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Passing Fancy or Permanent Reform?:
An Evaluation of Defense Acquisition Oversight and Review Integrated Product Team Implementation

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PASSING FANCY OR PERMANENT REFORM?: AN EVALUATION OF DEFENSE ACQUISITION OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW INTEGRATED PRODUCT TEAM IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Motivated by the acquisition reform movement and emboldened by the successful use of Integrated Product Teams (IPTs) in product development, DOD has harnessed the IPT concept to fundamentally change the way it oversees and reviews acquisition programs. Since mid-1995, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and Service Headquarters staffs have hurriedly worked IPT implementation issues in parallel with their activation. The question is: have they applied effective teaming precepts to ensure the new structure's long-term viability?

The literature emphasizes the breadth and depth of attention required to build a lasting, team-based, participatory organization. Senior leadership must work to instill a host of effective team attributes, while facing unique challenges of hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations that work against teaming.

In establishing IPTs, DOD has made both good decisions and others that, if not corrected, may derail preliminary gains. Failures to provide timely team training, solidly establish a team focus, and consistently support the teaming concept have jeopardized the cultural change needed for lasting reform. It is not too late, however. DOD senior leadership can permanently reform this important part of the acquisition process if they commit to finishing the job they started.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of a proven management tool--the Integrated Product Team (IPT)--at the pinnacle of the American military establishment is cause for great hope and interest. Intent on reforming weapons system acquisition, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Service Headquarters have undertaken a fast-track program to apply IPTs to defense acquisition oversight and review--a bureaucratic nightmare long a part of an equally nightmarish acquisition process.

While Congressional overseers and field acquisition personnel applaud the intent, the value is in lasting improvement to the process. In establishing the new IPT approach, Department of Defense (DOD) senior leaders have made both good decisions and those which, over the long term, may derail preliminary gains. By referring to those who have studied and written on teaming, we can assess the changes needed to ensure IPTs live up to their potential and are not a passing fancy.

In this paper, I will answer the question: has DOD applied the appropriate organizational precepts in developing an IPT-based acquisition oversight and review process of lasting significance? I will divide the discussion into three major sections. First, I will provide some general background on IPTs and their application within DOD. I will then relay what the literature identifies as precepts to implementing effective teams within an organization. I will close with an evaluation of DOD's IPT

implementation as compared with these organizational precepts, and make general recommendations to enhance the chance that this attempt at acquisition reform will stand the test of time.

THE GENESIS AND USE OF IPTS

The IPT has proven itself to be a valuable management tool, putting the desired skills in a team problem-solving environment. In the following sections, I will track the forces that have popularized the IPT and the tool's intended use in acquisition oversight and review.

WHAT IS AN IPT?

An Integrated Product Team is, as the name implies, a team of integrated expertise focused on producing a "product." That "product" may be anything from actual hardware rolling off the assembly line to a recommendation for management action. The IPT supports the Integrated Product and Process Development (IPPD) concept by forming partnerships of skilled personnel having a stake in the outcome, and empowered to produce a quality product meeting all requirements. (Pentagon Daily Briefing, 16 May 95; Northrop Grumman) In an environment where both government acquisition and contractor personnel are under ever-increasing pressure to perform, program offices were fertile ground for the initial application of IPTs.

USE OF IPTS IN THE FIELD: A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The DOD acquisition community quickly applied the IPT tool to its acquisition programs, and soon saw the benefits from its use. The Air Force first employed IPTs

on the F-22 program, which became a benchmark program throughout DOD in their

application. (Boatman:36) The Army had equal success in its Tactical Endurance

Synthetic Aperture Radar (TESAR) program, where the IPT approach enabled the

program office to take only 96 days from synopsis of potential sources to contract

award. (Horner et al.:36) Other success stories abound in each of the services as well

as in joint programs. (JAST Information Paper) Obviously, the use of effective teaming

in product development has proven the power of integrated teams. For those

overseeing the acquisition process from within the Pentagon, the question became,

"Can we harness the power of IPTs here?"

INTENDED USE OF IPTS IN THE PENTAGON

Under pressure to reform the acquisition process and buoyed by the demonstrated

potential of IPTs, DOD leadership focused its effort on the acquisition program

oversight and review process. Direction came from the 1994 Federal Acquisition

Streamlining Act, which promised sweeping changes to the government procurement

process to include the elimination of unnecessary review through the use of IPTs.

(Williams:22-23) Previously, multiplicative reporting on program status was the norm at

the Service, Program Executive Officer (PEO), and OSD levels of oversight.

Redundant, sequential reviews eventually culminated with the Defense Acquisition

Board (DAB) and a milestone decision by the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE).

This procedure required inordinate preparation time on the part of the program office.

(Pentagon Daily Briefing, 16 May 95) The result was often advice given too late to alter

program execution or the outcome of the decision. Obviously, the oversight and review process was ripe for reform--a fact not lost on DOD senior leadership.

OSD Direction And Its Implications

Secretary of Defense Perry initiated a change to oversight and review business practices in his May 1995 memo entitled "Use of Integrated Product and Process Development and Integrated Product Teams in DOD Acquisition." The memo directed a "...fundamental change in the way the Department acquires goods and services..." by applying the IPPD and IPT concepts "...to the maximum extent possible." To do this, the Secretary called for oversight staffs to "...shift their roles from sequentially checking on the program beginning six months prior to a milestone decision point to participating early...through continuous teamwork and assistance throughout the acquisition process." (SECDEF Memo, 10 May 95:1)

The Secretary's memo meant fundamental changes in the way the Pentagon conducted its acquisition oversight and review business. Streamlined management, as hoped, would minimize no-value-added reviews and oversight. Applying IPPD and IPTs would essentially create a "seamless link" where Service and OSD staffs would work arm-in-arm in support of the program manager. This partnership of all involved stakeholders would operate in a parallel, supportive fashion versus the existing serial, often adversarial process. Together, the OSD-Service-program office team would achieve the ultimate goal of early insight as opposed to oversight, thereby allowing for correction of problems well before milestone decisions. (Allen & Yoos:42; Defense News, 24-30 April 95; Johnson:2,6; SECDEF Memo, 10 May 95:Atch.1,p.1)

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Putting Direction into Practice

With Secretary Perry's directive in hand, OSD and the Services immediately set out to create a new effective, efficient business practice. The final result involves a new decisionmaking structure, new "rules of the road" for implementing that structure, and new training requirements for those involved.

The Structure: Overarching and Working-Level IPTs. The Pentagon has

developed two levels of IPTs to handle program oversight and review: Overarching IPTs (OIPTs) and Working-Level IPTs (WIPTs). Each acquisition program will have an OIPT and usually several WIPTs focusing on particular functional areas (test, contracting, etc.). The program manager may also chair an Integrating IPT (IIPT) to integrate the information from multiple WIPTs. (Rules of the Road:5) The differences between these oversight and review IPTs lie in their membership and responsibilities.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between OIPTs and WIPTs in the new decisionmaking structure. The appropriate OSD technical director chairs the OIPT, which includes component representatives as well as senior OSD and Service staff members (Appendix A). OIPTs provide strategic guidance to the program manager, make program assessments to the Milestone Decision Authority (MDA), and resolve issues elevated by the WIPTs. (Rules of the Road:3) The program manager or his designee chairs each WIPT, which involves OSD, Service Headquarters, and program office functional staff members. WIPTs provide the bulk of the oversight function by developing strategies and plans that execute OIPT strategic guidance and

recommendations. (Johnson:13) With the IPT structure in place, the Pentagon set up
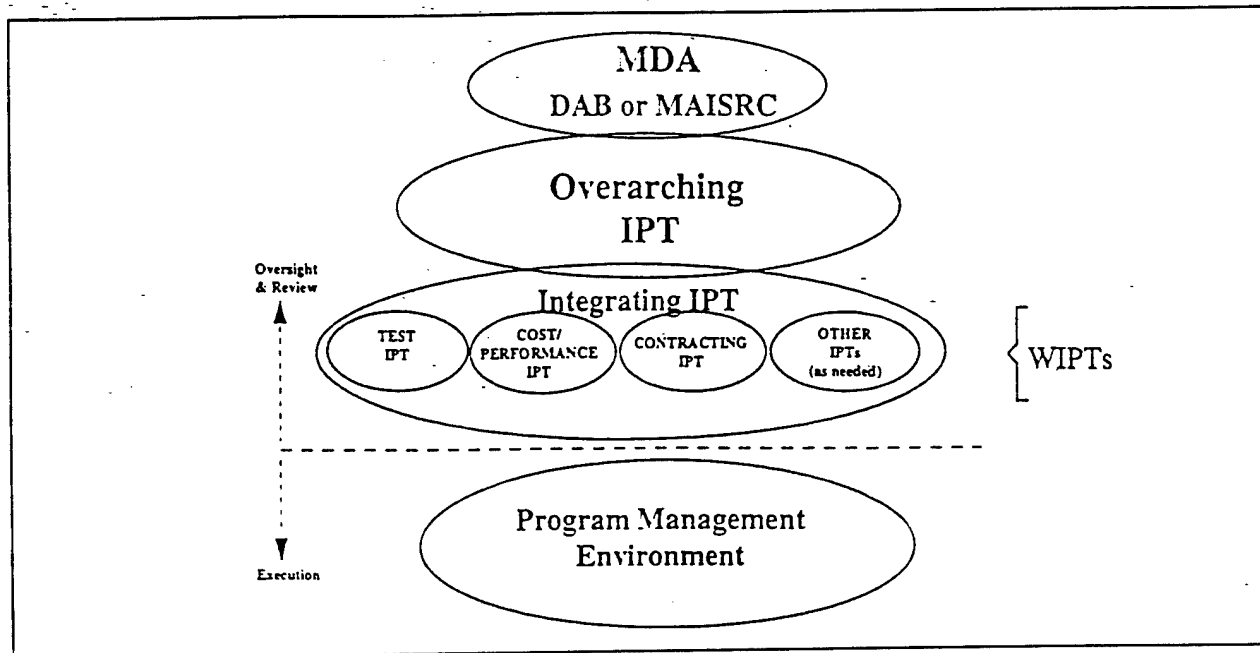
guidelines to make it work.

Figure 1. IPT Structure (Rules of the Road:5)

IPT "Rules of the Road." In November 1995, OSD published its <u>Rules of the</u>

<u>Road: A Guide for Leading Successful Integrated Product Teams</u>. This guide clarifies

directives set forth in draft revisions of DODD 5000.1 and DODI 5000.2 by outlining six

broad principles under which OIPTs and WIPTs should operate:

1. Open discussions with no secrets - A sense of cooperation and ownership on
   the part of team members is essential.

2. Qualified, empowered team members - Members must be able to speak for
   their superiors. This requires frequent communication with leadership to
   determine the limits of team member authority. An empowered team
   produces binding decisions.

3. Consistent, success-oriented, proactive participation - All stakeholders
   should participate with no limits on membership. WIPT members should
   have alternates to ensure continuity.

4. Continuous, "up-the-line" communications - Team members must ensure their leaders agree with the direction of IPT activities. Should issues exceed the limits of empowerment, members should consult with their superiors.

5. Reasoned disagreement - The team encourages constructive disagreement, as opposed to unyielding opposition, in order to avoid "lowest common denominator" consensus.

6. Issues raised and resolved early - The objective is to resolve issues early and at the lowest possible level. If resolution is not possible, the team leader must raise the issue quickly to the appropriate decisionmaking level. (Rules of the Road:9-11)

While not listed as principles, the guide covers two elements important to proper IPT operation--direct communication and guidelines for meeting management. The guide emphasizes that direct communication between the program manager and all levels in the review and oversight function must occur in order to build trust as well as exchange information. The guide also encourages team leaders conducting IPT meetings to (1) clearly articulate the IPT's focus at its outset and (2) attain team concurrence to meet only as necessary to achieve the stated objective. (Rules of the Road:12) With everyone from senior OIPT members to WIPT functional experts now required to operate with new rules under a new system, OSD senior leadership looked at changing its training program accordingly.

IPT Training. OSD leads the effort to create a training program for IPT leaders and members. OSD plans to use the "Rules of the Road" as a baseline in developing videotape instruction covering the six broad principles of IPTs. The training package will also contain a bibliography of source books on teaming and of IPT-related policies. Plans call for the Defense Acquisition University to receive the complete package and

conduct formal training of acquisition oversight personnel. For those major program IPTs already in existence, OSD provides mentors that attend WIPT and IIPT meetings and observe the process. In addition, process and outcome metrics, when developed, will provide all senior DOD decisionmakers with a report card of the efficiencies gained through the use of IPTs. (Johnson:13)

In Search of Lasting Change

Implementation of IPTs in the DOD oversight and review process requires nothing less than a cultural change to transform a risk-averse, highly regulated, and bureaucratic culture into a risk-tolerant, incentivized, and empowered one. (Johnson:3) Dr. Paul Kaminski, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, admits this cultural change will take time to propagate through the entire system. (White House Briefing, 19 September 95)

Such a statement appears to assume that time is the only remaining variable, and that everything possible has been done correctly to promote lasting change. But is that indeed true? It is at this juncture that I turn my attention to those who have studied and written on the elements of effective teams and the organizations they support.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRECEPTS INVOLVING IPTS

Given the relative novelty of IPTs, it is not surprising that little specific research exists regarding their application in organizations. However, considering that an IPT is, in fact, a unique form of a team operating within a participative setting, a number of organizational precepts spring forth. I will start by generally characterizing the

operation of teams in participative organizations, then get into the details of effective

team attributes. I will close this section by focusing on teaming issues particularly

relevant to IPT implementation in the senior managerial, hierarchical, and functionally

divided organizations found within the Pentagon.

TEAMS WITHIN PARTICIPATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Introducing IPTs into the acquisition oversight and review process signals a shift

from a more authoritative system of organization to one that is more participative.

Participative organizations, as described by Rensis Likert in The Human Organization,

exhibit a complex "linking pin" structure with multiple groups joined together by

members who belong to more than one work group (Figure 2). These "linking pins" act

as conduits through which group interaction and decisionmaking occur. Because of

their complexity and reliance on group processes, participative organizations require

greater skill, learning, and facilitation at all organizational levels. (Likert:46,50)

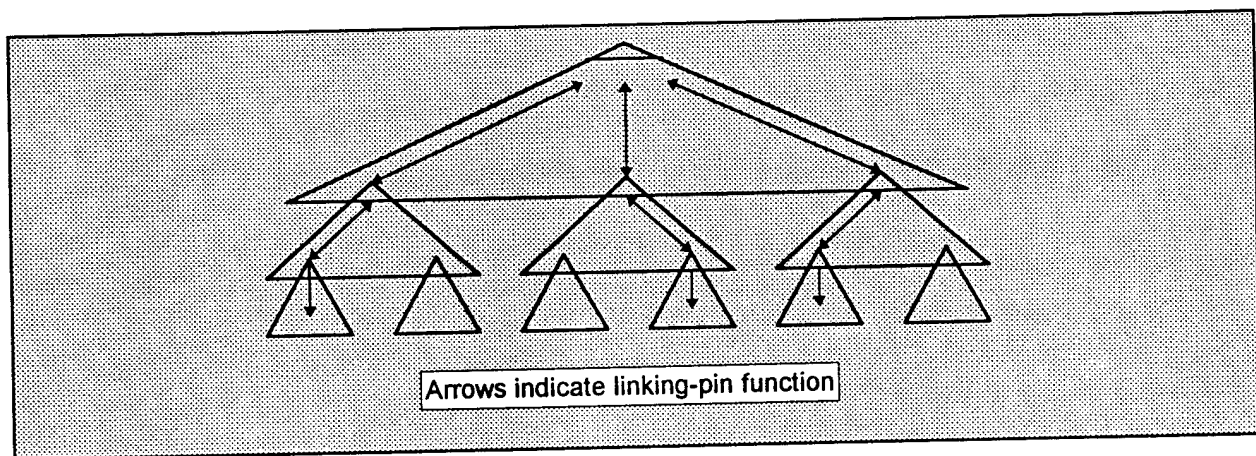Arrows indicate linking-pin function

Figure 2. Linking Pin Organization (Likert:50)

High performance teams are worth the effort, however. While work groups and

committees depend on the sum of individual bests, teams produce joint work products

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through committed, collective action. Nurtured to reach their potential, teams are often the best way to integrate across structural boundaries and to enhance core processes. (Katzenbach & Smith:5,85) Furthermore, high performance teams share common attributes that differentiate them from teams in name only.

ATTRIBUTES OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

In defining the attributes of high performance teams, I will start with the basic building block of the team--the individual--and work my way up through team synergism, leadership, training, teambuilding, reward, and cultural influences.

Individual Member Attributes

Even if the output of a high performance team is greater than the sum of its individual parts, it helps to start off with good parts. The literature on teamwork collectively focuses on two desired characteristics of team members: individual competence and team-supportive behavior. Whether characterized as technical skills and abilities or subject matter competence, team members must bring some expertise to the table. Equally important, members must work well with others, know how to be part of a team, and understand their role in contributing to the whole. (Carr:41; Dyer:15-16; Larson & LaFasto:62). Doing so requires individual team members to develop certain qualities critical to team synergism.

Team Synergistic Qualities

Much of the literature highlights three overarching qualities necessary for a team to achieve synergism: trust, cohesiveness, and shared commitment. Whether through a

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shared sense of team autonomy, a foundation of mutual respect, or a willingness to share risk, building a "climate" of trust is a prerequisite for team cohesiveness. Cohesiveness springs from a collective view of team membership as being a positive experience, and from a sense of shared responsibility. This "all for one, one for all" mentality helps to align the team with the task at hand, or in other words, develop its sense of commitment. Shared commitment refers to the team functioning as a harmonized whole with commonality of direction, and culminating in jointly implemented decisions with true "buy-in." (Blanchard et al.:22-23; Buchholz & Roth:176-177; Carr:29-30; Dyer:15-16; Hackman:487-488; Larson & LaFasto:78,87,93; Senge:234)

Many experts agree that high performance teams transcend the confines of mere task accomplishment when they reach this stage of development. Perhaps researchers Dean and Mary Tjosvold describe team synergism best when they state:

> "Wanting to work as a team is insufficient. The desire to be part of something greater than oneself, to make a difference with other people, to have a credible leader, and to have an inspiring, common vision...are very strong today."
> (Tjosvold & Tjosvold:xii)

Obviously, even with teams demonstrating such synergism, effective leadership facilitates the transition from ordinary to extraordinary teams.

Leadership

It is not surprising that the type of leadership called for in a trusting, cohesive, and committed team nurtures and reflects those same qualities. While adjectives such as "participative" and "supportive" repeatedly appear in the literature, the word "authoritative" does not. (Buchholz & Roth:176-177; Dyer:15-16; Likert:58). The

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literature resonates with four other areas where leadership greatly influences team effectiveness: communication, empowerment, goal orientation, and team structure.

Communication. Open and honest communication is a key component of effective teams, and leadership must constantly nurture it or risk undercutting team trust and cohesiveness. "Openness" refers to information flowing in all directions, while "honesty" implies that team members receive "direct, prompt, dependable, and usable" information relevant to the task at hand. (Blanchard et al.:22-23; Buchholz & Roth:176-177; Carr:39; Dyer:15-16; Likert:16-17; Petkus:72)

Empowerment. Open, honest information flow tends to push decisions to the point in the organization where adequate information to make those decisions resides. (Likert:21) Such empowerment is essential to high performance teams since it allows employees to "...manage themselves in pursuit of organizational goals." (Blanchard et al.:22-23; Carr:5-6; Tjosvold & Tjosvold:49) Leadership must be mindful of the balance of authority within the organization and the perception of trust it engenders when intervening in team affairs. (Hackman:484)

Goal Orientation. A team of cohesive and committed talent, nurtured by participative leadership and empowered to act, cannot reach its full potential if not properly oriented. Together, the team and its leadership must establish value-based goals and specific, measurable objectives that are elevating, engaging, understood, and accepted. Failure to establish value-based goals before the team begins work is

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the "most frequent explanation for team failure." (Blanchard et al.:15-16,22-23; Carr:30-31, 36-38; Larson & LaFasto:27,33,38; Tjosvold & Tjosvold:45)

Intrinsic benefits arise from team-authored goals and objectives. Besides creating a sense of ownership and acceptance, these "yardsticks" provide standards of excellence against which the team can measure its progress, thereby providing internal as well as external pressures to perform. This, in turn, bolsters team cohesiveness and motivation, creating an upward spiral of continuous improvement where goal attainment, cohesiveness, and motivation feed off one another. (Larson & LaFasto:95-96; Likert:64; Tjosvold & Tjosvold:54)

Team Structure. Structuring of the team requires the integration of all the effective team attributes discussed earlier. The leader must build a results-driven structure consistent with the task at hand, team goals, and the members involved. This implies that, for one, there is a genuine need for each team member. A team's design in harmony with team attributes is one of the primary catalysts for "self-fueling spirals," or ever-increasing levels of performance. (Carr:33; Dyer:15-16; Hackman:481-482; Larson & LaFasto:39) Even so, the catalyzing effects of training and teambuilding are also critical for enduring organizational change.

Training

James Shonk, in Team-based Organizations: Developing a Successful Team Environment, puts the importance of team training in perspective when he states, "You can implement teams without training but there is a cost. Without training, teams are

slow to mature and some may never reach a productive working level." The team leader should receive independent training on team leadership skills as well as training with the team on how to (1) build teams, (2) work in teams, (3) conduct team meetings, (4) resolve conflicts, and (5) nurture interpersonal relationships. (Shonk:121,124)

Teambuilding

Despite the accepted importance of teambuilding, researcher William Dyer provides this synopsis on its actual practice:

> "I have watched teams set up to implement Total Quality programs, to create new designs or products, to do strategic planning, but no effort was made to prepare these teams or the team leaders for the work. It is almost assumed that if people are put into a team, they will automatically know how to function."
> (Dyer:xvii)

Teambuilding is not optional if an organization wants to enjoy the unifying, purposeful, and synergistic effect that true teaming provides. Organizational leadership must openly commit up front to an effective teambuilding program by (1) clearly communicating their support, (2) treating teambuilding as an on-going, long term concern that focuses on continuous improvement, and (3) understanding that it is a learned skill requiring training. (Dyer:xvii,13-15,17; Hackman:494; Kinlaw:25; Senge:257) Leadership commitment should end with an award system that supports the fruits of teambuilding--effective team performance.

Awards

While teambuilding gets a lot of "air time" within team-based organizations, rewarding team performance does not. Rewarding the entire team, as opposed to

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rewarding the individual for team performance, is the most frequent oversight when building successful teams. (Carr:40-41)

This, perhaps, is not surprising given the cultural orientation of many organizations. Job descriptions, methods of compensation, career paths, and performance evaluations typically emphasize individual performance, proving that most organizations intrinsically prefer individual over team accountability. (Katzenbach & Smith:3-4)

If an organization is truly going to transform culturally into a participative organization utilizing teams, its award system must support the change desired. The organization must respect and acknowledge team contributions continually. Emphasis on the individual must give way to emphasis on teamwork, and managerial rewards for developing people and cross-departmental coordination must get equal time with rewards for meeting the bottom line. (Blanchard et al.:22-23; Carr:40-41; Shonk:44-45)

Culture

Building effective teams cannot succeed unless the entire organization wholeheartedly commits, both in practice as well as in word, to a "collaborative, team-oriented way of life." Referring to McGregor's Theory X and Y, an organization holding to Theory X assumptions (i.e., fear of empowerment) but enacting changes espousing Theory Y beliefs (i.e., the power of teams) will see its people cynically undermining its efforts. Ideally, the organization should completely review all of its systems to ensure they reflect the desired cultural norms and values. (Dyer:67,72,74) Without this match,

DOD will find it even more difficult to overcome the inertia inherent in senior

managerial, hierarchical, and functionally divided organizations.

TEAMING CHALLENGES IN BUREAUCRACIES

The press and others have often maligned the Pentagon as a place where the

"concepts of bureaucracy and assembly-line efficiency have been deeply ingrained in

our legacy of management thought." (Sashkin & Sashkin:19) That image, however, is

not so different from what researchers have observed in other bureaucracies wrestling

with the teaming concept--difficulties in transition, challenges in teaming senior

personnel, and the dangers of functional loyalties.

Difficulties in Transition to Teams

Every organization putting the teaming concept to work must accept the

implications that go with that decision. Organizations can expect increased training

demands to impact funding, personnel, and time. They must also accept lengthier

meetings and slower decision cycles due to consensus decisionmaking. Organizations

must deal with power struggles between the old competitive, individualistic order and

the new cooperative, team order. The aggregate effect of maintaining an individual-

based "wolf" in team-based "sheep's clothing" is to field teams ill-prepared and ill-led,

no matter where they exist in the organization. (Hackman:493,496,500; Larson &

LaFasto:134-135; Shonk:8; Tjosvold & Tjosvold:24)

Challenges of Senior Management Teams

High-level executive teams, such as OIPTs and WIPTs, are very difficult to implement and maintain because of (1) the heavy demands on executive time and (2) the ingrained individualism of senior membership. Senior executives, anxious for the bottom line, feel they have precious little time to invest in teambuilding or consensus decisionmaking. They also advance in the classic, hierarchical organization by successfully competing against their contemporaries. This individualistic, competitive frame of reference manifests itself when senior personnel (1) base team membership on their position rather than the relevance of their input, (2) view team membership merely as providing professional opportunities, and (3) define their roles and contributions as team members by their respective hierarchical and functional positions. (Katzenbach & Smith:3,217-221; Hackman:81) Like individualism, excessive functional orientation often works against effective teamwork.

Functional Versus Team Orientation

"Functional nationalism" describes the tendency of managers to identify first with their function (contracting, engineering, etc.) instead of emphasizing cross-functional integration. Where present, its pull may create the "development of dual and potentially inconsistent loyalties" within the team. (Carr:66-67; Chaudron:4-5; Herbst:7; Shonk:41,45)

Given this inherent difficulty with cross-functional teams, researchers differ on their approach to a solution. Some experts favor a more temporary structure where team membership changes based upon need, or where the team's very existence lasts only

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as long as the task at hand. (Nahavandi & Aranda:64; Sashkin & Sashkin:37) Other researchers claim that the functionally divided organization, and not team longevity, is at the heart of the problem. By promoting cross-functional teams across an organization, senior leadership may need to look at changing the very structure of the organization along product or service-oriented lines. (Chaudron:5)

EVALUATION OF DOD'S IPT IMPLEMENTATION

The Pentagon clearly took on a monumental task when it chose to implement the use of IPTs in its oversight and review process. The changes required to make it work reach from within the individual to the organization's structure and culture. DOD has done some things well which will support the longevity of the changes desired, and others that, through neglect, may unravel the progress made thus far.

In this section, I will evaluate DOD's implementation of IPTs as compared to the applicable organizational precepts, and present general recommendations where appropriate. I will start with the role of OSD leadership in facilitating cultural change, then cover the training and award systems, where delayed implementation and focus on the individual have slowed needed change. I will then discuss how shortfalls in these areas manifest themselves in problems with teambuilding, goal setting, empowerment, and communication. I will close by entertaining structural problems associated with "functional nationalism" within OSD and the Services.

[Note: since some observations and recommendations may be controversial, I have chosen not to reveal the identity of those with whom I have spoken. Nevertheless, I am deeply grateful for their time and frankness.]

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LEADERSHIP: WORDS, DEEDS, AND CULTURAL CHANGE

OSD senior leadership has shown long-term support for the IPT concept, but not always in deed as well as in word. In a favorable light, Dr. Kaminski has demonstrated leadership's facilitating role in participative organizations by regularly scheduling off-sites with IPT implementation stakeholders. OSD senior leadership has visibly demonstrated its trust in the IPT process by disregarding issues introduced in an OIPT but not previously brought out and worked first at the WIPT level. However, this support has not been entirely consistent. There have been instances where senior decisionmakers overturned team decisions without proper explanation, casting doubt on their commitment to the teaming approach in the process.

Even more damaging, OSD senior leadership has failed to follow through in two key precepts necessary for cultural change: training and a team award system. The failures are in timing and focus, which I discuss in the following sections.

TIMELY TRAINING: GETTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT

How much better could IPT performance be with trained team members? IPTs formed shortly after Secretary Perry's guidance, but as of February 1996, comprehensive training had yet to materialize. Perhaps pressured to field teams in order to show progress on acquisition reform, DOD senior leadership has shown a willingness to pay Shonk's trade-off "cost" between training and team productivity. If DOD is serious about moving to teaming in a participatory organization, then it must

step up to its responsibility to facilitate greater learning by its team leaders and members.

The issue seems to revolve around ingrained individualism and the demands on executive time. One input received indicated that OIPT members, because of their seniority, already knew how to be on a team and did not require further training. Will this "leadership by example" help to change the culture or to mock it? It is true that senior executive time is at a premium, but it is also true that a demonstrated lack of leadership support will make "IPT" the latest buzzword. Several inputs I received mirrored that exact sentiment. With many of the same senior officials on the same OIPT, the relatively small investment in time for training outweighs the larger negative consequences.

The planned training program may also be lacking in detail as it does in timing. Closely paralleling the broad material covered in the Rules of the Road guide, it is not apparent that the program will cover the five training areas proposed by Shonk, nor require that all teams and their leaders train together. Since team-supportive behavior is one of the two key attributes of team members, training should not occur in video-viewing isolation, but rather with open discussion by team members.

Recommendation

OSD should institute, as quickly as possible, a substantive training program for all potential IPT members covering teambuilding, conflict resolution, meeting management, teamwork facilitation, and interpersonal relations. If at all possible, existing teams should receive this training together--even OIPTs. Senior leaders must

set the example by being the first to receive training. Potential IPT leaders must also receive IPT leadership training, which could occur individually at their work sites.

REINFORCING IPTS THROUGH A TRUE TEAM AWARD SYSTEM AND MORE

DOD senior leadership espouses the virtues of IPTs, yet clings to systems emphasizing the individual--the most visible being the award system. The IPT Staff Award under consideration within OSD is a step in the right direction, but still emphasizes individual accomplishments over the collective contribution of the team. This award is an individual award for individual contributions to the IPT--an approach not uncommon in other organizations. OSD even bases the nomination process on individual input--in this case it's the IPT leader or program manager who has the authority.

Recommendation

OSD must make the IPT award a true "team" award by recognizing the entire team for outstanding performance. Nomination for the award should come from the team itself based upon minimum criteria established by OSD senior leadership. The award should include all team members from OSD, the Service Headquarters, and the program office in order to underscore the importance of a joint effort.

To enhance its cultural transformation into a team-based participative organization, DOD should go beyond enhancing the award system. It should also inject the value of team support and accomplishment in its job descriptions, compensation methods, career paths, and performance evaluations. Evaluating and rewarding based on team

performance is the best way to move away from the individual and toward team-focused behavior. OSD should also place added, visible emphasis on the importance of IPTs in the oversight and review process by formerly chartering them.

STRUCTURED TEAMBUILDING: AN INVESTMENT IN FUTURE SUCCESS

The lack of formal training and shortfalls in emphasizing team-based performance manifest themselves in DOD's cavalier, catch-as-catch-can approach to teambuilding. The extent and quality of IPT teambuilding are entirely dependent on the pre-existing qualities of the team leader. Some IPT leaders, apparently already well-versed in teambuilding techniques, have led structured, effective teambuilding sessions. Others without such skills have authoritatively dictated rules and expectations to their members. None have benefited from formalized training that should have been part of oversight and review IPT implementation. With the multiplicity of WIPTs, which places many untrained personnel in team leadership positions, this problem touches every IPT member. If many members lose their commitment, cohesiveness, and trust due to negative team experiences, DOD senior leadership cannot expect cultural change.

IPT mentors, as currently employed, have not helped alleviate teambuilding inconsistencies. Despite their presence, individual team leaders dictate the form and extent of teambuilding with little to no feedback. This may be due to the fact that mentors may feel uncomfortable giving advice to experienced personnel of equal or senior rank.

In addition to the idle involvement of mentors, several statements contained within the Rules of the Road guide may send the wrong message about the importance of

teambuilding. First, in the interest of continuity, the guide encourages WIPT members to have alternates. At face value, this statement ignores the importance of team synergism, and instead seemingly equates team membership with committee attendance. Second, the statement encouraging the IPT to meet only as necessary to attain the stated objective may, once again, unintentionally downplay the importance of teambuilding.

Recommendation

Teambuilding must be structured, meaningful, and given the time and training it deserves. OSD senior leadership must concern itself with the quality of teams providing oversight and review as much as it concerns itself with the products of those teams. Mentors must take a more active role in assisting the team leader to guide team processes and development. If mentor seniority or time availability is a problem, DOD should consider hiring outside facilitators. Finally, the Rules of the Road guide and training courses should be careful to underline the importance and responsibilities of team membership.

GOALS: CRITICAL TO FOCUSED PERFORMANCE

Without adequate training or attention to teambuilding, OIPT and WIPT goal-setting is situation-dependent. As a program approaches a milestone decision, these IPTs work better because the acquisition cycle explicitly dictates the goal--get approval to enter the next program phase. However, difficulties in team performance arise when IPTs are merely overseeing programs without pressing event or time constraints.

Under this scenario, goals and specific, measurable objectives are much harder to definitize. Perhaps because of this difficulty, IPT leaders do not make the effort. The danger in this approach is that the team, without a clear focus, will lose its commitment to Secretary Perry's call for early program insight and, ultimately, timely and constructive influence.

Recommendation

OSD and the Services should emphasize and teach goal-setting in IPT training, and make it a mandatory part of the teambuilding process. WIPTs should strongly consider adopting program office goals to strengthen the sense of program ownership, and to build cohesiveness between OSD, the Service Headquarters staff, and the program office. Discrete, measurable objectives with accompanying metrics should accompany those goals, and provide the "yardsticks" by which the IPTs can measure the effects of their inputs.

EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION: MIXED SIGNALS

With uncertainty expected during the transition from individualistic, hierarchical decisionmaking to participative team consensus-building, it is not surprising that DOD still seeks a balance of authority and communication between its executives and IPTs. Functional supervisors and OSD senior leadership continue to struggle with the extent of empowerment and the perceptions left with WIPTs when intervening in team affairs. Situations exist where supervisors want to see all team products and where OIPTs

meet merely to review WIPT proceedings. The perceptions left with the WIPTs are of mistrust, undue influence, and an imbalance of authority.

The Rules of the Road guide, as written, also works against a true sense of empowerment by leaving the door of influence on team affairs wide open. The guide talks of leadership determining a team member's limits of authority instead of defining latitudes. It defines issue resolution at the lowest level as an objective instead of the expectation. The only expectation established is to raise issues quickly to the appropriate decisionmaker if difficulties arise. Yet the guide opens by stating that ownership on the part of team members is essential. Some may argue that it is only semantics, but at this stage in the transition, I would argue that the message is--in word and in action--everything. As the literature defends, trust occurs through a shared sense of team autonomy. Without respected autonomy and its underlying message of trust, WIPTs will lack a critical synergistic quality.

Feedback from WIPTs indicates a vast improvement in the quantity and quality of information flow. Open and honest communication flowing in all directions has apparently replaced the serial, filtered communication of the past. My concern lies once again in the terminology chosen for one of the Rules of the Road principles: "up-the-line" communications. This implies interest in only one direction, and toward the leader at that. OSD senior leadership has the important responsibility to push information down to the level where decisionmaking occurs--the team. Once again, we get back to the issue of empowerment and the perception that control of information will allow control of decisions.

Recommendation

OSD and Service senior leadership and functional supervisors must understand that McGregor's Theory X and Y is alive and well in their efforts to implement IPTs. They need to be mindful of matching the messages of their actions and directives with the professed support of team empowerment. OSD should rewrite the <u>Rules of the Road</u> guide to clarify full support for empowerment and open communication. Leadership action must follow. Superiors should give WIPT members the latitude and information needed to meet the expectation of an autonomous decision.

"FUNCTIONAL NATIONALISM" BREEDS TEAM STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

"Functional nationalism" presents two significant problems for OIPTs and WIPTs: divided loyalties and non-productive team members. The sense of division within and between OSD and the Services is strong. OSD Directorates, Service Headquarters functional areas, and PEO staffs all have their agendas and biases. Some organizations have particular difficulty struggling with their role as team supporter of the program manager and that as an "honest broker." Team members come to the IPTs with divided loyalties that nonexistent training, unstructured teambuilding, and mixed signals accentuate. If an IPT member perceives the balance of authority and control of information lies with his parent organization, and that he will be evaluated and awarded based upon his individual accomplishments in support of that organization, is it any wonder that "functional nationalism" keeps oversight and review IPTs from working to their full potential?

"Functional nationalism," a fear of bureaucratic exclusion, and the sense of ingrained individualism work together to place members of questionable productivity on IPTs. Supported explicitly by the Rules of the Road guide, both OIPTs and WIPTs tend toward being all-inclusive in their membership. Functional areas want membership to have influence, and team leaders tend to encourage attendance for fear of missing a "player" in decisions. Individuals can eliminate themselves from the IPT based upon the circulation of advance agendas--few do. They either feel they may be a player in the decision, no matter how remote the possibility, or, because of their position, that they should be. It is not unusual for WIPT meetings to involve 40, 50, or even 100 members. Members who are not essential to the stated objective can, at best, cloud discussion and hinder the development of team synergism. At worst, members can become counter-productive by working their own agendas. In this environment, the team leader will likely experience undue difficulty creating the cohesive team necessary to produce synergistic results.

Recommendation

OSD senior leadership must counter the negative impact "functional nationalism" has on the future viability of IPTs. OSD must work to align its message and the award and evaluation systems with the team-based approach. OSD and the Service Headquarters should also consider reorganizing along product vice functional lines.

While the reviewed literature places no limit on the number of team members, it does stipulate that the team leader must make the call based on genuine need. OSD senior leadership must give team leaders the authority and support to do just that with

OIPTs and WIPTs. For those individuals or functions interested in IPT proceedings but not central to team decisionmaking, electronic information links could provide desired feedback and dialogue opportunities. In sum, the risks of cynicism, idle discontent, and non-productive team efforts outweigh bruised organizational or individual egos.

CONCLUSION

Motivated by the acquisition reform movement and emboldened by the success program offices have enjoyed with IPTs in product development, OSD and the Service Headquarters have harnessed the IPT concept to fundamentally change the way they oversee and review acquisition programs. Started in the summer of 1995, a system of streamlined management that emphasizes early insight and program support has replaced a laborious, sequential process that provided program feedback too little, too late. Overarching and working-level IPTs--the vehicles chosen to enact this change-- work together to provide strategic guidance to the program manager and program assessments to the Milestone Decision Authority. In November of 1995, OSD disseminated an IPT Rules of the Road guide that outlined broad operating principles of OIPTs and WIPTs, and served as a framework to develop a training program. Now approaching a year in operation, I ask whether DOD has adhered to recognized teaming precepts in order to achieve lasting reform.

Digging into the literature does not answer the question directly, but is necessary to provide a basis for evaluation. Overall, building a lasting, team-based, participatory organization requires attention to detail in both breadth and depth. Senior leadership must nurture individual team member skills and team-supportive behavior as well as

the team synergistic qualities of trust, cohesiveness, and commitment. It must develop team leaders reflecting those qualities while facilitating communication, empowerment, goal-setting, and an appropriate team structure. Senior leadership must commit to a thorough training program and structured teambuilding. It must reorient its award system to emphasize team over individual accomplishments, and follow suit with evaluation, promotion, and other systems if true cultural change is to occur.

The literature also confirms that making these changes in hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations is even more difficult, and will require more effort over a longer period of time. The expected transitional clash between the old and new systems, senior management time pressures and ingrained individualism, and divided cross-functional team loyalties will underscore senior leadership efforts even further. Timing and persistence are everything when incorporating teaming practices within such organizations.

In evaluating DOD's implementation of oversight and review IPTs in relation to these precepts, I maintain that the department has done well in considering the breadth of changes required. However, it has fallen short in implementing several of those changes. OSD senior leadership has jeopardized the lasting viability of IPT-based oversight and review by failing to implement training and a team-based award system immediately. Without the proper training and focus, oversight and review IPTs have unnecessarily suffered through inconsistent teambuilding and goal-setting efforts.

OSD and Service senior leadership and functional supervisors have also shown inconsistency in support of the team-based decisionmaking structure. They have

struggled at times with supporting IPT decisions, fully empowering these teams, and ensuring open communication. In addition, undue functional orientation, fear of exclusion, and ingrained individualism have worked together to place members of no added value on IPTs. If this environment of bloated membership and competing agendas persists, team leaders will experience undue difficulty creating the cohesive team necessary to produce synergistic results.

So, with knowledge of effective teaming precepts and DOD's attempt at applying them to acquisition oversight and review, I feel the answer to whether the changes will result in permanent reform is a qualified "yes." "Yes" if DOD works quickly to enact a comprehensive IPT training program. "Yes" if DOD senior leadership nurtures a team-based culture by hiring, evaluating, and rewarding based upon it. "Yes" if it values structured teambuilding and goal-oriented teams. "Yes" if DOD senior leadership leads by example, is mindful of mixed messages, and shifts authority away from individuals and functional organizations and toward teams. DOD senior leadership has done much—they can and should do more.

David Lloyd George once stated, "There is nothing so fatal to character as half-finished tasks." (Hovey:62) Budget realities, Administration initiatives, and Congressional pressures have newly tested the depth of DOD's commitment to acquisition reform. A passing score depends on hard work that sees change through to the end. In the area of acquisition oversight and review, may DOD complete what it has started.

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