

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO TRANSFORM THE ARMY CULTURE

by

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No.
0704-0188

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

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 07-04-2003		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2002 to xx-xx-2003	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Responding to the Call to Transform the Army Culture Unclassified			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Driessanck, Charles H. ; Author			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks Carlisle, PA17013-5050			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS ,			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APUBLIC RELEASE					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached file.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 44	19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Rife, Dave RifeD@awc.carlisle.army.mil	
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified			c. THIS PAGE Unclassified	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number DSN
				<small>Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18</small>	

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: LTC (P) Charles H Driessnack

TITLE: Responding to the Call to Transform the Army Culture

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 07 April 2003 PAGES: 44 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

With the rate of change outside the Army accelerating, the need exists to create an Army organization that can accelerate the change inside the Army. This paper explores the Army culture required to excel in a world of accelerating change; an Army culture that embraces change and adapts and innovates by its very nature. Because changing a culture requires changing beliefs, a discussion concerning the innovative culture's facilitating beliefs and values is provided. The paper also discusses the role these values and beliefs play in stabilizing the culture, providing a sense of security while everything else changes at increasing rates. The key innovative cultural beliefs are then used to compare the current Army culture to the desired innovative culture. Gaps are identified between the current Army culture and the desired innovative culture and opportunities to close the gaps between the current culture and desired culture are discussed. The paper specifically considers the organizational change levers of leadership/strategy, processes, structures, and personnel policy, and suggests how these levers could be pulled today to speed the cultural transformation.

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RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO TRANSFORM THE ARMY CULTURE

A CALL TO TRANSFORM THE ARMY CULTURE

THE NEED FOR AN INNOVATIVE ARMY CULTURE

The U.S. Army culture will face staggering rates of change in the near future. Technical progress in the next ten years is expected to equal the technical progress achieved during the past 100 years.¹ In this rapidly changing environment, the proliferation of new technically advanced weapons will threaten the security and stability of our nation and the world. The changes in the Army will need to accelerate to maintain superiority in the World.² The Center for Strategic and International Studies report on American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century concluded that maintaining the superiority of U.S. Military effectiveness will depend on, “a culture that prizes constant change and unchanging values.”³

When making large-scale technological change, old ways must give way to new ways, “new capabilities demand new organizations, new structures, new processes, and new cultures.”⁴

The rate of change inside an organization needs to keep pace with the rate of change outside the organization. With the rate of change outside the Army accelerating, the need exists to create an Army organization that can accelerate inside changes. The survival of the Army depends on creating an organization that can respond rapidly inside, continually transforming faster than its adversaries.

A CALL FOR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The current draft of the National Military Strategy (NMS) emphatically states that U.S. forces must rapidly transform.⁵ The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) recently reinforced this urgent NMS language by directing the Service Secretaries to make the task of transforming the Joint Force a top priority. The Secretary of Defense made it clear that he wanted a full military transformation, not just a military material transformation but also a transformation of the military culture.⁶ The President has given the SECDEF a mandate to shake things up in the Department of Defense and the President expects the resulting culture to exhibit: “a new spirit of innovation where change is welcomed and rewarded not dreaded.”⁷

The Army has stepped up to the plate, taking several significant actions to expedite a material transformation. The interim Stryker Brigade acquisition, the significant research and development investment, and the cancellation of several major legacy programs clearly

demonstrate the Army's commitment to a material transformation. The Army has also recently begun to consider approaches for initiating a cultural transformation. An Army Culture of Innovation Task Force was just chartered in 2002 to develop Army policy to establish and sustain a culture of Innovation. This Task Force is scheduled to make recommendations by May 15, 2003 on what changes are needed in the Army culture and how best to achieve those cultural changes.⁸

THE NEED TO IDENTIFY THE INNOVATIVE CULTURE'S KEY BELIEFS

The Army Culture of Innovation Task Force (ACITF) has defined culture as: "the sum of all learned behavior, as it is shared and transmitted by members of a society or group."⁹

The Army's Leadership Field Manual (FM22-100) defines culture as not just learned behavior but also: "a group's shared set of beliefs, values, and assumptions about what is important."¹⁰ The culture helps to explain the deeper motivation behind the learned behavior.

Edgar Schein, a noted author on organizational culture, adds that the culture's basic assumptions and beliefs are based on what: "has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to problems."¹¹

These beliefs and values: "guide how people in an organization interact, know what is right and proper, and make judgments about both themselves and others. It is 'how we do business around here'."¹²

In light of these definitions on culture, one concludes that to understand a culture one must understand what they believe and value. Further, if the ACITF plans to transition the Army culture to an innovative culture, then this task force must first come to grips with what an innovative culture believes and values. Only after the key beliefs and values of an innovative culture are identified and understood can the planning begin on how best to shape the current Army culture.

THE DIFFICULTY OF CHANGING CULTURAL BELIEFS

Before developing their plan to shape the Army culture, the Army Culture of Innovation Task Force will also need to consider the many obstacles to changing the current Army's beliefs and values. The maturity of the Army's current beliefs and values creates the first obstacle to changing the culture. The Army's beliefs and values are deeply embedded, encompassing: "the customs and traditions, norms of conduct, ideals, and values that have evolved over 226 years of campaigns and battles, of shared hardship and triumph."¹³

The size and complexity of the Army creates a second obstacle to culture change. The large number of personnel and the multiple levels within the Army organization can potentially translate into a large number of personnel resisting change from numerous levels within the organization. T.O. Jacob observes: “the Army and DOD are massively complex, and resist change massively.”¹⁴

The third difficulty in Army cultural change addresses the emotional aspect of belief change. Changing what people have come to believe, changing what people understand is true and right is both an intellectual and an emotional event. Significant effort must be focused on getting people to see and feel that the new way is right and reduce their natural emotions that could undermine the change effort.¹⁵ The larger the change, the more likely the response will create emotions that undermine change.¹⁶

A fourth challenge in the Army’s cultural change effort will be obtaining examples and models of the desired behaviors. Unlike many civilian companies that recruit externally for leadership that possess the desired values, the leadership in the Army is internally grown. Current Army leadership must first internalize the more enlightened values and beliefs and become examples before the rest of the Army can change. Any approach to changing the Army culture must first effectively change the embedded beliefs of the current and future leaders.

A fifth obstacle to Army cultural change is created by the current status the Army enjoys. The Army is currently rated the most powerful Army in the World. The Army is also teamed with the most powerful Air force and Navy in the World. America’s Armed Forces have helped establish the United States as the world’s single super power. A culture normally needs to experience situations that force a reevaluation of their beliefs before they will consider changing. Without a compelling reason or crisis to alert the Army culture for the need to change, the Army culture will most likely resist change.

With all these potential obstacles to changing the Army culture, the Army’s Leadership Field Manual (FM22-100) adds to the problems by providing no guidance on how to overcome these obstacles and effect cultural change. The FM simply states that the strategic leader is responsible for changing and shaping culture and that shaping culture is critical to supporting the organization’s vision and objectives.¹⁷

The Army Culture of Innovation Task Force plan for changing the Army culture will need to develop a strategy to negotiate these obstacles to belief change.

CONSEQUENCIES OF NOT CHANGING OUTDATED CULTURAL BELIEFS

Although the difficulties in changing beliefs of a culture are many, the Army Culture of Innovation Task Force must spearhead a robust cultural change or risk the success of the Army Transformation. History illustrates that neglecting to change the culture significantly contributed to past transformation failures. Recent studies have also shown that attempting to transform an organization without considering the transformation of the culture often leads to failure.¹⁸ If an organization's culture remains unchanged – even when equipment, procedures, and strategies are altered – organizations return quickly to the status quo.¹⁹

The French provide a good example of how a military culture can botch a military transformation. At the start of WWII, the French's military material transformation had out paced the Germans. The French had larger quantities of superior tanks as well as the very high-tech Maginot line. But the French military was stuck in the inflexible, autocratic culture of the past. As a result, the French military used their technological and numerical edge to support their old ways of thinking and to maintain the status quo. In contrast to the French military culture, the German military culture embraced the technological advances as opportunities to adapt their thinking about warfare and improve their methods of fighting. The transformed German military culture was synchronized with their material transformation, enabling the German military to implement a rapid maneuver capability. The static strategy maintained by the French military culture was no match for the fully transformed German military.²⁰

IDENTIFYING INNOVATIVE CULTURAL BELIEFS

The call to transform the Army's culture is an urgent one. Currently, the Culture of Innovation Task Force defines the desired innovative culture as: "creative, adaptable, and having a propensity for trying new ideas, methods, or devices."²¹ A deeper understanding of the Army's current and desired culture is needed. Cultural values and beliefs for both the current culture and desired culture must be compared and gaps identified. The ACITF needs to rapidly identify key beliefs and values of the innovative Army culture and when equipped with this knowledge, develop their change strategy to shape the culture. Any effort to change Army cultural behavior by edict will be met with the current Army culture's massive resistance to change. On the other hand, failure to transform the culture will jeopardize the Army plan for transformation, threatening the Army's and America's future.

This paper seeks to assist the ACTFI by proposing key beliefs and values of a learning oriented, adaptive and innovative culture. The current Army core values should not change.

Rather, any new values that facilitate innovation must be complimentary to the Army's core values that have proven themselves fundamental to the Army's past successes.

The paper begins with a discussion of the values of an innovative culture and the 2015 objective force. Because changing a culture requires changing beliefs, a discussion concerning the innovative culture's facilitating beliefs and values is provided. The key innovative cultural beliefs are then used to compare the current Army culture to the desired innovative culture. Gaps are identified between the current Army culture and the desired innovative culture and opportunities to close the gaps between the current culture and desired culture are discussed.

RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO TRANSFORM THE ARMY CULTURE

THE INNOVATIVE CULTURE'S KEY VALUES

There exists key values and beliefs of organizational cultures that best reflect their ability to learn, innovate, and adapt. Ideally one would want to combine these values and beliefs in such a way as to achieve an optimal culture for learning, innovating and adapting while avoiding the cultural characteristics that lead to cultural rigidity.

The Army seeks to create an innovative and adaptable culture that produces units with the capability to "receive details of their mission en route to their location, put together an ad hoc task force on the fly, or operate for long periods of time in the absence of guidance or supervision."²² The Army seeks to create an Army culture that embraces experimentation and innovation and excels in the hyper-turbulent, hyper-accelerating conditions of the information age.²³ The Army seeks to create an Army culture with leaders creating "a command climate that supports initiative, innovation and risk-taking."²⁴

What are the key values that facilitate innovative organizations? The following discussion highlights common values that emerge from descriptions of innovative cultures in industry and descriptions of the 2015 Army Objective Force.

Externally Sensitive

Because of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and speed of change in the global environment, the innovative culture is highly sensitive to new developments in the external environment and recognizes the opportunity and the need to change. The innovative culture thrives in a world often filled with disruptions, confusion, and chaos from the external environment leveraging this environment to awaken creative energy needed for improvement and survival.²⁵

A new business technique called environmental scanning is becoming increasingly popular among successful organizations. Using this technique, organizations continuously scan their external environment looking for threats and opportunities in relation to the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses.²⁶ Early detection and proper interpretation of an abrupt change in the external environment provides these organizations time to adapt and avoid being overwhelmed. These organizations value their ability to detect and interpret changes in the external environment in order to continually position their organization for survival and success.^{27 28}

This externally oriented characteristic is not new to the military. COL John Boyd observed that highly effective combat units throughout history could observe, orient, decide, and act more rapidly than their adversary.²⁹ The combat environment was continuously changing and changed in irregular, disorderly, and unpredictable ways. He concluded that the highly effective and successful units continuously and rapidly sensed the changes in the environment, reoriented, and then decided and acted to leverage these changes as an opportunity for seizing advantage.³⁰

The criticality of sensitivity to the external environment is not lost on the authors of the Army Objective Force White Paper. The White Paper states, "Objective Force in 2015 requires (external and internal) knowledge dominance to succeed."³¹ The Objective Force must provide timely intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance information to rapidly identify opportunities to out-manuever and overwhelm the enemy and achieve mission success. The Army Objective Force White Paper has become the guide for the Army Culture of Innovation Task Force.

Responsive Short Term Strategic Planning

A long term vision provides a stable strategic direction for an organization but strategy must also be flexible and responsive to the unpredictable and rapidly changing environment. "Just in Time" short term strategic plans are emphasized over the more long term speculative strategic planning. Emphasis is placed on improving the organization's ability to respond rapidly to the changes in the environment.³²

Responsive short term strategic planning is a capability aimed for in the White Paper for the Objective Force. The Army Objective Force will use both parallel and collaborative planning methodologies that link multiple echelons into simultaneous rather than sequential planning cycles.³³

Flexibility and Diversity

Flexibility also allows an organization to respond rapidly to changes in the environment. An organization with personnel that support variation in structures, methods, procedures and approaches will be much more adaptable when unforeseen problems arise. This appreciation of diversity provides more options from which to choose. Additionally, diversity provides a stimulating environment where different perspectives provoke deeper thinking and understanding from all organizational members. Using a variety of methods, procedures, and approaches helps to enhance learning. Confining organizational members to a single approach stifles learning.³⁴ An innovative culture will create structures that fit the moment, innovatively adapting to create temporary teams to deal with the specific as well as the ever-changing demands of the environment.³⁵ When describing this culture's flexible structures, Cameron and Quinn write that the innovative culture uses 'tents rather than palaces' so that they can reconfigure themselves rapidly when new circumstances arise.³⁶

The Objective Force in the White Paper is also described as having "modular, scalable, flexible organizations for prompt and sustained operations,"³⁷ able to transition quickly between changes in task, purpose, and direction. The White Paper describes a diverse and flexible force with teams able to: "form, change, relocate, expand, and disperse without effect to battle command."³⁸

Collaborative Environment

The innovative culture maximizes the distributed and diverse knowledge that exists throughout the organization. The organization shares knowledge based on goals and maximizes horizontal and cross-functional communication to speed learning and decision making. Shared leadership is practiced, allowing the freedom of action for those closest to the action. The innovative culture can rapidly morph their organization to respond to the ever changing environment because of the unifying energy created through a collaborative change process that involves all those affected.³⁹

This collaborative environment is especially critical to the Objective Force's ability to achieve and to execute their flexible structures and to gain knowledge dominance. The Objective Force is expected to achieve, "unprecedented teaming of commanders, leaders, staffs and functional experts using advanced on-demand collaboration techniques, linking them from dispersed locations allowing for timely sharing of information and enabling decision dominance."⁴⁰ Objective force soldiers also have the requisite communications equipment and knowledge to send and receive the right information, at the right time, to the right place.⁴¹

Better, Faster Learners.

Given the unpredictability of the future and likelihood of frequent, unplanned changes, there is a commitment to experimentation and innovation among successful innovative industries.⁴² There is an emphasis on being at the leading edge of new knowledge, products and capabilities.⁴³ A continuous emphasis exists on improving methods for knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge storage and knowledge sharing and distribution within the organization.⁴⁴ Decentralized decision making results from leadership having increased confidence and trust in the knowledge and competence of the work force. Once people gain knowledge, they gain the trust of the leadership and can be empowered to make decisions in their area of expertise. Empowered workers within this trusting climate no longer fear failure and increase their levels of commitment, initiative, experimentation, and innovation.

The Army Objective Force is expected to produce soldiers and leaders that rapidly learn and excel in the future operational environment.⁴⁵ Leader and soldier assessment and feedback processes are conducive to experiential learning. "Subordinate leaders and soldiers are trusted and empowered to out think and dominate adversaries with superior speed of command and decisive action."⁴⁶ Indeed, every soldier acting within the framework of a shared mission, commander's intent and values is trained, equipped and empowered to be a decision maker.⁴⁷

Rich Network of Relationships

The innovative culture puts a premium on trusting one another, learning from one another, and cooperating with one another using a rich network of relationships and a free flow of information to facilitate collaboration and team work.⁴⁸ Organizations realize the importance of both relationships and task accomplishment. In turbulent times and complex tasks, relationships allow the level of trust and communication that make joint problem solving and solution implementation possible.⁴⁹

The Army Objective Force recognizes the power of rich relationships and how the continuity of relationships impact unit effectiveness. The objective force specifically keeps personnel in units for longer periods of time to increase unit cohesion and readiness.⁵⁰ The Army's proposed move to increasing continuity within units by decreasing personnel turnover will allow units to build expertise and avoid reliance on standardization as a crutch to real knowledge.

Organizational Vision, Mission, and Values

The innovative culture also has a strong sense of their guiding vision, mission, and values. Leaders trust employees to work freely within the framework provided by the vision, mission and values.⁵¹ Because of decentralized decision making, the innovative culture emphasizes the development of judgment and wisdom and puts less energy in the development of formalized procedures, rules, and job descriptions.⁵² The rich network of relationships is united by a shared knowledge and a strong sense of the organization's identity, values, strengths, vision, mission, and in the purpose of their work. These invisible but powerful guides enable the innovative culture to intelligently respond inside the organization to rapid changes in the exterior environment.

The beliefs and values of an innovative culture are summarized in table 1.

Beliefs and Values of an Innovative Culture
Externally Sensitive
Rapid Short Term Strategic Planning
Flexibility and Diversity
Better, Faster Learners
Rich Network of Relationships
Organizational Vision, Mission, and Values

TABLE 1: BELIEFS AND VALUES OF AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE

STABLE VALUES AND CHANGE

Vision, mission, and cultural values and beliefs normally provide frames of reference that enable a degree of predictability and stability for an organization.⁵³ Individuals and organizations need a degree of stability to be effective and productive. A strong culture with strong beliefs and values can provide a stabilizing effect, but the stronger the culture the potential increase in their resistance to change. In a world that will demand continuous change, strong cultures that resist change could become increasingly dysfunctional. Only cultures that embrace change and learn, adapt, and innovate by their very nature will avoid the debilitating resistance to change.⁵⁴ The Army needs to transform to an innovative culture that gains stability from holding onto and acting upon key facilitating beliefs and values that encourage innovation and adaptation. These stable values and beliefs will allow the culture to feel secure while

everything else changes at increasing rates. This innovative culture could provide the social architecture to sustain the world's most advanced and powerful Army.

In an effort to transition the Army culture to an innovative culture, the Army Culture of Innovation Task Force must first identify what an innovative culture believes and values. Only after the key beliefs and values of an Innovative culture are identified and understood can the planning begin on how best to shape the current culture. The next section will attempt to expand on why these values are so critical to an innovative organization.

PUTTING THE VALUES AND BELIEFS IN ACTION

The Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA Loop) model developed by Air Force Colonel John Boyd and depicted in figure 1 is helpful in discussing organizational values and beliefs.⁵⁵ Boyd conducted an exhaustive study of successful organizations in military history and concluded that an organization's success depended on its ability to move through an informed decision cycle faster than their opponent. The model provides foundational functions for an organization to be innovative and adaptable.

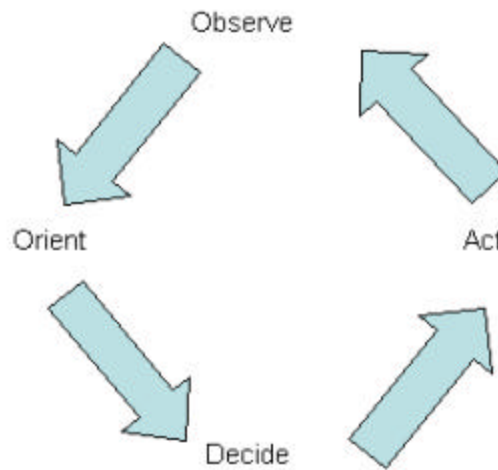


FIGURE 1: OBSERVE, ORIENT, DECIDE, ACT (OODA) LOOP MODEL

The first key to Boyd's model is the organization's ability to rapidly observe or sense changes in the situation external to the organization. In this step the organization is always asking the question: "What is out there?"

Secondly, once an observation is made, the organization has to rapidly determine the significance of the observation and consider options to respond. In this step, rapid learning is emphasized to speed the process of orientation.

The third step in Boyd's model is the rapid selection of an option. In this step, the organization considers their strengths and weaknesses and then decides how best to exploit the opportunity or minimize the threat. During this step the organization rapidly collaborates and commits to a specific direction.

Finally, the model emphasizes rapid and decisive action. This final step emphasizes the freedom (empowerment) and flexibility to act. Once the decision is implemented and action is taken, the OODA Loop cycle restarts immediately.

Boyd observed that in highly fluid situations like combat, the advantage went to the organization that seized the initiative and advantage by moving through the OODA Loop faster than their opponent. Boyd argued that an organization should be in a constant state of positioning itself in order to gain advantage. The OODA Loop model assumes the organization has a clear understanding of the mission and purpose and all efforts are then devoted to optimizing the organization's effectiveness in a fluid environment to achieve that mission.

There are several beliefs that facilitate exceptional performance of an innovative organization and are highlighted by the OODA Loop cycle. For an organization to effectively execute the OODA Loop, people within the organization need to believe they are not at the mercy of the environment but can and should seek to shape the environment.⁵⁶ Believing in shaping the future (making a difference for good) instills the value of commitment and the value of external sensitivity.

The belief of desiring to shape the future also leads to people wanting to understand the near and midterm future. The organization realizes and believes that success depends on anticipating the near and midterm future events, assessing consequences of different courses of action (orient and decide) as well as assessing the success of current actions (observe and orient).⁵⁷ This orientation to the future lays the foundation for the value of rapid learning and responsive short term strategic planning.

People also come to believe that knowledge (orientation) is time sensitive and must be gained rapidly and acted upon continuously (OODA Loop cycle). This understanding of the time sensitivity of knowledge and the need to continuously adjust their direction leads the organization to value rapid learning, information sharing, and rapid strategic planning.⁵⁸

The time sensitivity of information and a system's view of the organization create the necessity for rapid and wide spread information sharing. People come to believe that

communication and information are central to organizational well-being and that it is necessary for anyone in the system to be able to talk to anyone else (OODA Loop cycle efficiency). Communication systems connect anyone to everyone. The organizational value of systems view, information sharing, and collaboration dominates organizational behavior.⁵⁹

As knowledge and information is rapidly accumulated and shared across the organization, people develop an understanding and believe that the best solutions to problems evolve from considering multiple approaches and from considering multiple perspectives. This realization leads to openness to explore multiple methods and hear divergent perspectives in the process of solving problems. Not relying on one best method or one expert/decision maker effectively spreads the responsibility of learning and knowing around. In an organization that believes in multiple approaches and perspectives, values such as collaboration, flexibility, and diversity become the norm.

The OODA Loop model highlights several key values of an innovative organization and these values are summarized in table 2 below:

Organizational Values emphasized in OODA	OODA Loop Phase or Process
Externally Sensitive	Observe Phase
Rapid Learning	Orient Phase
Information Sharing	Orient Phase
Collaboration	Decide Phase
Commitment	Decide Phase
Empowerment	Act Phase
Flexibility and Diversity	Act Phase
System View	OODA LOOP Process

TABLE 2: VALUES OF AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE

VALUE'S ROLE IN AN INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

The alignment model expands on Boyd's OODA Loop Model. The alignment model as depicted in figure 2, illustrates the potential organizational adjustments that take place within the organization in response to an observed change in the external environment. The Alignment Model also shows how all alignments are guided by the vision, mission, and values of the organization. Changes in the external environment may require changes in the organization's strategy, people, and process/structure. For example, the vision, mission may stay the same but a significant change in the environment may require a rapid adjustment to the strategic plan. Strategic planning needs to be rapid and take shorter views to stay responsive to the external

environment by guiding appropriate internal adjustments. People need to become tuned to the changing environment and rapidly learn and adjust. Further, organizational processes and structure require flexibility to allow the organization freedom of action. The organization's vision, mission and values are critical to both help determine what external events are significant and to also guide the types of changes made internally to achieve the desired organizational response. The external environment in this model includes customers, (i.e. Congress, American people, National Security Council, etc.), opponents, and other external factors that can influence the ability of the organization to accomplish the mission.

The alignment model also takes a system view of the organization to highlight the importance of well connected and related functions that are aligned by a consistent understanding across the organization of their mission and values. A system view recognizes the relationship between all the functions of the organization. Like the human body where all the systems are interrelated, all functions, or subsystems, in the organization impact the others and provide motivation for rapid learning and information sharing. Something that impacts one subsystem also impacts the others making information sharing vital amongst the subsystems.

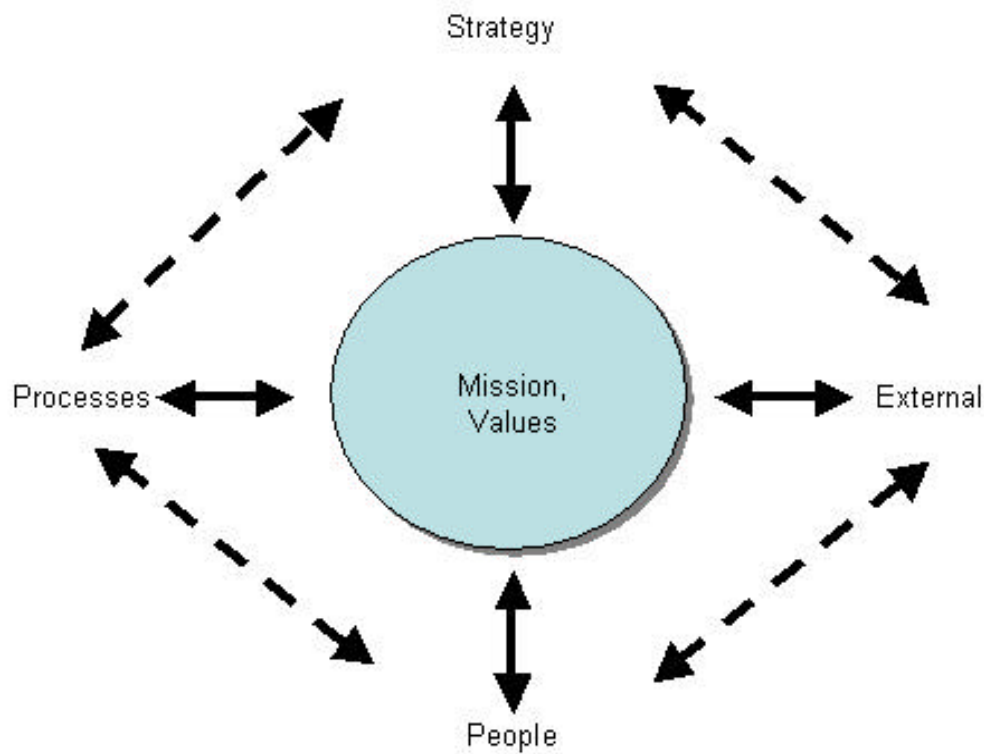


FIGURE 2: ALIGNMENT MODEL⁶⁰

The Model in Figure 2 suggests that rapid responses to external changes result from well integrated and synchronized organizational functions. If an organization allows misalignment to occur between vision, mission, values and organizational functions, the culture will detect the inconsistencies and the mixed signals will prevent rapid, focused and concerted action. Leadership must insure specific changes are synchronized with the other key areas of the organization and consistent with the organization's vision, mission and values. The Alignment Model demonstrates the central role that vision, mission, and values play in the rapid and unified response of the organization. Key values need to support an organizational climate where rapid alignment activities can take place. The organizational values highlighted in the OODA Loop in Table 2 meet the criteria for facilitating rapid alignment activity. In addition to the OODA Loop values, the continuous aligning of the organization through the synchronizing and integrating of disparate organizational functions suggests the organization not only respects the unique roles of each member but the organization has also learned to leverage each member's diverse views and talents. The alignment model also emphasizes responsive short term strategic planning as a means to keep pace with the high external rate of change. Table 3 summarizes the key values of the Alignment Model. The next section integrates the OODA Loop Model and Alignment Model to glean further insights on key organizational values.

<p style="text-align: center;"> External Sensitivity, Rapid Learning, Information Sharing, Collaboration, Commitment, Empowerment, Flexibility, Systems View Diversity Responsive Short Term Strategic Planning </p>

TABLE 3: VALUES THAT ALIGN AN INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

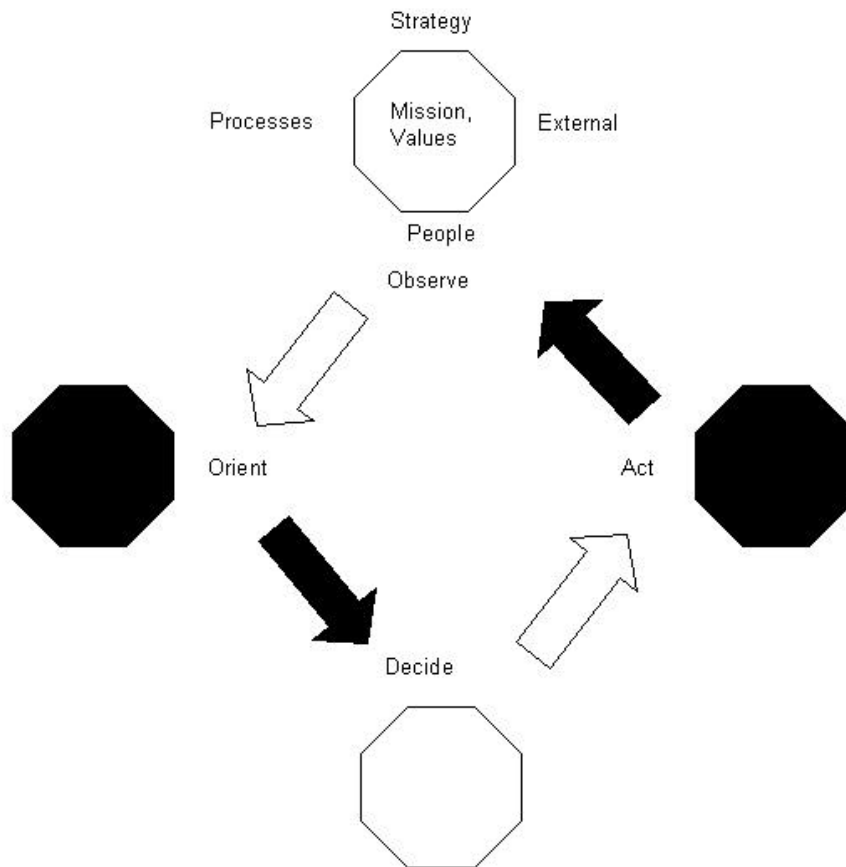


FIGURE 3: INTEGRATING THE OODA LOOP AND ALIGNMENT MODEL

MAINTAINING ALIGNMENT OF AN INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION

Integrating the OODA loop and Alignment models, as depicted in figure 3, highlights the intensity of internal organizational interaction necessary to maintain organizational alignment. Alignment activities are continuous and take place during each phase of the OODA Loop cycle. In this integrated model, an alignment model is placed at each of the four OODA loop cycle events, one alignment model diagram for each phase in the OODA loop cycle.

At the top of the figure, an alignment model is embedded in the observe phase of the OODA Loop model. Here, the alignment model represents the need to deploy new and relevant observations throughout the organization to insure rapid awareness of the change in situation. This puts the entire organization on notice to evaluate the new situation.

Similarly, the left side of the diagram depicts the orient phase where the alignment model represents the need for all aspects of the organization to simultaneously orient on the change

and assess the need for change. Assessments are done and options developed through collaboration in order to create integrated and synchronized adjustments that improve the larger organization's ability to achieve the mission.

The bottom of the diagram shows the decision phase of the OODA Loop where the organization makes multiple congruent decisions throughout the organization to respond to the latest observations and orientations. Once the organization has conducted extensive information sharing, oriented on the external change and assessed the need for change, a collaborated, integrated and synchronized strategy is developed. This updated strategy along with the vision, mission, and values provides the boundaries from which empowered workers can make congruent decisions.

The right side of the diagram shows the resulting unified and rapid action from the organization. The greater the flexibility and robustness of the organization's processes and structures, the faster the organization can respond. With the organization's vision, mission and values used to guide their actions, every aspect of the organization is continuously reviewed, challenged, and rapidly aligned to effectively respond to the changing environment.

The integration of Models #1 and #2 suggests that the intensity of alignment interactions within an organization take place during each phase of the OODA Loop process. Additionally, shared vision, mission, and values guide and facilitate and synchronize actions throughout the OODA Loop and alignment process.

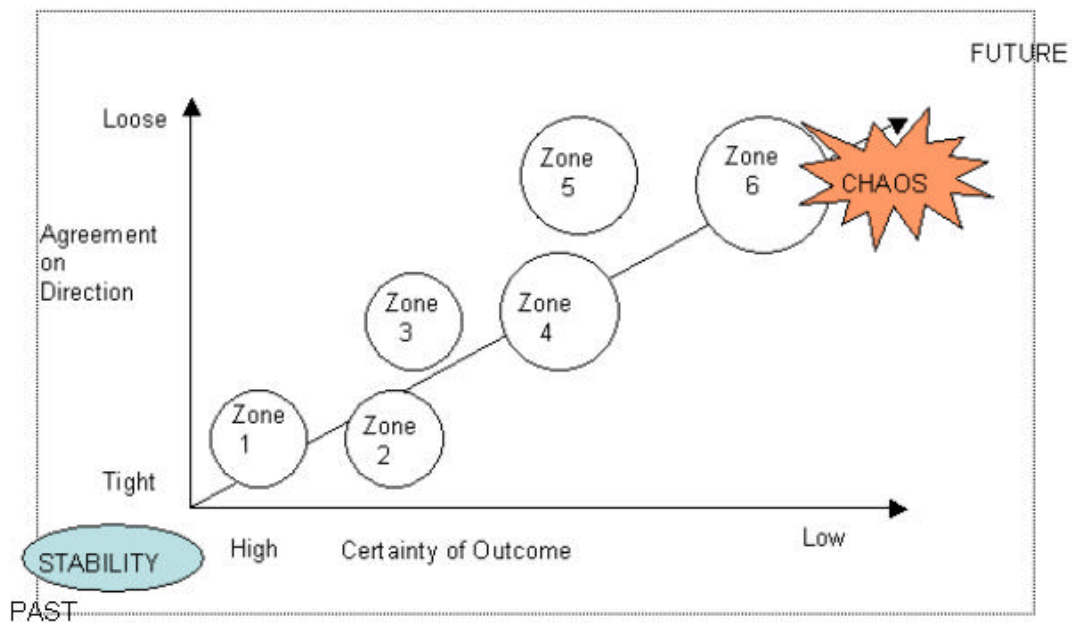


FIGURE 4: ORGANIZATIONAL ZONES OF ACTION MODEL⁶¹

DEVELOPING THE KEY VALUES OF AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE

Obviously an organization does not start out executing the OODA Loop rapidly and aligning itself continuously. Rapid and successful organizational responses result from an organization that has mastered OODA Loop and alignment activities and internalized key values.

The last model, illustrated in figure 4, highlights six incrementally difficult organizational situations that an organization can master. Only zone 6 or the most difficult zone of action demands rapid innovative and adaptive responses from the organization for survival. The Organizational Zones of Action Model shows organizations gaining proficiency and achieving success in the lower zones of action before expecting to conquer higher levels of action. As an organization successfully negotiates a lower zone of action, the organizational culture internalizes the key values and beliefs required of that zone of action.

Each zone of action has facilitating values that make success at the current level and higher levels possible. An organization that aspires to achieve the adaptive and innovative abilities required in zone 6 must first graduate successfully from the less demanding zones of action and fully internalize the facilitating values of the lower zones of action. When an organization faces higher level zones of action out of sequence, an organization's learning and value gaps will frustrate organizational action.

The first organizational zone of action deals with little ambiguity; enjoying clearly articulated tasks, conditions and standards. The higher zones of action in the model represent organizational actions that negotiate higher levels of ambiguity. The highest zone of action in the model deals with near chaotic situations with very loose direction and low certainty of outcome.

Zone 6 reflects an organization that can deal with the most unstable external situation. This is an organization in continuous white water (or chaos). The organization lacks a frame of reference to orient their work. However, because of the information sharing, diversity of knowledge and perspective, empowerment, rapid learning and collaboration, a way forward can be determined. An Army unit that is still able to function in Zone 6 is essential in the 21st Century battle zone.

Figure 4's Model is designed to illustrate two fundamental leadership challenges. The first challenge concerns the need for leaders to understand the zone of action they face and to take the appropriate actions consistent with the situation. The second challenge addresses the requirement for the organization to gain proficiency in a progressive building block manner. "Each zone must be a secure foundation for the next one, which builds upon it. One goal then,

in using the framework is to ensure that leadership in each zone is vibrant and robust so it can launch into the next zone.⁶² Adaptable and innovative behavior results at the top zone, after the leader has progressively moved the organization through the other zones. Interestingly, each zone emphasizes different values and beliefs that are critical for the current zone but also foundational for higher zones.

This model's lesson for the Army leadership is the reality that key beliefs and values facilitating innovation and adaptability develop incrementally. Adaptability and innovativeness result from the organization and the leader successfully reaching the top zone of action having learned and developed key beliefs as a result of conquering increasingly ambiguous situations. The leader and the organization must possess all the key beliefs and values of zones 1 - 6 to achieve innovation and adaptability. The next sections briefly discuss each zone of action and the associated facilitating value(s)

Zone 1 Values: Understanding Context

At the most stable end of the scale, zone 1 involves the leader's ability to understand the existing organization. The leader must assess the unit's strengths and weaknesses and also the people's currently held values and beliefs. Knowing the history of the organization can assist the leader in better understanding the rationale for the current organizational beliefs. In zone 1, the leader appreciates what has been, and seeks to honor and preserve the proven and valuable aspects of the organization. The leader must also determine what aspects of the organization no longer contribute or are no longer consistent with the current organizational direction. This assessment serves as the platform for action, providing a context and foundation for all future action.⁶³ The core organizational values are key central to zone 1.

Zone 2 Values: Building Core Competencies

In zone 2, the organization builds the core competencies to act. Individuals are trained on specific tasks that have well known conditions and standards. This zone seeks to create an efficient organizational machine; each worker doing their specific task like gears in a watch. Leadership must meet the challenge of putting the right people in the right jobs and insuring they are doing the right tasks at the right time. The organization strives to consistently, efficiently, and reliably accomplish the mission.⁶⁴ In this zone, role clarity is achieved and the value of mission accomplishment and competency is stressed.

Zone 3a Values: Systems Thinking

Where the activity in zone 2 uses an efficient machine analogy, zone 3 actions use the analogy of a living system. Zone 3 views the organization as a system made up of interrelating subsystems that depend on a high degree of interaction. Actions in this zone are directed at improving the operations of the subsystems in order to increase the overall organizational system's effectiveness. Forming teams and facilitating collective action through communication within teams and between teams is achieved in this zone. This zone also emphasizes system understanding. Individuals grasp how they contribute to the team and the team understands its contribution to the organization. Workers also understand how the organizational subsystems interrelate and impact the performance of the system. Armed with this system's knowledge, members understand what kind of actions to initiate to maintain or improve the overall system performance. These organizational members also appreciate the contributions of the other individuals and teams.⁶⁵ The key values developed in this zone are: systems view, teamwork, rich network of relationships, and sharing information freely.

Zone 3b Values: Affirming shared identity

Because zone 3 activities provide individuals with an awareness of the system, individuals develop a broad sense of membership in the organization as a whole. Individuals grasp their larger purpose in the organization and also grasp what their organization is about. The individual shares a common identity with the entire organization and enjoys feeling apart of the macro team. Members freely move from one team to another and contribute their unique perspectives and skills. With identity and belonging residing at the organizational level, teams form quicker and diverse perspectives are shared more readily.⁶⁶ The values of diversity and shared identity are critical during this zone.

Zone 4 Values: Focusing on the Future

Zone 4 focuses on the future where conditions of less certainty about outcome and less agreement on direction require a more distributed approach to command and control. In this zone the community is empowered to act within their expertise and not just respond to direction. The organization no longer uses a top down directed leadership approach, but rather trusts and expects contributions from the widely distributed specialist and experts in the organization. Leadership uses a more participatory and collaborative leadership process in an effort to rapidly achieve shared understanding of the future direction of the organization. Through participatory methods, the preferred future is created and plans devised.⁶⁷ The key values in this zone are trust, collaboration, empowerment, and commitment.

Zone 5 Values: Anticipating Change

Zone 5 places the focus on the journey and not on the future destination. External scanning dominates this zone as the organization seeks to gain sensitivity to the external environment as a critical survival skill. In an effort to gain advantage in the rapidly changing environment, the organization seeks to anticipate external change. The organization determines ways to exploit their strengths, mitigate their weaknesses and seize opportunities in the new environment. The organization continually seeks to learn at increasing rates to keep pace with the rapid pace of change in the environment. Through aggressive external scanning, experimenting, and learning, the organization prepares for the emerging environment. The organization uses flexible and adaptable processes and structures to maximize the agility of the organization. Here the key organizational actions of the OODA loop of observing, orienting, deciding and acting, take place rapidly and in a congruent fashion across the organization. With the organization's mission and values used to guide their actions, every aspect of the organization is continuously reviewed, challenged, and rapidly aligned to effectively respond to the changing environment.⁶⁸ Key values in this zone are externally sensitive, rapid learning, and flexibility.

Zone 6 Values: Creating Meaning in Chaos

In zone 6, events occur that were not anticipated, requiring wisdom and improvisational skills. Together, in the present, people co-create the future with no certainty of outcome. People attempt to make meaning out of events that do not readily yield to sense making. External event may shatter old reliable patterns. Near chaos makes orientation nearly impossible. The values of rapid learning and reflection along with innovation and adaptability are demanded for survival.

During zone 6, although the purpose of the organization may still exist, the organizational vision or objective may become irrelevant. Having no clear vision or objective the organization has no clear direction forward. Values and purpose must guide actions.⁶⁹ General Douglas MacArthur talked about such times and the power of core values saying: "They are your rallying point: to build courage when courage seems to fail; to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith; to create hope when hope becomes forlorn."⁷⁰

Models implications for innovation

The Army must have a foundation to be innovative. Several key organizational values provide the foundation for innovation and adaptability. An organization can develop these key values as it progresses through the progressively difficult zones of organizational action. The

objective of the leader is to insure the organization has a secure footing in each of the foundational zones so as to facilitate actions in the more challenging zones where environments require adaptability and innovation for survival. The Army needs to build on their core values in zone 1 with some additional organizational values to achieve the innovative and adaptable organizational actions necessary to survive zone 6 environments.

Table 4 below summarizes the key organizational values highlighted in the Zones of Action Model.

Key Values	Zones of Action
Sensitive to current core values -----	Zone 1
Core Competencies, Mission Focus-----	Zone 2
Systems View, Relationships, Identity, Diversity, Teamwork, Information Sharing	Zone 3
Empowerment, Collaboration, Commitment, Trust -----	Zone 4
Rapid Learning, External Focus, Flexibility-----	Zone 5
Innovation, Adaptability, Risk Taking,-----	Zone 6

TABLE 4: VALUES DEVELOPED IN THE ZONES OF ACTION

EVIDENCE OF VALUE GAPS AND POTENTIAL ALIGNMENT ACTIONS

The differences between the desired transformed culture and the current Army culture are significant and require a major change in our cultural behavior. The Army's current hierarchical culture emphasizes stability, control and order while the desired innovative culture is at the other end of the spectrum with an emphasis on flexibility and spontaneity.

The text book description of a hierarchical culture is a close match to the current Army culture. A hierarchical culture is concerned with internal efficiency, emphasizing the execution of policies and regulations. Leaders in a hierarchical culture tend to be conservative and cautious.⁷¹ The following discussion is organized around the desired values. Examples of current cultural behavior out of alignment with the desired culture behavior are provided. For each desired cultural value an appropriate organizational change lever, such as leadership/strategy, processes, structures, and personnel policy are discussed as a method to move the current organization into alignment with the desired cultural values. Aligning the organization with the desired values will provide opportunities for the culture to experiment with innovative behavior and experience the benefits of this behavior, thereby lowering the cultures resistance to change.

Externally Oriented

Instead of responding to the external environment and embracing change as a means for improvement, the Army is well known for processes that focus internally. Behavior is shaped by measurement and many of the Army's feedback processes focus on measuring internal efficiencies with little emphasis on the external environment. Company commanders report they are required to record and provide over 125 different types of data.⁷² Commanders complain they feel more like administrators than commanders because compiling information about troops has replaced an emphasis on leading the troops.⁷³ The current culture spends energy focused internally on administrative reporting with little incentive to explore the external environment to detect conditions that mandate change or allow improvement. The Army is introducing a new measurement tool process that could be a powerful change lever for the culture. The new Strategic Readiness System (SRS), modeled after the balanced scorecard approach, has the potential to encourage leaders to look externally for multi-source feedback and anticipate readiness issues. The SRS needs to be implemented in place of and not on top of the multitude of other internally focused reporting requirements so as to achieve the full culture changing impact of the SRS.

Flexibility

Today, the Division structure is fixed and is not designed to rapidly and gracefully adapt its structure. The Army is addressing this shortfall with the Unit of Employment concept. This concept describes a non-fixed organization designed to be inherently adaptable using Units of Action as building blocks. If this concept gets implemented, the Army will have the potential for structures that can be morphed to fit the moment. This structural change is a powerful lever that will exert pressure on the current culture to better position themselves to handle change and become flexible and adaptable.

Collaborative Change Process

The Army leadership style rarely models a collaborative change process that obtains shared ownership of decisions. For example, changes in structures are usually just announced. A task force is created by staffs with little to no input from the affected members. In the current culture, the leader is encouraged to make decisions decisively. A collaborative leadership style is used mostly at the strategic level where decisions are outside of a subordinate-commander relationship and agreements must be negotiated among peers. If initiative and competence is desired in the culture than collaboration needs to be encouraged and contributions of all members of an organization must increase in value. Personnel policy can be

used as a key organizational change lever to emphasize collaboration as well as most of the other desired cultural behaviors. Key behaviors, like collaboration, could be measured using tailored command climate surveys and 360 degree feedback tools that specifically center on the desired cultural values. These measurement tools could also aid leadership development counseling and Officer Evaluation Reports. Behavior can be shaped by what the personnel policy decides to measure; therefore, the Army needs to be very deliberate about using this lever to move the culture in the desired direction.

Better, Faster Learners

Training is very necessary to gaining competency but as the environment changes at increasing rates, knowledge will also have to be acquired at increasing rates. Achieving proficiency on fixed tasks, with specific conditions, and standards will not be sufficient. Battle Focused Training is a good example of the current Army training philosophy. Units focus their energy on training on specific tasks, with specific conditions and standards to achieve a trained status. The Army culture puts little emphasis on adaptive learning. The Army de-emphasizes adaptive learning and emphasizes the training and execution of current doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures. But when doctrine fails to keep pace with the changing environment – senior command no longer confident in the units ability to perform tend to micromanage and squelch any subordinate leader learning. Micromanagement has been a trend through every cultural and climate assessment of the Army from 1970 through 2002. The explanation for this behavior is the lack of experience in the younger officers due to the immaturity of doctrine concerning new mission areas. No opportunity to train specific tasks leads to lack of trust from the senior leaders who error on the side of mission success at all costs. Pressure to not trust young officers also comes from an Officer Evaluation Report system that reflects not how much the individual or unit learned or improved but what short term actions were accomplished that were measurable. With the speed of change and degree of uncertainty in the world, soldiers need to be quick at learning and adapting and not shackled to yesterday's tactics and procedures. The training process needs to equip soldiers so they know how to think and learn rapidly, not drill them on what to think.

Rapid Short term Strategic Planning

The Army also favors taking a long view in strategic planning in contrast to creating short term strategic plans based on rapid analysis of changes in the external environment. The Army uses a two year strategic speculative planning process to produce plans that look out over 10 years.⁷⁴ This methodically slow planning process creates a culture that has difficulty keeping up

with rapid changes. The Army should use the strategic planning process as another cultural change lever. The Afghanistan war plan was done in a matter of weeks. The planners and leaders took maximum advantage of technology and networked people to create a rich collaborative process that needs to become the standard for strategic planning not the exception.⁷⁵

Rich Network of Relationships

Although technology is breaking down barriers, the Army is far from having rich networks of relationships that cut across traditional boundaries. The Army hierarchal structure does not encourage a free flow of information engendering trust, learning and cooperation with one another. Hierarchal 'stove pipes' are pervasive throughout the Army in both the Army's structure and supporting processes.

The Army's education, training, budgeting, equipping, training, fielding processes are organized around the Army's different branches, each branch a very entrenched hierarchal structure. Staying in your hierarchal lane and focusing on only your unique part is encouraged with the complexities and subtleties of the larger system only appreciated at the highest levels. The way the different branches within the Army are pitted against each other to compete for dollars is especially destructive to trusting and cooperative relationships and information flow. One of the keys to transforming this hierarchal culture is a transformed branch structure. In industry, the organizations that have achieved innovative cultures have flattened their hierarchal structures into horizontal organizations designed around key processes. The Army has made a good start with the design of the Units of Employment and Units of Action but the branch hierarchal structure is not addressed.

The Army needs to position itself for the coming flattening of the hierarchical DOD organization. It appears the Joint Staff is rapidly moving in this direction by organizing around specific military operations and jointly applied functions (such as dominate maneuver, precision engagement, and focused logistics.) If DOD organizes around this functional framework, massive consolidations among the common service functions are likely. This consolidation of functions would force like service functions to work together to develop the best support for the combatant commander. Services would jointly develop requirements for their common functional areas and jointly fight for their budgets. A unified joint function would begin trusting one another, learning from one another, and cooperating with one another. A rich network of relationships could arise allowing a free flow of information to facilitate collaboration and team

work. In the end, this powerful cultural change lever of structure would pave the way for a truly joint force cultural transformation.

Organizational Vision Mission, and Values

The innovative culture uses its strong sense of vision, mission and values to provide the boundaries for freedom of action. They are trusted to respond intelligently to changes in the environment with little direction or supervision. The Army's current culture "has become obsessed with minimizing risk and uncertainty with a high degree of structure, control, and centralization," "replacing trust in junior officers with a myriad of controls, checks, and constraints."⁷⁶ The cultural change lever of leadership needs to be fully applied to create a positive command climate where subordinates are trusted and allowed to work freely and innovate within the agreed to standards, guidelines, and values.

The Army needs to provide incentives that move leaders from an internal focus on data collection and on a dependence on rules, regulations, doctrine, techniques, tactics and procedures to incentives that reward learning, adapting and innovating. Command climates of high performance military units achieve this focus being characterized by having: "(a) role clarity and focus; (b) empowerment to act and encouragement of initiative; (c) teamwork and inter-group cooperation; and (d) the emphasis on innovation, 'learning from doing' and encouragement to question existing practices and to experiment with better ways of doing them."⁷⁷ A study found that these common elements normally occur together and that the cause for this climate was due to the style of leadership.⁷⁸

Given this close match between high performance command climates and the desired transformational culture, the Army would do well to emphasize the development of high performance climates. As recommended before, leadership performance feed back could be focused on the climate in the unit creating a powerful lever to move the culture in the direction of innovation and risk taking.

CONCLUSIONS

- Maintaining the superiority of the Army will require a culture that prizes constant change; a culture that can innovate and adapt.
- Only after the key beliefs and values of an Innovative culture are identified and understood can the planning begin on how best to shape the current Army culture.

- The proposed innovative values must complement the Army core values while also facilitating innovative and adaptive organizational action.
- The proposed innovative values complement the Army core values and facilitate innovative and adaptive action.
- The Army is not aligned with the proposed innovative values
- The current Army culture is likely to resist the change to the proposed values until leadership embraces the additional values and the Army aligns the organization to the additional values.
- Organizational alignment is a continuous process and the Army will need a systematic process to keep the Army aligned as the need for internal change accelerates in response to increasing external environmental changes.
- The values that facilitate innovation and adaptability develop incrementally.
- An organization must possess all the proposed innovative organizational values to successfully take action in highly ambiguous situations that require innovation and adaptability for survival.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Innovative Culture Task Force should identify innovative values before attempting to take any action to shape the Army Culture.
- The Innovative Culture Task Force should insure the innovative values meet the following minimum criteria: (1) complement the Army core values, and (2) facilitate innovative and adaptive individual and organizational action.
- The Innovative Culture Task Force's proposed strategy for cultural transformation needs to address specific actions needed to align the Army to the innovative values as well as a process to maintain the Army's alignment to the innovative values.

SUMMARY

The Secretary of Defense has made transforming the military culture, to a culture that rewards innovation and risk-taking, a top priority. In a new era where the predictable Soviet threat is gone, our military needs to transform the way we think to adjust to the unpredictable adversaries of the future who may strike in unexpected ways using weapons that will continue to increase in range and power. Failing to address the needed cultural transformation will put the

overall transformation of the military at risk and consequently risk the defense of our country. This paper has explored desired values and beliefs critical to the Army cultural transformation and provided example of where the Army's current cultural behavior is out of alignment with the desired culture behavior. The paper also addressed the key organizational change levers that strategic leaders can pull to exact maximum leverage on the current culture to obtain the desired cultural change. The paper specifically considered the organizational change levers of leadership/strategy, processes, structures, and personnel policy, and suggests how these levers could be pulled today to speed the cultural transformation.

WORD COUNT = 9,209

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