feels what it is like to properly counsel and be counseled? Where are the consequences and feedback both for doing it well or missing the mark? Where else can this be done in a controlled environment under the guiding hand of a trained instructor/mentor? And yet, despite all the rhetoric, there is very little time allocated to counseling and mentoring skills and nowhere in the military professional education system have these skills been integrated into experienced-based learning objectives of the overall course. Is there any wonder that our leadership feels

uncomfortable with these competencies? Again, if they do not feel comfortable with these key leadership skills, can the unit be the primary leadership classroom and the commander the expert instructor?

The difficulty in changing the current leadership evaluation paradigm is that almost all the current leadership *made it* without the benefit of counseling or mentoring. Thus, there is little incentive to overhaul a system that may have *worked* so well for them.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, the system worked for the individual at the expense of unit effectiveness, command climate and future leader development. The current leadership crisis is but one symptom. Emphasis in training these interpersonal counseling and mentorship skills combined with a complementary, multi-dimensional evaluation of all leadership competencies is essential for a return to sound leadership practices within the Army.

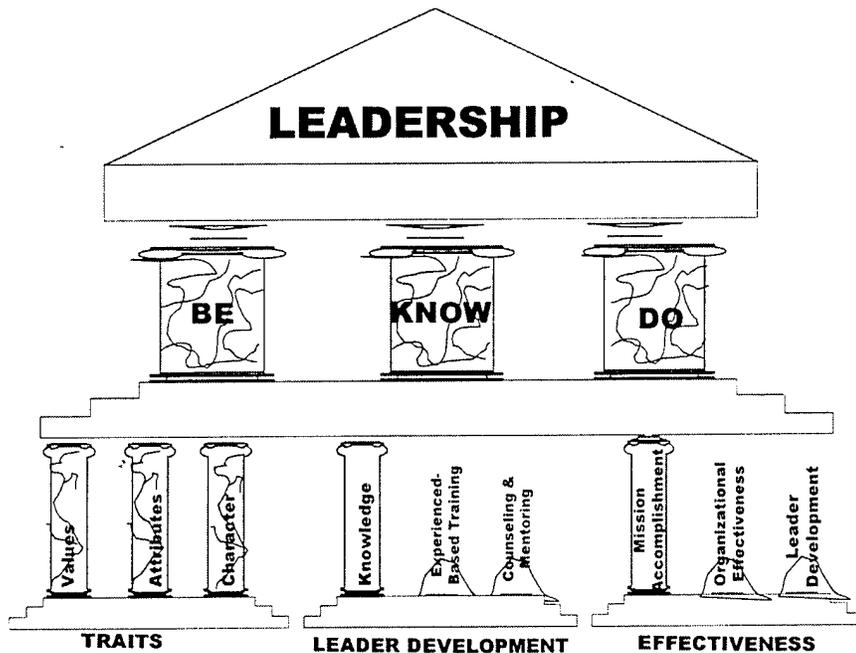


FIGURE 8 – LEADER DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

As summarized in Figure 8, the Army’s efforts and resources in teaching leadership is exceptional from an academic perspective. According to the surveys of junior officers today, they truly understand what leadership should look like and what standards are expected from them. However, what appears to be lacking is the experience-based training and consistent feedback necessary to reach these expectations. Time and time again, officers who become disenchanted are saying that their leaders are not walking the talk and more importantly are not mentoring/counseling them in the ways and techniques to becoming the successful leaders that they are asked to read about.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

There is little question that the strength of the Army today lies in its dedication to upholding the absolute highest standards in core values, inspiring leadership attributes and flawless character. Also, make no mistake, the Army must be and has proven itself to be a mission-oriented institution that earned its reputation as one of the most respected professions in the world through superb mission accomplishment. Finally, leadership is recognized as the foundation of this great institution and a tremendous amount of effort and resources is expended to develop it. By all external accounts, the Army, along with its sister services are extremely successful and the envy of all other governmental organizations and commercial corporations.

Internally, however, there are signs of stress that threaten the very core of the Army institution – its leadership. Leader development is undermined by a lack of experienced-based training to reinforce and institutionalize the textbook theories. Counseling and mentoring is little more than a good idea with almost every officer at every level acknowledging that it just is not happening. Moreover, most recognize that the knowledge and skills to counsel and mentor are not being taught, developed or implemented.

In measuring leadership, the entire focus is channeled in *what* is being accomplished with the emphasis placed on performing better than anyone else. Little attention is given to *how* the mission is being accomplished with particular respect to the effectiveness of the unit as an organization or sustainability over the long-term through leader development. This has resulted in significant questioning of leader's values, attributes and character by subordinates at both the junior and mid-level officer ranks.

The current symptoms of these deficiencies are manifesting themselves in a declining command climate, problematic retention of junior officers, and increasing hesitancy to serve in key leadership positions. At what point does the crumbling pillars and cracks in the supporting foundation cause the leadership structure to completely collapse as depicted in Figure 9. More importantly, what can be done to rebuild the fallen pillars and restore leadership to its full potential?

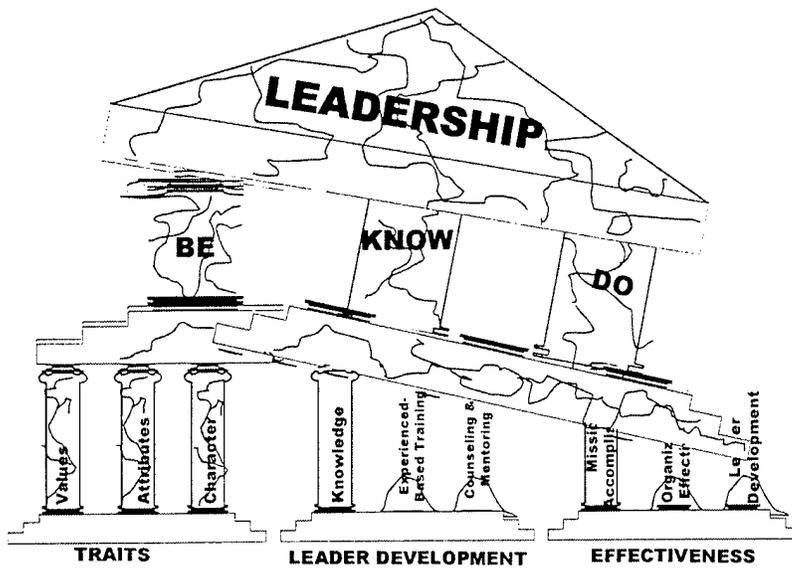


FIGURE 9 – CURRENT LEADERSHIP STATE IN THE ARMY?

**SOLUTIONS:**

Surprisingly, the Army has a history of experience-based, full spectrum leadership programs that were highly successful. The largest and most promising was the Organizational Effectiveness Program (OE) from about 1975 to 1985. Then, in response to a 1985 GAO report criticizing the Army for not providing leadership training opportunities to GS civilians, the Army developed a core, four-level progressive and sequential competency leadership training program.<sup>29</sup> Finally, impressive improvements in the Institutional Army have been recorded since the introduction of Total Quality Management (TQM) in 1992. Each of these programs will be reviewed as a source of examples of successfully teaching and institutionalizing many of the leadership attributes which now appear to be de-emphasized by mainstream military leaders (note that not one book on the Army Chief of Staff's suggested reading list addresses organizational or leadership processes).<sup>30</sup> Building on the lessons learned from these programs can provide the solution to today's leadership crisis.

**ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (OE):**

Following Vietnam, the transition to an all-volunteer force, and confronting the daunting challenges associated with the continued escalation of the Cold War, the Army found itself in a leadership crisis. At that time the leadership inadequacies manifested themselves in racial strife, drug use, low morale, and high incidence of discipline problems.<sup>31</sup>

The Army's answer was Organizational Effectiveness following an emerging business philosophy that emphasized team building, transformation, organizational learning and investing in people as its foundation. The key to this process was an action-research process based on an internal collaborative effort that would prescribe certain intervention to specific performance criteria.<sup>32</sup> On July 1, 1975, the U.S. Army Organizational Effectiveness Training Center (OETC) opened its doors at Ft. Ord, California. By 1980, over 570 OE officers were trained, certified and spread throughout both TOE/TDA units and schoolhouses. Where OE was applied, the result was significant both in the efficiency of units and the effectiveness of leaders as commanders and mentors.<sup>33</sup> Based on an Army study of OE conducted in 1979-80:

- use of OE at battalion level appeared to result in significant improvement in certain command climate indicators which include:
  - maintenance of unit's high performance standards and reputation of unit,
  - supervisor's leadership,
  - supervisor's consideration of subordinates,
  - satisfaction with supervisor;
  - getting a fair deal from the Army, and
  - satisfaction with the job<sup>34</sup>
- use of OE resulted in a greater acceptance of the process as an effective method of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. Additionally, the demand for the services and products increased exponentially despite it being totally voluntary.<sup>35</sup>

Between 1980 and 1985, because of the growing successes and acceptance by leaders at all levels, OE started finding its way into the curriculums of most of the Army branch courses as well as the professional courses such as the Command & General Staff College and Army War College. Not only was this process becoming institutionalized in a relatively short time, but also the Army was ready to expand the scope of implementation to encompass larger organizations and a more complex, system-wide approach. It should be noted, however, that although the program was growing through its own reputation, use of OE as a unit process was never mandated or evaluated. This may very well explain its lack of universal acceptance and ultimate demise.

By 1985, it was decided to disband OE as an Army program. There are many perceptions as to why, but the most common are:

- The personnel and funding resources became convenient bill payers for an emerging Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Concept that once again developed skills

that related directly to mission accomplishment and could be easily measured in terms of success and failure over the short term.<sup>36</sup>

- The process of bottom-up development, which is based on the organizational strengths and problem solving processes at the lowest level, was incompatible with the Army top-down approach, which relies on hierarchical structures and centralized control. As OE began to catch on and flourish, it butted up against the traditional military decision making culture and ultimately lost.<sup>37</sup>
- “Those who controlled the budget of the Army were never convinced to accept the cost and methods of OE without some centralized control and centralized accounting of the efficiency of the program.”<sup>38</sup> This is largely due, as discussed above, to the fact that leadership processes are hard to define and measure. Additionally, the Army did not do a good job of measuring, documenting, or publishing their successes.
- “the very nature of ‘touchy-feely’ OE flies in the face of snake-eatin’, ass-kickin’ REAL Army guys...”<sup>39</sup>

Regardless of the reason, OE ceased to exist in 1985, though many processes and underlying philosophies are still evident in operational planning and follow-on programs which will be discussed later. Although there is a lot of controversy over whether OE was headed in the right direction or had grown too big and was abandoning the basic process approach, there is little doubt that the program had growing acceptance and was showing promising organizational effectiveness progress. The question is, did the disbanding of this successful program at the time the Army was at its historic best, directly result in the following decline in leadership proficiency? This brings us back to the original assertion that the Army cannot refute this question because it has no formalized process to evaluate both organizational effectiveness and leader development.

#### **DA CIVILIAN TRAINING:**

Even today, there exists within the Army structure an organization that is dedicated to the complete process of leadership development. Falling under the Center for Army Leadership at Ft. Leavenworth Kansas, the Civilian Leadership Training Division’s (CLTD) charter is to provide all Army civilians a common core leadership-training curriculum from entry-level career interns to top-level executive managers.<sup>40</sup> The underlying philosophy, similar to OE, is that organizational effectiveness is an internal collaborative process that empowers the organization to critically evaluate itself, set priorities and measure progress. It is based on

building trust and confidence through cohesion and empowerment. Most importantly, it recognizes and builds on all nine supporting pillars in the leadership model to positively affect professional traits, individual development and organizational effectiveness.

Ironically, this civilian-oriented program was started about the same time the Army's leadership was abandoning the military-oriented OE program. There were two primary forces spurring this effort. The first was the general perception among the military that their civilian counterparts were severely lacking in leadership skills and were not capable of holding key positions, especially those which called for supervising military personnel. Second were the complaints of the supervisory civilians that they were not being offered similar leadership training opportunities as afforded to their military counterparts.<sup>41</sup>

Since its inception in 1986, CLTD has trained over 68,000 personnel ranging from interns to SES and general officers.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, attempts to quantify the value added was not begun until 1997, again the result of pressure to move valuable people and dollar resources to other priorities. Yet in the last three years, at the junior level (up through GS-11), end of course evaluations noted an average of 15.23% increase in each of 24 leadership dimension and attribute areas. At the senior level (GS-12+/LTC/COL), surveys were solicited from both the students immediately after the end of the course and then six months later, as well as from their supervisors. Evaluations of key leadership skills indicated an increase of 9.5% on 13 leadership behavioral indicators as reported by the supervisor and 13.5% as reported by the students themselves. When applied as a ratio between increase of value in salaried skills compared to training costs per participant, the return on investments was 230% or 326% depending on whether the supervisors' or students' value added perceptions were used in the calculations.<sup>43</sup>

More importantly, after the students returned to their home stations and the value to the individual as well as to the organization became increasingly apparent, an interesting phenomenon occurred. The leadership in these organizations first started sending more of their leaders, both military and civilian, to the course and then eventually asked that the courses be exported and taught to their organization as a whole. This began a new dimension of CLTD known in the commercial world as "consulting". Everything from basic teambuilding/command climate workshops to command transition, to complete, long-term organizational improvement programs have now been developed and are continuously conducted within the limited capability and manning of the CLTD.<sup>44</sup> This truly has become a bottom-up, incremental, organizational improvement movement that, like OE, is just now at the threshold of showing major Army-wide impact. This time, will it be allowed to mature and flourish or will it be once

again be cut to another program that enhances the technical proficiency side of leadership at the expense of the more fundamental leadership attributes and skills?

### **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM):**

Total quality management for the Army has been dubbed Total Army Quality (TAQ) and was officially embraced as a key organizational effectiveness tool in 1992 after considerable demonstrated successes in the corporate world. Based on W. Edwards Demmings 14 points of management, TAQ became the Army's "integrated strategic management approach for achieving performance excellence."<sup>45</sup> It focuses on individual empowerment and continuous process improvement based on four principles at its core: Leadership vision and commitment, customer focus, employee empowerment, and continuous improvement.

By all accounts, success of this effort has been tremendous as exemplified by:

- DoD winning over 475 National Partnership for Reinventing Government Hammer Awards of which 163 were specifically for Army agencies/units since its inception in 1993. The Hammer Award is presented to teams of federal employees who have made significant contributions in support of reinventing government principles.
- DoD winning over 30 Presidential Quality Awards of which 11 were specifically for Army agencies/units since its inception in 1988. The President's Quality Award Program recognizes Federal organizations for their accomplishments in continuous improvement through the application of quality management principles and practices. It is the governmental agency equivalent of the Malcolm Baldrige Award.
- Establishing over 120 reinvention laboratories of which 48 are Army. "These reinvention labs have been very successful in championing innovation, encouraging prudent risk-taking, removing bureaucratic barriers, and linking authority, responsibility, and accountability.
- Establishing the Army Performance Improvement Criteria (APIC), which is modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. This program standardizes organizational assessments, balances competing Army Imperatives (list in footnotes), and facilitates innovative process-based performance. This effort has been credited for the major innovations and quantum leaps in Army facilities and quality of life as part of the Army Community of Excellence (ACOE) Program.

Despite all these successes, TAQ has been almost exclusively implemented on the institutional side of the Army, mostly in logistic, maintenance and installation management operations.<sup>46</sup> The TQM/TAQ program is a slow, long-term improvement process based on

consensus problem solving and decentralized decision-making and is structured around a customer-oriented bottom line profit. Therefore, many say it is incongruent with military culture. After all, who specifically are the Army's customers? Profitability is not a measure within the Army; rather it is the perceived public benefit at a given cost. Finally, how is success measured especially during times when there are no battles or wars to be won or lost?

Though some will argue that TQM was the then in-vogue-management-process of-the-day replacing OE, it never received the same level of senior leadership support or resourcing. Additionally, like the other programs, the TAQ program has done an inadequate job of marketing its success, especially to the warfighters. This has resulted in a lack of integration into the Army education system, haphazard voluntary application, and marginalizing its potential as an organizational effectiveness multiplier. The one positive improvement over OE, at least within the Institutional Army, is that the processes have become institutionalized through the APIC process which serves as the measurement tool for recognition programs such as ACOE.

Like OE, just before it was terminated, and the Civilian Leadership Training Division's organization and leader development program, TAQ is proving to be very successful. All three were or are on the verge of changing the military culture while providing the measurement tools to effectively develop and evaluate the full range of leadership competencies. Why then is the senior Army leadership so hesitant to fully embrace and support programs that have proven to be so successful?

#### **INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING/EVALUATION PRACTICES:**

The Army as an institution cannot be directly compared to the largest of civilian institutions or even to other non-military governmental agencies. This is because:

- even the largest of civilian organizations, numbering in the tens of thousands dwarfs the current 780,000 strength of the Army;
- for many of the skills in the Army, one cannot just move on to another company if frustrated or stilted as one can when working for any other major industry;<sup>47</sup>
- few other professions "carry with it the implicit duty to risk one's life to meet corporate goals";<sup>48</sup>
- leadership at all levels within the military are "home grown"; they do not hire from outside;<sup>49</sup> and
- unique missions; frequent placement into hostile, remote, or culturally different environments; and the stresses associated with combat environments build cohesion between fellow soldiers that is seldom found in any commercial company.<sup>50</sup>

Understanding these significant differences when looking at the successes of leadership and organizational effectiveness in the civilian sector is important as there are different organizational dynamics at work. However, there are some lessons to be learned from industry. Key among these "best practices" are:

- participation in "laboratory exercises that include structured, instrumented feedback from peers and subordinates" for mid-grade leaders and programs that include behavioral feedback from observers at the work site."<sup>51</sup>
- concentration on developing leadership through use of feedback instead of using it to *grade* or evaluate performance for the purpose of determining the best performers.<sup>52</sup>
- use of "climate surveys to articulate organizational values, sense strong and weak aspects of the environment, coach (leaders), and sometimes contribute to assignment or promotion decisions."<sup>53</sup>
- use of simulation to enhance people skills, problem solving techniques, and to experience in compressed time, the effects of decisions and areas of concentration in organizational effectiveness.
- use of multiple sources of evaluation information to make key promotion and both operational and developmental assignments. These may include 360 degree (superior, peer, subordinate) evaluations, climate surveys, self-evaluations, skills inventory, academic standing reports and management reports (budget, resource management, retention, etc) to name a few possibilities.<sup>54</sup>

This is not to say that there is a specific commercial model that, if implemented, will solve all our leadership problems. Rather, that there are concepts and practices that have worked in large, corporate organizations where competitiveness is just as keen and organizational effectiveness makes the difference between survival and failure. What is certain is that the Army's top-down, one-dimensional practice of evaluating organizations through their short-term leaders just does not work. This is evident both by the cyclical nature of leadership crisis throughout our military history and the continuous need to redesign the evaluation form primarily because of inflated ratings. Interestingly, the civilian sector's experiences seem to confirm the Army's own experiences with OE, the civilian leadership training program, and TQM. If this were a piece of equipment and all the evidence suggested that a change in design was warranted, wouldn't the Army upgrade it?<sup>55</sup> Then why is it so reluctant to make such obvious changes in the leadership development design?

## THE WAY AHEAD

Leadership is consistently held up as the load-bearing pillar of our Army institution. Past great battle captains, theorists, and even our doctrine places the premier emphasis on leadership above any other aspects of military duty. Historically, when our Army is at its best, leadership is always pointed to as the key ingredient. At the low points of our pride as an institution, the finger seems to point to a leadership crisis. So what makes the difference? As discussed above, very possibly it could be the attention to leadership process training as the fundamental skill that must be taught independently and that does not automatically occur just because we teach our leaders to be technically proficient. Moreover, lack of counseling and mentoring fails to strengthen classroom training and stop inadequate execution. Finally, it is the evaluation process that brings balance and emphasis to leadership approaches and enforces the highest ethical standards. As we learned from our climb out of the depths of the Vietnam era, both individual and unit experienced-based leadership training is essential and balance must be achieved between mission accomplishments, organizational effectiveness and leader development at all echelons.

The way ahead must consist of:

- rock solid support and prioritization of a leadership training and implementation doctrine that demonstrates understanding by the senior Army commanders that leadership is more than just accomplishing the mission. This recognizes that recent morale issues and a backward slide in organizational efficiency is due to inattention to experience-based teaching and measuring of leadership processes, especially mentoring and counseling skills.
- command priority and support for progressive, sequential, experienced-based leadership and organizational effectiveness training. This must take into account the lessons learned from the previous OE program and leveraging the successes of the CLTD program based on current organizational development theory.
- incorporation of multi-dimensional tools for mentoring, counseling, and evaluating the full spectrum of leadership traits, skills, and actions. This *whole leader* evaluation must also be part of the promotion, assignment, and schooling selection process.
- specific evaluation measures that hold leaders accountable for organizational effectiveness and development of their subordinates as an equal criterion to mission accomplishment. Most critical is accountability for effective and routine counseling and mentoring.

- safeguards to deter future efforts to eliminate full-spectrum leadership development and organizational effectiveness as a bill payer for other programs, especially after perceived leadership deficiencies are not longer prevalent.

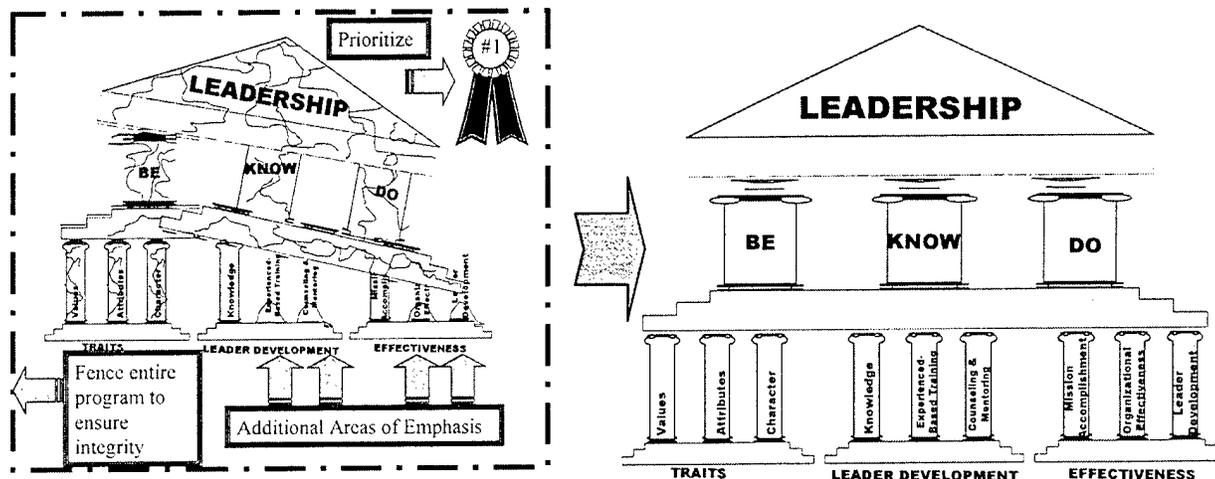


FIGURE 10 – THE WAY AHEAD – IT’S ALL OR NOTHING

If there is one thing history has shown, every time the Army, or any other institution, disregards the human relational aspect of leadership -- that part that causes human interaction to become effective and organizations to operate efficiently -- the decline of the institution is sure to follow. As demonstrated in the leadership model, all the pillars must be strong for leadership to stand just as any building must have all its load-bearing walls to be sound.

Will the Army ever learn? General Ulmer hit it right on the mark in saying “strong conclusions about required competencies and behaviors have rarely produced powerful and integrated new policies designed to support the development of the heralded attributes.”<sup>56</sup> Solving the leadership crisis will depend on whether the Army can institutionalize this understanding through diligent training and evaluation of the full spectrum of leadership competencies. More importantly, it must have the fortitude to stick to the leadership development process over the long-term. Until this occurs, the Army cannot reach its full potential, nor can it confidently combat claims of a leadership crisis.

WORD COUNT – 7,557



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<sup>3</sup> Colonel Patricia Capin <pat.capin@csl.carlisle.army.mil>, "Army Team – CGSC Perceptions," electronic mail message to multiple addressees, 1 December 2000.

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<sup>10</sup> Wood, 3.

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<sup>16</sup> Major Donald E. Vandergriff, "Truth@readiness.mil," Naval Institute Proceedings (Jun 1999); available from <<http://www.usni.org/Proceedings/Articles99/PROvandergriff.htm>>; Internet; accessed 22 January 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Wood, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Capin.

<sup>19</sup> John L. Rovero; R Craig Bullis, "Assessing Self-Development," Military Review (Jan/Feb 1998): 35-40.

<sup>20</sup> Major General John C. Faith, "Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Is It Time To Change The System?" Army Magazine (December 2000): 13.

<sup>21</sup> W. Huitt and J. Hummel, "The Behavioral System," Educational Psychology Interactive, May 1998; available from <<http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/behsys/behsys.html>>; Internet; accessed on 01 March 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Battle Command Training Program Web Page; available from <<http://bctp.leavenworth.army.mil/>>; Internet; accessed 13 March 01.

<sup>23</sup> FM 22-100, C-1.

<sup>24</sup> Ulmer, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Shinseki.

<sup>26</sup> Based on a review of the curriculums of the Captains Career Course, CGSC, AWC, and three branch basic/advanced courses.

<sup>27</sup> Faith, 12-13.

<sup>28</sup> Capin.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Army Center for Army Leadership, Civilian Leadership Training Division Web Page; available from <<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/cal/CLTD/CLTDFR.HTM>>; Internet; accessed 23 February 2001.

<sup>30</sup> General Eric Shinseki, "The U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List," 7 July 2000; available from <<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/reference/CSAList/CSAList.htm>>; Internet; accessed 15 December 2000.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 38.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 11.

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