

Teams of Leaders

Building Adaptive, High-Performing Interagency Teams

Volume 2

Coaching Guide



Battle Command Knowledge System

Combined Arms Center – Knowledge (CAC-K)

Combined Arms Center (CAC)

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

June 2009

Teams of Leaders Coaching Guide

Foreword

Teams of Leaders (ToL) is an approach for rapidly building and effectively employing cross-boundary teams that are highly competent both in making and executing decisions and in learning and adapting together. The *ToL* approach helps the team gain common understanding of the situation and requirements and reach a higher level of performance faster.

ToL is different than hierarchical teams found in military units and organizations. They consist of leaders from different organizations brought together to effectively leverage the expertise, experience, and resources of their entire organization. The most common reference in the military is the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental Multinational (JIIM) teams employed to bring the full capacity of the U.S. Government to bear on a situation. In Leader Teams, the members most often have no authority over one another, come from different cultures and levels of experience, and may even have separate agendas. They usually have extensive contact lists within their parent organization and supporting agencies and work by influencing and co-opting others through strong relationships and mutual benefit. *ToL* teams can be co-located but usually have a geographically dispersed membership and rely on modern technology to connect them and advanced information and knowledge management applications and processes to help them collaborate. Using a Leader-Team Exercise thinking methodology at each stage of the team's development lifecycle, the *ToL* team overcomes the obstacles of diversity, geography, and culture that traditionally cause teams to take longer to form and achieve their desired level of performance.

The *ToL* approach provides a deliberate methodology for forming, launching, operating, and sustaining nested leader teams and developing their capacity to work at higher performance levels. *ToL* is a set of practical thinking drills and organizing tools that can be learned in a day. The *ToL* approach applies and balances three key elements—information management, knowledge management, and leader team qualities—to boost team communication and collaboration. Through coached deliberate practice and performance, *ToL* systematically builds relationships on a basis of shared purpose, trust, confidence, and competence. The shared competence includes intuition-based sense-making and decision-making skills and habits, a disciplined method for learning and adapting, and expert improvisation under stress. The value of teams of leaders increases in proportion to the diversity of team members, so that the approach is especially valuable to inter-agency and coalition (and thus cross-cultural) teams.

Teams of Leaders is an emergent capability originally developed for training and educating Battalion and Brigade commanders to overcome preconceived bias and develop a greater sense of situational awareness. Pilots in the 10th Mountain Division, I Corps (Stryker Brigade Combat Teams), and European Command provide compelling evidence that the approach will prove a major force multiplier at every echelon.

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How to Use This Coaching Guide

This guide is for anyone participating as a member of a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) team. It is designed as a coaching guide, with leading questions and areas of consideration that can be used by any leader who is a member of the team, during any stage of the team's lifecycle.

Section I is a short introduction similar to a ToL overview briefing, lesson, or tutorial you may have received as a leader about to join a team of other leaders. Section I also establishes the foundations of the ToL approach and orients the team member to common terms and stages of leader-team development. More depth and detail on ToL is found in the BCKS Teams of Leaders Handbook (Teams of Leaders: Volume 1: Handbook, June 2009).

Section II discusses the three ToL enablers: the Leader-Team Exercise (LTX), Information Management (IM) tools, and Knowledge Management (KM) processes. The LTX is at the heart of the ToL approach; using the information contained in this section within the context of your own team cannot be stressed enough. Particularly valuable is the team assessment: you need to know where your team is so that you can realize where you want to go. This section provides a methodology for thinking through any problem, whether it be military, governmental, family, etc. When learned and applied with the other two enablers, leader-teams deepen their thinking, understanding, and actions through increased communication and collaboration, developing shared qualities that, in turn, generate high performance as actionable understanding is achieved. The LTX is best used during a leader-team's normal operating rhythm while it is working to accomplish its goals and objectives.

The Information Management portion outlines some basic principles and considerations for using technology to connect geographically dispersed teams. This section is supplemented by a more detailed explanation of specific types of tools and instructions in the Teams of Leaders Handbook (Teams of Leaders: Volume 1: Handbook, June 2009).

The Knowledge Management portion provides principles, considerations, and questions about the processes the team will use to create, manage, and share knowledge internally and externally. Again, more specific details and instructions are located in the Teams of Leaders Handbook (Teams of Leaders: Volume 1: Handbook, June 2009). The IM and KM sections of this guide are supplemented by hands-on orientation and instructions on the specific organization's tools and processes. These pull-outs help the leader-team member ask the right questions during that instruction.

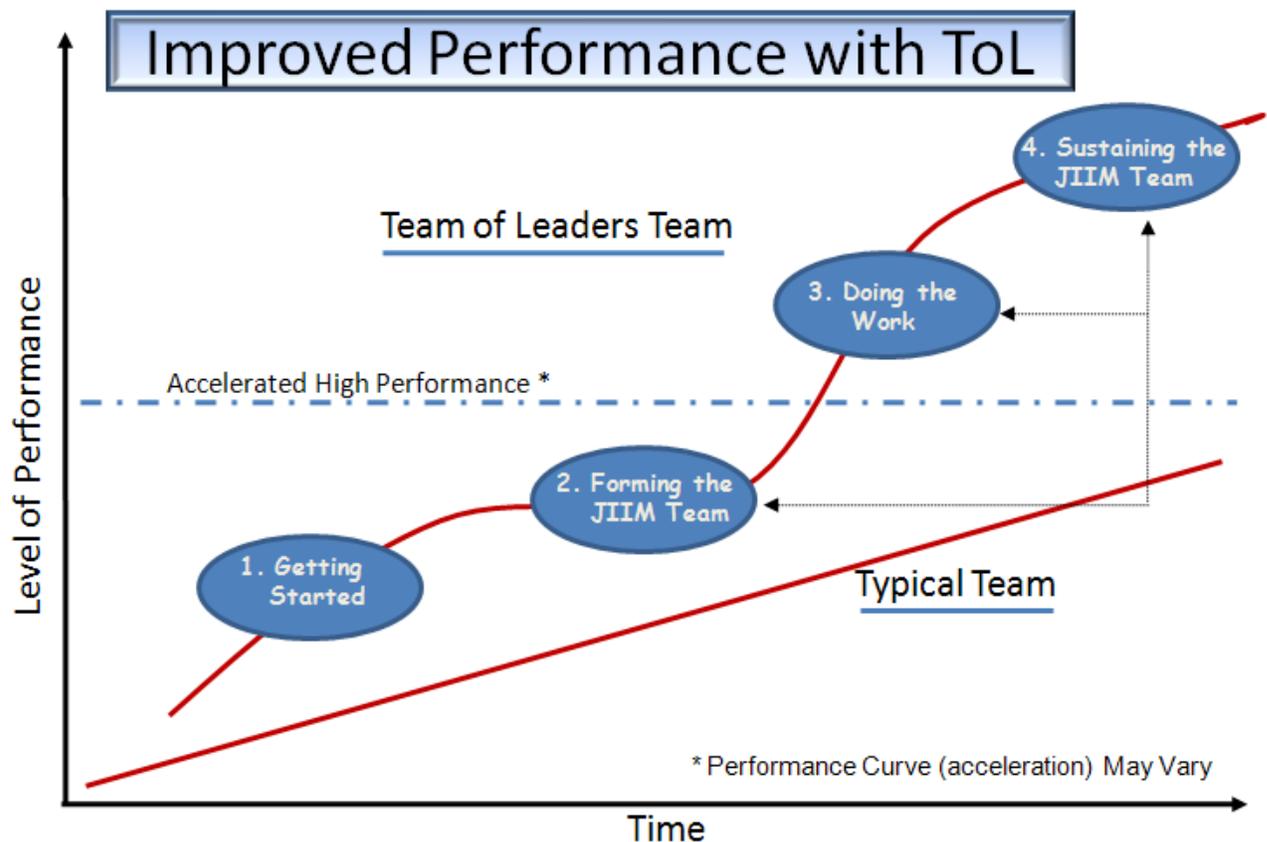
Section III contains "Tip Sheets" that a leader-team member can pull out and use to generate team discussion and understanding, especially when used to cross the various boundaries and diversities represented within that leader-team membership.

- **Development Stages:** Helps assess your leader-team's point within its lifecycle. Questions relevant to each stage to help energize conversation and collaboration.
- **Operating Agreements:** Provides examples that can help develop your team's procedures for how to work in a highly collaborative and often virtual environment. These operating agreements outline reasonable expectations and set the foundation for effective cultures of collaboration across the various boundaries of function, organization, level, or culture.
- **Measures of Effectiveness (MOE):** Provides suggestions on how to identify if your leader-team is effective and high performing. As a survey tool, it can provide leaders with insights on where and how to improve.
- **Individual and Team Preparation:** Designed as an individual and team assessment to help leader-team members prepare to participate on a high-performing team by developing actionable understanding in building relationships that generate high performance.
- **Coaching Tips and Techniques:** Offers practical coaching tips that can be used by any member of a high-performance leader-team. These coaching techniques focus on creating discussion and shared understanding that any leader can apply as an active member of a high-performing leader-team.

Section I: Introduction to Teams of Leaders Approach

Leaders of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) teams face unique challenges as they bring together teams of other leaders that cross multiple boundaries and attempt to operate at high performance levels. In the military culture, team building seems intuitive since there is a shared culture, set of values, lexicon, and doctrine, etc. This common background makes the Teams of Leaders (ToL) approach appear naturally occurring.

However, within JIIM teams, obtaining high performance is much more difficult due to the added complication of diversified backgrounds, agendas, perspectives, and situational understanding, which can significantly complicate leader-team formation and render some traditional teams dysfunctional. The ToL approach mitigates the challenge of operating within such complex JIIM environments, allowing leader-teams to not only function, but rapidly achieve high performance through developing shared qualities faster than traditional teaming practices focused on task proficiency.



**High performance will be determined by a number of variables, such as the number and diversity of leaders or changes to mission and capability. Leader-Teams may experience peaks and troughs due to any number or combination of factors. Turbulence, as identified in stage four, may cause the team's performance to drop, at which time it should apply the Leader-Team Exercise (LTX) through the second and third stages again.*

What Are High-Performing Leader-Teams?

The term Teams of Leaders is used to describe a high-performing leader-team whose members are from different organizations, cultures, agencies, or backgrounds and who each bring specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the cross-culture JIIM leader-team. These leader-team members often represent a parent agency, organization, or country and come with varying backgrounds, skill sets, motivations, and agendas as they interact to accomplish a common mission or objective. Due to the complexity and a less defined hierarchy where the military organization may not be

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the lead agency, each leader-member of the team may find themselves in a lead role of a project or objective. Rather than a team consisting of clearly defined leaders and subordinates focused on task proficiency, the team is transformed into one of peer leaders or a *leader-team*, where the relationship among members is the cornerstone to achieving high-performance.

Unlike traditional military doctrine that focuses on a team's mastery of task proficiency and competency, the ToL approach addresses the interaction and relationships among team members essential to collaboration and critical to high performance. ToL accelerates collaboration by allowing the team members to further develop qualities of shared vision, trust, competence, and confidence among leader-team members. It is a streamlined approach designed to break through barriers and boundaries that stagnate team development and ultimately performance. Along with an evolutionary method called the LTX, leader-teams are able to harness the power of Information Management (IM) and Knowledge Management (KM) to achieve rapid high-performance. The goal of ToL is to leverage this synergistic effect of bringing Leader-Team qualities to bear, enabled by IM and KM, to achieve high performance within the mission.

The ToL approach establishes a culture of shared trust, intensive collaboration, and networked expertise among horizontal (peer) and vertical (hierarchical) high-performing leader teams to generate actionable understanding and support decision making.

Many teams face the challenge of having to become effective in a very short amount of time while working across organizations, cultures, or agencies. Organizations are challenged as they build teams that cross multiple boundaries and attempt to operate at high performance levels. Team building seems intuitive when cultures, values, and language are shared; however, in some teams, the diverse backgrounds, agendas, perspectives, and situational perspectives complicate things and can even render a team dysfunctional.

The term Teams of Leaders describes an approach used to generate high-performing leader-teams quicker than conventional methods. This approach rapidly develops the shared vision/purpose, trust, competence, and confidence required for high performance. It leverages IM technologies, effective KM, and learning strategies to communicate and collaborate across time and space boundaries, while a newly developed LTX is used to build understanding of the operational situation and team requirements. And the developmental-models of how the team might execute the mission or tasks results in actionable knowledge needed to perform at high levels.

Every team goes through a set of developmental stages; the synergistic use of the three elements in the ToL approach accelerate the leader-team movement through those stages by addressing the leader-team requirements and cultural and organizational obstacles quickly and effectively. The ToL approach broadens the circle of the team and emphasizes building relationships and finding expertise. This approach develops a larger shared rolodex and an adaptive nature that immediately looks for and finds the workaround when obstacles are encountered.

The ToL approach is a new, adaptive way of teaching leaders how to observe, think, and act in high stakes, highly complex situations. It is about capacity building for non-routine situations that demand rapid and creative solutions.

What is a Leader-Team?

In most teams today, no one person is solely responsible for the team's leadership. Leadership is often provided by anyone who helps create and maintain performance enhancing conditions, regardless of whether that person holds a formal leadership role. Nor, is there any one right way for leaders to behave. Instead, they use whatever expertise they have or can co-opt and whatever resources they corral to accomplish the mission. Many team members have no direct authority and little professional influence on other members. As missions change, different team members may take the lead in accomplishing a specific mission or objective.

Leader-teams are comprised of members from different organizations, cultures, agencies, or backgrounds joined to accomplish a mission or task. These teams exist across government, the military, industry, academia, and in our neighborhoods. Each member brings specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes to the team to help accomplish an

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objective, and each “leader” is part of a greater organization that the leader-team member can reach back to for expertise and support. These teams do not follow a hierarchical organizational model, but rather operate as a network within the hierarchy. At any time, any member of the team may be placed in a lead role for a project or objective. ToL is a new approach that achieves higher performance faster than traditional teaming practices.

Leader-team effectiveness depends on three criteria:

1. Producing a team outcome (product or service) acceptable to whomever the leader-team is serving.
2. A growth in leader-team capacity (which in turn improves capacity of the organization).
3. A group experience meaningful and satisfying to members (which results in improved confidence).

High performance can be measured by:

1. Amount of shared situational understanding.
2. Amount of shared purpose and vision about the mission (ability to see an end-state, a compelling direction).
3. Amount of shared trust between team members.
4. Amount of perceived competence of other team members.
5. Amount of confidence each member has in the team’s ability to get the job done...and more.
6. The amount of latitude it is given by leaders to get the job done (enabling structure that facilitates rather than impedes).
7. Level of expertise available or accessible to the team (the bigger the shared rolodex the better).
8. The ability to use their social network to include and co-opt others into supporting the team.
9. Time it takes to accomplish a mission/task.
10. Quality of work the team produces (satisfaction of the customer).
11. Contribution of knowledge and expertise shared beyond the leader-team.

How Does the ToL Approach Accelerate Team Performance?

ToL accelerates learning, understanding, and action through the synergistic effect between successfully applying advanced leader-team development practices (created through the development of shared vision/purpose, trust, competence, and confidence) with effective use of information technology (IM/IS) and virtual collaboration tools and processes (KM) to learn and perform more rapidly and at higher levels than before.

The ToL methodology is not an externally-generated exercise or training; it is a way of thinking, understanding, and acting. It is used during the normal course of operations in the context for the situation at hand. This approach will enable leader-teams to observe, listen, stimulate, and support those who will themselves “create shared actionable understanding” from the bottom up, drawing on their practices and expectations so actual ground truth is first supported. These approaches also help a leader-team frame and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to support the high-priority issues facing JIIM teams. The ToL approach helps leader-teams identify and overcome obstacles that can keep them from accomplishing the mission.

Qualities of a High-Performing Team

High-performing leader-teams possess four well-developed qualities—shared vision/purpose, shared trust, shared competence, and shared confidence. These leader-teams also possess an adept ability to build relationships and work through problems to achieve their mission.

Shared Vision/Purpose

Shared vision exists when members of the leader-team have a common understanding of:

- The overall mission or objective
- Goals and sub-goals of the mission
- Strategies for reaching the goals

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- Team members' strengths and weaknesses
- Values and preferences of the leader-team as a whole and among the individual members
- The roles each member will play and want
- The big picture (such as how this particular mission contributes to a larger purpose)

Benefits of Shared Vision: It's widely known that teams with shared vision have better coordination and less conflict than teams without. Members of such teams of leaders tend to be better able to predict one another's behaviors and act quickly in the face of changing circumstances. Members are more confident sharing responsibility, which in turn increases the leader-team's ability to adapt. ToLs comprise members from many backgrounds, organizations, cultures, and agencies. Each leader brings unique skills, biases, and agendas. It is easy to see, then, how this can result in members not having a common vision. Through the ToL LTX process, team members can identify where differences exist and come to a common understanding more rapidly.

Shared Trust

Among the meanings associated with trust is the expectation that a person has a high level of integrity and dependability. People are willing to put themselves at risk because of their confidence that the other person will do what they expect. People tend to initially develop trust by superficial factors such as rank, position, résumés, or combat patches, which can lead to assumptions about a person's prior experiences and or qualification. As a barometer of trustworthiness, such assumptions are neither predictive nor reliable. However, direct experience with one another over time allows leader-team members to develop more informed, deeper levels of shared trust.

ToL LTXs offer a process for developing deeper levels of trust more quickly by discussing experiences in a context common to the leader-team. This development of trust, combined with building on small successes, results in improved confidence across the leader-team, which in turn, adds to more trust and confidence.

Shared Competence

Competence is evident when people perform their work at or above standard. Individuals and teams, as a whole, have competencies; it's important to ask whether the team has the competencies necessary to accomplish the mission. Shared competence means the team collectively is competent. While in the context of the team members from the same organization, team members are assumed to be competent based on similar experiences or a common background, but we cannot automatically assume the same to be true in teams with members from a diversified background or where experience may vary. This situation is increasingly common when military leader-teams operate in a cross-cultural world. ToL LTXs offer processes for identifying team and individual competencies, or lack thereof, and for developing the needed competencies more quickly.

Rapid development of competence is important because:

- Leader-team members rely on one another to round out leader-team expertise
- The sum of a leader-team's skills is greater than the separate parts
- Complexity and change keep accelerating, which means that few leader-teams have all the skills and knowledge needed within the core group
- Confidence builds as the team demonstrates competence

Competency may be initially assumed, but must be proven to increase trust and confidence. To support developing leader-team competence more broadly, we include a selected set of standard LTXs and supporting tips and techniques in the pull-out sheets in Section III.

ToL LTXs offer a process for identifying leader-team and individual competencies, or lack thereof, and for developing the needed competencies more quickly. Combined with building trust and vision in other discussions, team confidence grows, mutually reinforcing the other qualities as well.

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Shared Confidence

As trust, purpose, and competence build, the accelerator to attaining and continuing to build “high performance” is confidence. Small successes develop confidence, which in turn causes teams to undertake new and more difficult challenges. With each accomplishment, leader-team confidence grows, as does the leader-team’s culture and ability to collaborate.

Confidence among leader-team members with a common background, values, and beliefs, such as in the military, should be assumed. However, in the much more complex JIIM environments, such an assumption of shared confidence comes at the risk of performance. For example, the leader-team may include members whose parent organizations or countries have historically shared little faith in one another, in which case personal interaction and relationships among one another are more critical to success.

Building Relationships

One of the most important qualities a leader can acquire is the ability to form and maintain solid working relationships. In the relationship, without trust, a leader-team has a difficult time achieving high performance. This is particularly true when operating across the boundaries of levels in a hierarchy (military), service, agency, culture, and nationality. Each leader member of the leader-team should be encouraged to:

1. Identify and include all stakeholder representatives in the leader-team.
2. Establish a personal rapport with each leader by finding initial commonalities. Examples could be:
 - Common history/experiences
 - Common contacts/interests
 - Common competency
3. Determine the leader-team’s readiness to collaborate.
4. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each other leader-team member.
5. Distinguish between values, interests, and positions.
6. Build personal relationships.

The Modern Rolodex (Annotated Contact List)

A shared rolodex is a leader-team listing of key contacts known throughout an organization. Similar to the white or yellow pages of a phone book, leader-team members should physically share or import their contacts to a shared website that all have access to. The shared rolodex (or annotated contact list from your Outlook account) includes not only physical contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses, but highlights each contact’s functional expertise and how it supports the leader-team mission. It is a listing of who we need to talk/coordinate with. Building and then sharing rolodexes becomes increasingly important by drawing on various interpersonal associations that created the functionally-oriented rolodexes in the first place. Every member of the leader-team will learn who the other’s contacts are and understand what relationships exist both outside and within the organization.

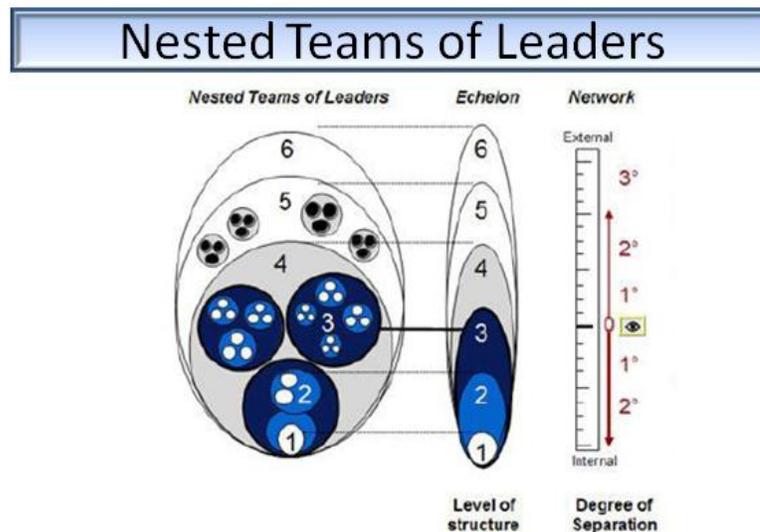
When creating and upgrading the shared rolodex, it is important to ask some key questions and to have conversations about building a network of contacts. Who else do we need? Does another agency have a capability that we need? Often, effective collaboration starts by sharing rolodexes, each to assist the other in responding to requirements. Once the shared rolodex is created, how will the team keep the listing current and where will it be stored?

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Nested Networks of Leader-Teams

Leader-teams also apply to small cross-boundary groups where multiple organizations are represented and members are expected to leverage their home organization's resources on behalf of the team's purpose. Members are expected to lead when their expertise is called upon.

The nesting of teams is one of the most critical aspects of the coaching guide. A breakdown at any level can have serious consequences to the larger team of teams. Effectively nesting teams provided the most difficult challenge and we will review the handbook to place a greater emphasis on this area.



Often, for a nested hierarchy there is a parallel hierarchy of interconnected teams. Within each organization, echelon teams are formed for specific missions and purposes. When these teams cross organizational boundaries (internal or external), it is very likely that a leader could serve on multiple teams at various echelons. An example of formal nested networks of a leader-team are the Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups (B2C2WG).

A leader from one organization who is a member of a team from within that organization may also belong to a leader-team consisting of many other organizations. An example of this occurrence is a JIIM leader-team that could be focused on a particular crisis, project, or activity. These teams may be hastily assembled or long-standing.

Teams are often created (sometimes in a hasty fashion) from within a hierarchical organization to serve a specific purpose. It is very important for that newly-created nested team to be 'introduced' to the organization. Explain the new team's purpose or vision within the organization. Introducing the nested team will help to lessen misunderstandings, specifically as roles and taskings evolve.

See ToL Tip N for a discussion on how nested teams and team networks were used in Austere Challenge '09.

Adaptability and Workarounds

For most of us, the core practices of ToLs are familiar, everyday behaviors. In the midst of change, most situations require two very simple approaches that appear to be natural reflexes among high-performing leaders: When the formal systems in which they work don't offer quick paths toward solving problems, they know how to find workarounds and they know how to use their personal networks/rolodexes. Both innovation and adaptation are examples of workarounds. Solutions come from initiative, expertise, and relationships. Workarounds and networks of relationships are essential to ToLs. Success breeds success.

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Informal vs. Formal Collaboration

Work is done in two settings: formal and informal. High-performing leader-teams must master both.

Formal: The approved process within any organization for gaining a decision and officially communicating those decisions to others.

Formal coordination applies when there are clearly defined rules and regulations that govern the leader-team's actions. Although a leader-team may exist across the limits of regulations, the agencies and organizations the leaders represent do not. Formal coordination is most common when coordinating between organizations and cultures when there is a need to maintain records of the process.

Informal: The use and transfer of pre-decisional data, information, and knowledge by whatever means to increase situational awareness and quicken our ability to coordinate activities and resources to accomplish a mission, often across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture.

Informal coordination usually applies within the team when conducting day-to-day business between peers and colleagues. Informal coordination outside the team is used to establish and maintain situational awareness and to co-opt other actors and agencies to action, without unnecessary formal avenues. The informal coordination enables the leader-team to act faster.

Organizational leaders must acknowledge and endorse high degrees of informal coordination to enable high performance. Organizational operating agreements must address both formal and informal coordination.

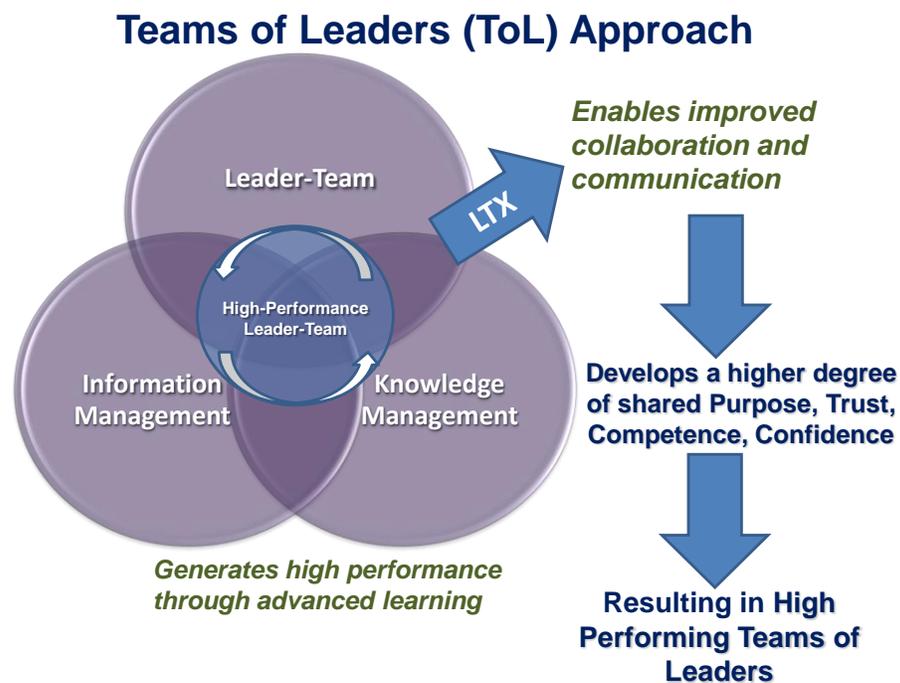
Section II. Enabling High-Performing Teams

The Teams of Leaders (ToL) approach is a means to improve team learning and performance levels by deliberately developing shared, **actionable-understanding*** using a combination of continuing sequence LTXs while expanding the team's ability to collaborate and communicate across various boundaries.

**The term "actionable-understanding" applies to knowledge-in-motion; the leader-team has in-depth situational awareness, accurate information, and the concerted ability to use that information swiftly and correctly.*

ToL consists of three main components:

- The Leader-Team
- Information Management (IM) Tools
- Knowledge Management (KM) Processes



The Synergistic Effect of ToL

ToL is an evolutionary approach designed to help leader-teams punch through their boundaries and barriers quickly, constructively, and without the stop-learn-practice interruption of typical teaming models. It is conducted in the context of ongoing operations, enabling the leader-team to achieve shared vision, trust, competence, and confidence very rapidly. The leader-team, combined with the performance enablers of IM and KM, supported by the LTX, result in a synergistic momentum that propels the leader-team to ever-higher levels of performance.

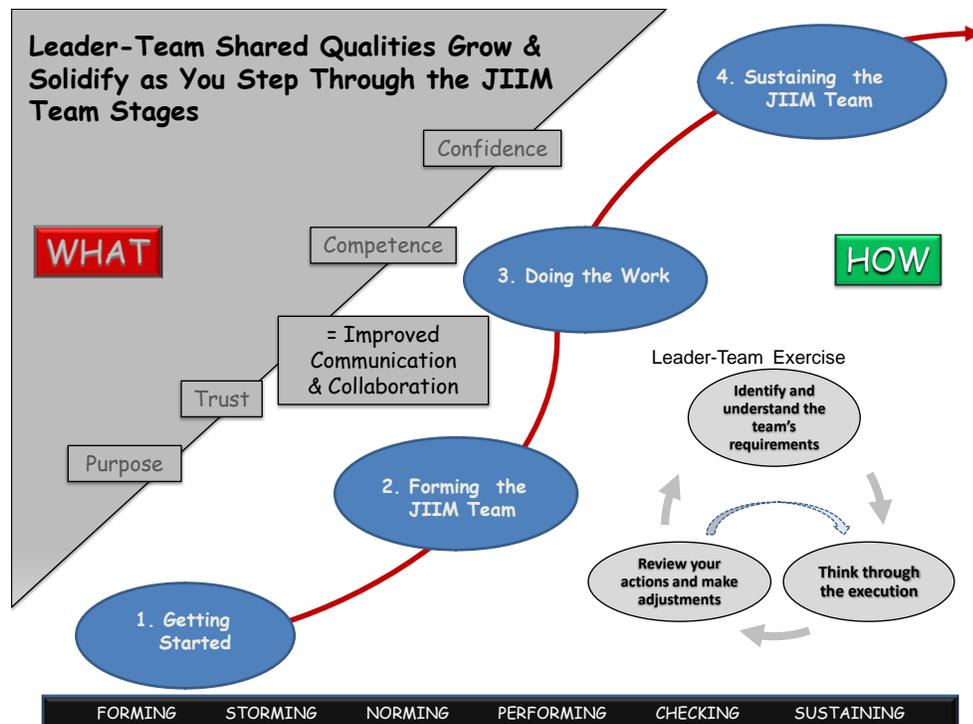
The ToL Approach is Different from How Teams are Trained Today

This approach facilitates rapid leader-team building by providing specific questions and issues to consider at each stage of a team's lifecycle and in the context of the operational mission. These questions help develop mental models of the leader-team's missions/requirements, concerns, and possible actions. No stepping away from the real world to

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“conduct an exercise.” Each LTX discussed in this approach is *in context* and contributes to mission outcomes. The leader-team discussions, stimulated by the questions and considerations, accelerate shared understanding and set conditions to develop the four key qualities for a high-performing leader-team: shared team vision/purpose, shared trust, shared competency, and shared confidence. Developing these qualities in combination with artfully applying IM tools and effective KM processes help a leader-team communicate across time and distance virtually and collaborate more effectively. The result is a leader-team that can observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) faster than the way we work today. The ToL objective is to build leader-teams that can “connect the dots” ahead of others to influence outcomes across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture.

The synergy of these three components helps improve communication and collaboration among team members, which enables the rapid generation of shared purpose/vision, trust, and competence. As the team develops actionable understanding it performs successfully, which in turn develops confidence, which acts as an accelerant generating high performance. Teams of leaders are adept at achieving higher performance through building relationships, global collaboration, leveraging technologies, and quickly overcoming the obstacles imposed by traditional hierarchical structures that cause many teams to struggle.



In effect, the leader-team achieves higher levels of “actionable understanding” through building relationships faster than traditional team building methods primarily focused on task training. Furthermore, traditional forming, storming, norming, and performing stages (Tuchman) of team development that we have become familiar with are often dysfunctional when applied across boundaries of organization, level, function, and culture. In a western culture or where team members have a common background, education, or experiences, such as in the United States Military, the “storming stage” often places issues on the table and begins addressing them early, further building on the common shared qualities, further establishing a relationship among team members.

However, in non-military, non-American cultures, the storming is likely to have a negative impact and can cause team members to withdraw, hold back vital information, or even work at cross-purposes. At best, the team performs at a sub optimal level; at worst, it is dysfunctional and ineffective. The ToL approach is designed to find common ground more quickly, across cultures and other barriers if necessary. It reveals differences in purpose, values, and agendas in a

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less confrontational manner, with minimal “storming,” and then builds consensus and trust from a common start point.

The LTX is not a course or standalone set of exercises, although it could initially be introduced that way. The LTX is more a way of thinking and acting in diverse teaming situations and is most effectively applied through a coach; preferably one of the leader-team members or team leaders well versed in the approach. An external coach could and should be used in high payoff leader-teams to both model the approach and teach others as part of normal team operations.

The Leader-Team Exercise

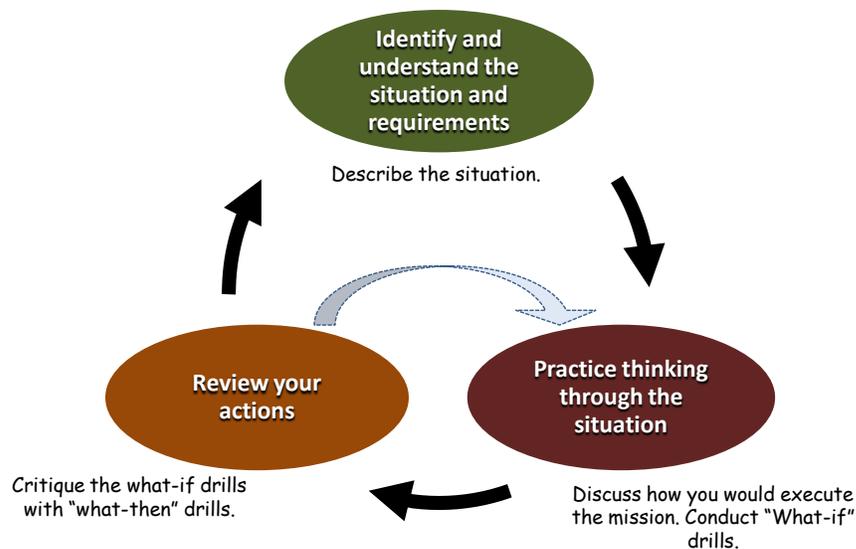
The LTX is the “driver” that propels and accelerates the team of leaders through the natural team development stages, helping it achieve high-performance, exhibiting actionable understanding more quickly. The LTX should be conducted in an operational setting as a way to think through a situation and build the actionable understanding discussed above.

The art of building high-performing leader-teams is sensing what combination of *practices* and *expectations* to stimulate when and with whom to generate the intensive collaboration that fosters development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes (SKA) that are characteristic of high-performing teams of leaders (shared trust, vision/mission, competence, confidence).

The LTX process comprises three steps. Team SKA develops primarily through the team, as a group, discussing short vignettes (situations in story form), analyzing the mission/task “what if...,” and developing options and considering the “what then...”. The three steps are:

1. Determine and understand the team’s situation and requirements.
2. Practice by thinking (talking) through the situation.
3. Review your shared actions and decisions.

Leader-Team Exercise (LTX) Framework



Adopted from Gary Klein, PhD
The Power of Intuition, 2003

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To develop such high-performing leader-teams requires an approach that goes beyond traditional “train to task” models. Rather, these exercises develop the “art” of adaptive thinking and learning. This advanced methodology develops clear and shared understanding, critical-thinking and reasoning skills, and promotes adaptive behaviors, not conditioned responses. The LTX, done in the context of the current mission and situation, results in an accelerated maturation of the four shared qualities: vision, trust, competence, and confidence. They help the team develop understanding with respect to the purpose, situation, conditions, and decisions as well as how to work around obstacles together. These mental exercises apply available IM and KM enablers and improve the leader-team’s ability to effectively communicate and collaborate across organizational boundaries, time zones, and cultures. Using the technique of facilitated discussion, leader-team members gain shared insights by accelerating a process that normally transpires over a long period of time and becomes evident through real world interactions.

By varying the situations and techniques, you help maintain participant interest and deepen understanding. Initially, keep the situations simple. Focus on areas in which the entire leader-team can agree, then as shared understanding, trust, and confidence build, you can create more difficult “what if” situations.

The ToL LTX concept is a flexible, informal leader-team development tool that:

- You can use at any time.
- Lasts only a few minutes or longer as time permits.
- Uses pre-developed scenarios/vignettes/stories as well as those generated by the team of leaders.
- You can carry out in leader-team discussions, virtually or collocated.
- Any team member or the leader-team as a whole can initiate.
- Improves the way we look at and share “workarounds” to solve problems.
- Helps develop and advantage the direct and indirect rolodex (address book) contacts we all have. The broader the experiences, the greater the shared address book.

How to Create an LTX in an Operational Context

The LTX can be a discussion, a whiteboard drawing, be conducted over a web conferencing tool, or during a teleconference. The LTX can be applied in any situation. Using the framework is simple and quick.

- 1. Determine and Understand the Leader-Team’s Situation and Requirements.**
 - This step helps share knowledge and experience and create an operational concept.
- 2. Practice by Thinking (Talking) Through the Situation.**
 - This step helps justify the concept and build mental models.
- 3. Review Your Shared Actions and Decisions.**
 - This step helps cross-level new-knowledge and actions and establishes operating agreements.

The LTX can be used at each stage in the leader-team’s development. Remember, the LTX is simply a methodology that is used by the team to improve shared understanding (purpose/vision), shared trust, and shared competence, which in turn leads to improved shared confidence. As you repeat the LTX process to improve understanding and develop trust, leader-team competencies will improve, which in turn increases confidence and will impact performance and willingness to tackle more difficult situations.

To begin any LTX, ask a few basic questions. Get *everyone’s input* and then *check on levels of agreement*. Always try to find something everyone agrees upon initially and build from there.

When disagreement occurs, find out why. Coach the team to suspend judgment until they have heard the disaffected member’s position. (This rule is, “Seek first to understand others.”) Ask questions that identify the specific issues in the disagreement.

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Step 1: Determine and Understand the Leader-Team's Situation and Requirements

This step helps us share our knowledge and experiences, and creates an operational concept. In this first step, ask a series of questions to help the team members identify team requirements. A few questions you might use include the following:

- What is important about this mission/task and why?
- What team and or mission goals need to be considered and why?
Note: If the team is not aligned, always try to start with something (no matter how small) everyone can agree on after you hear each person's view of the mission/task.
- What are the preferences of the senior-level management, if any, and what guidance do they offer?
- What strategies should the leader-team consider to reach these goals and why?
- Which leader-team members should be responsible for what and why?
- Whom should the leader-team collaborate with?
- Who needs to be recruited into the leader-team, why, and what does the team have to offer them?
- What would the leader-team expect in the way of resources from our higher headquarters and why?
- What can be provided from "the field"—bottom up?
- What workarounds might the leader-team use to deal with this situation?

Step 2: Practice by Thinking (Talking) Through the Situation

Once you have identified requirements and understand the situation, this second step is to talk through executing the task/mission. In this step we justify the concept developed in Step 1 and build a mental model of what the shared execution of the mission/requirement/task might look like. This discussion develops shared understanding, and it helps the collective leader-team envision the execution.

Ask: What would it look like as we work through this situation?

One method is to have team members describe the events as they see them occurring. Include decision points and note actions that must be completed by the leader-team. Other questions to use:

- What will be our most challenging problem executing this mission/task?
- How will we work through it? (Explore shared options.)

Once the initial conversation is complete and you have discussed the scenario, use the next period of time to compare and contrast what members have said. Then engage a conversation around "what if's" that extend the discussion in different ways. It's best to manage the conversation such that people's responses are short and specific with prompts such as these:

- There seems to be some disagreement when we get to X?
- How would the team recognize a change in the situation if it occurs?
- What would be some shared cues or indicators?
- How would this new development affect the overall mission?
- In this new situation, whose roles would change? And to what?
- What could the leader-team do to prevent this new situation from occurring?
- Would the team need to develop workarounds for this situation?

Step 3: Review Your Actions and Decisions

After the Step 2 discussions, review what you have learned or decided. This cross leveling of knowledge builds the deep understanding and shared agreements between team members. Record these as needed and adjust operating agreements as required. Some questions to ask include:

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- What did we decide?
- What shared actions are we taking?
- How does this affect our operating agreements?
- What's the next step?

If necessary, revisit Step 2 to clarify events and to maximize common understanding.

Information Management

IM tools are those tools used to enhance communication and collaboration across time and distance. IM tools allow us to share files, communicate instantly, and organize and store information in a meaningful way. IM tools are either synchronous (we all meet at the same time) or asynchronous (we collaborate at different times).

- Common synchronous IM tools may include telephone, video teleconference (VTC), Button 2 (Desktop Web-Conferencing), instant message/chat, etc.
- Common asynchronous IM tools may include web portals, leader-team pages, blogs, communities of practices, etc.

Employing the best IM and KM alone cannot propel a leader-team to high performance. Without the fundamental leader-team qualities—particularly, but not exclusively, shared trust—achieving high performance is difficult, if not impossible. With the power of IM and KM, more options continue to emerge that allow increased communication and collaboration, which in turn helps build the shared qualities.

As the use of informal collaboration encouraged by an organization's leadership expands, shared leader-team qualities grow. Confidence in the tools and processes improve, and the shared leader-team qualities and high performance expands rapidly.

As the leader-team forms, ask: *What tools are available, what do we use, and what do we use them for?*

Information Technology

Portals

Portals are web-based entry points that create access into multiple web-enabled sources of information. Portals allow users to access information from a broad spectrum in a unified format. One example is the Army Training Requirements and Resources System (ATRRS), which compiles student, school, and course information from a variety of sources and presents it in common location and format. Another example is Google, which when conducting a search, searches multiple sites to find the most common results. Portals are powerful tools that multiply our IM capabilities.

Team Pages

Team pages are the primary tools that teams use to share and distribute information. The purpose of a team site is to create a common platform for all to operate and share from. Most team pages will consist of at least seven sections: People, Purpose, Links, Time, Communication, Content, and Tools. A brief description of each is below.

- **People:** Biographical and contact information, member photos, shared-rolodexes, personal documents, and individual network maps.
- **Purpose:** Vision statement that articulates objectives, deliverables, and tasks with accurate descriptions, standards, and timelines for each.
- **Links:** Map of the relationships within the leader-team, a cluster of nested-leader-teams, and any teams or organizations extended outside the leader-team primary mission or purpose. This also includes the leader-team's operating agreements, operational definitions, and common URLs.

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- **Time:** Common team calendar, project timelines, phases, and milestones.
- **Communication:** Meetings, web-conferencing, and discussion threads.
- **Content:** Final products, drafts, references, and strategic plans.
- **Tools:** Useful items such as exercises, templates, or worksheets.

Button 2

“Button 2” refers to using Adobe Connect software. Adobe Connect is a web-based meeting and briefing platform that gives users a number of powerful options such as video and voice conferencing, real-time file and desktop sharing, and chat. Connect provides a personal online meeting room in which many people (including the host) can collaborate through the web in real time. Button 2 is a way to level the playing field across the boundaries of time and distance virtually. Adobe Connect software can be accessed through the Defense Knowledge Online portal. There are many other synchronous tools—use what works. The use and types of IM tools should be discussed as the leader-team forms and progresses.

Connectivity and system check to Adobe Connect can be found at the following link:

https://connect.dco.dod.mil/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.html

Knowledge Management Processes

Knowledge management, simply put, are the tools, techniques, processes, and strategies to help create, capture, find, organize, analyze, share, and maintain organizational knowledge and expertise. The goal of KM is to make information easier to find, which will make us more productive and effective. It requires a balance of people, processes, technologies, structures, and a supporting culture of collaboration.

Effective KM provides actionable understanding that "wins or prevails" because the leader-team can "connect the dots more rapidly" than those they face. Generating and sustaining actionable understanding requires the interacting combination of IM, KM, and high-performing leader-teams that get better and better practicing ToL.

Knowledge Flow

Knowledge flow refers to the way information and knowledge move through the organization. Knowledge flows among people, among people and machines, and from machine to machine. Does knowledge flow from person-to-person over a phone where only two people gain an understanding, or is the leader-team collaborating en masse through a team site or portal that allows all to gain an understanding? Is your organization accomplishing neither, or perhaps, both? KM principles combined with IM tools allow the leader-team to collaborate, learn, transfer, and apply knowledge in more meaningful and efficient ways as they share qualities enabling the actionable understanding of high performance.

Wiki

A wiki is a page or collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites.

Wiki Characteristics

- A wiki invites all users to edit any page or to create new pages within the wiki website, using only a plain-vanilla web browser without any extra add-ons.
- Wiki promotes meaningful topic associations among different pages by making page link creation almost intuitively easy and showing whether an intended target page exists or not.
- A wiki is not a carefully crafted site for casual visitors. Instead, it seeks to involve the visitor in an ongoing process of creation and collaboration that constantly changes the website landscape.

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Blog

A blog (a contraction of the term "web log") is a website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

Blog Characteristics

- Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries.
- A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.
- Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art (artlog), photographs (photoblog), sketches (sketchblog), videos (vlog), music (MP3 blog), audio (podcasting), which are part of a wider network of social media.
- A technique is for the B2C2WG to build a "running assessment," like a blog on a wiki page, and have it send an alert to the CG's email when it is changed or updated. This helps to prevent constantly trying to get in to brief, as well as allowing the knowledge built by the B2C2WG to be shared across the command. By focusing on these running assessments, you can prevent constantly briefing the leadership on progress and challenges.

Community of Practice

The concept of a community of practice (CoP) refers to the process of social learning that occurs and shared sociocultural practices that emerge and evolve when people who have common goals interact as they strive towards those goals.

CoP Characteristics

- CoPs are usually formed within a single discipline to focus efforts in sharing knowledge, solving problems, or innovative ventures.
- Given the complex nature of the technological and global age in which organizations function, multidisciplinary participation provides an advantage in these efforts because of the expanded focus and even holistic goal that can be achieved.

Content Management

Document Repository (Any Time)

Every team needs a shared repository for documents and other work products. The ability to store and retrieve information and knowledge from any place at any time is core to teamwork today. A repository can be as simple as a shared drive online or a memory stick of folders and files that you pass around. Or it can be as comprehensive as a tailored team room (see below).

Discussion Threads (Any Time)

Discussion threads, which have been in use for 40 years, were the original any-time group collaboration tool of the Internet. They allow focused conversations over an extended period of time among, essentially, unlimited numbers of people. On a large-scale, this technology supports professional forums and CoPs. On a small-scale, teams can develop, discuss, and track a range of topics—from big ideas to bug fixes (Section 4: Communicate, *ToL Handbook Coordinating Draft v.1.2*, p 105).

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Leader-Team Room (Any Time)

An online team room provides a common home for people who function as a unit. It serves as a flexible repository and may have discussion capabilities. In general, such rooms have a menu of optional functions, such as calendars and lists. Tailored leader-team rooms are configured to support elements common to all leader-teams. Since they are relatively permanent places, such rooms accumulate knowledge and dynamically reflect a team's personality. While the use of a 'leader-team room' is highly recommended, a certain dependency can occur. When creating your team room, keep accessibility in mind. Are you able to 'reach back' to your team room from a possible forward location? If not, then have a workaround!

Push-Pull-Prod

In today's fast-paced environment we must take advantage of many ways to discover and acquire the knowledge we need for important decisions and actions. It is vital that we employ a triad of techniques to remain competitive. None of us has time to search for everything we need when we need it, so we use technology to help. *An effective method for doing this is called push-pull-prod. A good knowledge management system provides all three. A good team room technology allows a team of teams to employ all three approaches to communication.*

- For *push*, you can set alerts for changes in content areas and discussions, or announcements made on the home page (Section 4: Communicate, Teams of Leaders, 26 June 2009, Volume 1, p 126).
- For *pull*, the team room is a repository of all the team's shared information about itself, its work, and often the work itself (if it is an information product).
- *Prod* technology is currently in its infancy for leader-teams, but prodding comprises much of what team meetings and messaging are all about. Here, good virtual collaboration behaviors are the prod (for more information, see Teams of Leaders, 26 June 2009, Volume 1).

Operating Agreements

To be effective, the team needs to commit to shared ways of working and interacting. This is particularly important for teams that lack the familiarity of daily face-to-face contact and for those coming from diverse organizations and cultures. By agreeing to certain common behaviors, you can codify a set of operating principles that address many areas where such teams can go astray. Because your leader-team usually exists across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture, you may not have traditional rules and regulations that apply to every situation. This is particularly true in the JIIM environment, where rules from participating organizations may even conflict. Thus, your team may have to invent new approaches that are consistent with the common thrust of the participating organizations' procedures.

Each of these areas suggests grounds for leader-team agreement.

- Agreements around collaboration tools
- Agreements around the work process
- Agreements around leader-team behaviors and expectations
- Agreements around email addresses and groups
- Agreements around the location of the shared rolodex
- Agreements around the registrations for specific systems/applications/site

For examples of Operating Agreements, see ToL Tip D.

Section III. ToL Tips

**Use these pull-out sheets as quick references to work through each topic.*

- A. Shared Qualities of a High-Performing Leader-Team
- B. Leader-Team Development Stages and Questions
- C. Informal vs. Formal Coordination
- D. Operating Agreements: Rules of Engagement for a Culture of Collaboration
- E. Measures of Leader-Team Effectiveness
- F. Individual Preparation for a High-Performing Leader-Team Membership
- G. Initial Team Assessment
- H. Coaching Tips and Techniques for High-Performance Leader-Teams
- I. Building Relationships
- J. Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Vision and Purpose
- K. Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Trust
- L. Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Competence
- M. Conflict Resolution Tips and Techniques
- N. Nested Teams
- O. Conducting a Virtual Meeting
- P. Example of Organizational Collaboration Guidance
- Q. Acronyms

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ToL Tip A: Shared Qualities of a High-Performing Leader-Team

Shared Vision/Purpose

Whether called mission, vision, or purpose, the shared issue is: What are we, the leader-team (physical or virtual or mixed), assembled to do? To what extent do we all agree just what the mission, vision, or purpose is? The more the four qualities are in fact shared by everyone in the group, the more likely it will be a higher performing team to implement the vision (purpose). Sharing is not unlimited; it is focused on the explicit vision (purpose) established. Hopefully the range of overlap will expand to include both explicit and implicit tasks associated with the vision (purpose), including expected and unexpected tasking and task changes. Expansion should occur particularly as the shared confidence of the leader-team develops in becoming high performing.

Shared Trust

Shared trust is most important because it establishes the basic ingredient of sharing or collaboration. For Army leader-teams, trust is solidly grounded in the shared values of Loyalty, Duty, Honor, and Integrity. The Soldier's Creed—I will never leave a fallen comrade—epitomizes shared trust. With trust, the other qualities come more easily. So the challenge to developing high performance is to create intense collaboration within the members of the leader-team, and then across various leader-teams across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture.

Shared Competence

The skills, knowledge, and attitudes that teams build together culminate into what is known as shared competence. Often, competence is assumed. Natural factors in our lives have formed biases that often drive an inference of one level of competence or another. First impressions, rank structures, recognition, social class, and formal credentials are but a few of the ways we form early opinions of a person's assumed capability, particularly across cultures. Teams of Leaders (ToL) does not assume competence or incompetence. Instead, it builds a shared competence by transforming the way leader-teams operate and collaborate to get at the heart of what a leader-team, as a whole, can or cannot accomplish. Using the Leader Team Exercise (LTX), leader-teams explore and reveal not only gaps in their capability, but also hidden expertise. The sum of that expertise over time is a shared competence that drives higher performance against a particular goal or objective.

Shared Confidence

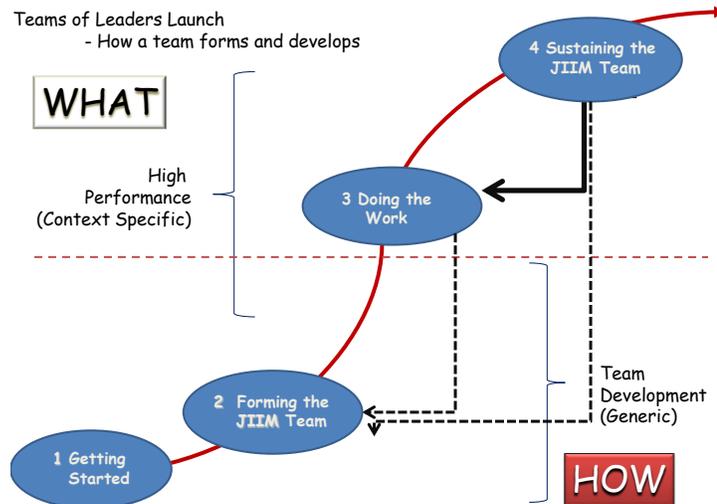
Confidence is the product of shared trust working as a team to execute a fully understood, agreed upon vision (purpose) with a wholly competent leader-team. It is a team—can do approach—routinely looking for better ways to accomplish the tasks assigned. Increasing shared confidence is a very positive accelerator to leader-team high performance.

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ToL Tip B: Leader-Team Development Stages and Questions

Stages of a High-Performing Leader-Team

All leader-teams go through certain stages as they form and develop. This guide provides tips and techniques to increase dialogue, improve situational understanding, and develop high performance.



Stage 1. Getting started are things we do to prepare a leader-team. They include identifying the initial mission and specific leader-team members and conducting an initial meeting. If this is a pre-existing leader-team, this stage may be omitted or reduced. The checklist provides specific questions, considerations, and actions that you can use to coach the grouped or virtual leader-team through this stage.

Stage 2. Forming the grouped or virtual leader-team. These are activities we perform to develop initial shared understanding of the leader-team mission and purpose, the skill sets everyone brings to the table, and the efforts required to develop shared skill sets. In this stage we clarify and build consensuses regarding team purpose, understand the impact of various boundaries crossed by leader-team members, and build situational understanding of the environment in which we will operate.

Stage 3. Do the work. In this stage the leader-team performs the mission(s) it is assigned. Throughout this stage the team can apply the LTX concept to identify and clarify purpose, adjust team requirements, and build the shared four team qualities in the context of the operational situation. Sharing, sharing, and sharing!

Stage 4. Sustain the team. As the team becomes high performing, many events or activities can reduce effectiveness, such as changing situations, loss of leader-team members, adding team members, changes in technology, etc. This section of the checklist provides tips and techniques for dealing with turbulence and maintaining high performance and to build higher and higher levels of performance!

Teams of leaders naturally move through these stages, but to achieve high performance more rapidly, the team requires an accelerator that facilitates discussion, understanding, and development of the shared qualities. Increased confidence is a powerful accelerator.

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Leader-Team Development Stages

Use this guide as a reminder of things to consider or ask your leader-team during each stage of your team's development. If starting a new leader-team, these stages are often considered a team launch (Teams)¹. Continually assess the leader-team's performance and return to any stage or sub stage as needed.

You can modify the questions from used in the LTX for each stage. Additional questions and considerations are listed in each sub step as a quick reference for stimulating discussion that results in improved shared understanding of purpose/vision, trust, team competence, and confidence.

Note: *In some leader-teams you will never achieve agreement on all points. If you can establish a common vision that is acceptable to the team—even the "lowest common denominator"—then shared trust can be built as divergent views and agendas are known and deconflicted.*

The bottom line is effective leader-team performance through improved communication and collaboration so that each leader-team member may achieve his/her organizational objective. How do we reach win-win?

Use the questions below to generate discussion, talk through execution, and review your action. Moving through these steps should be seamless and within the context of the operating environment.

Stage 1: Getting Started

The first thing any team must do is to follow the steps below. (If your leader-team has already been working together, you may omit or truncate this step.)

1.1. Identify the leader-team members and team mission

- What must the team do?
- Who is currently working the action?
- Who is on the team?
- Is the team grouped or virtual?
- Who should be on the team? Where's the expertise?
- Determine who has access/how to get everyone access.
- What are the cultural, organizations, and related diversity among the leader-team?

1.2. Set up and conduct an initial meeting

- How will I contact the team?
- How will I conduct the meeting? Face-to-face, virtual, both? How does this effect leader-team diversity?
- How do I run a virtual meeting (refer to Step 4.6 on page B-5).

1.3. Conduct a Team Assessment

The more you know about the team, the easier it is to highlight the areas where the team can improve and those where it can excel. Use the team assessment early in the first stage of the teams development cycle and again as often as needed when the situation or team members change. The assessment provides the team an azimuth check to calibrate which tools and approaches seem to be working. The team assessment can be done in a few minutes and a discussion of the questions is often more productive that taking it as a survey in isolation. The assessment can be performed as a group exercise. However, if the team is having problems building trust with one another it could be counterproductive to conduct it as a group exercise.

¹ Lipnack, J. & Stamps, J. *Virtual Teams: The Age of the Network*

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Remember that team strengths are as important as team weaknesses. In addition to the 24-question checklist (ToL Tip G), the team as a group might consider the following questions.

- How diverse is the team?
Note: *The more diverse, the more boundaries to cross, the more difficult initial sharing may be. Think small to start.*
- What tools do we have to communicate and collaborate?
- What are the access issues? Security issues?
- What are the initial IM/KM requirements? Where is the leader-team's knowledge maintained?
- One technique is for the B2C2WG to build a "running assessment," like a blog on a wiki page, and have it send an alert to the CG's email when it is changed or updated. This helps to prevent constantly trying to get in to brief, as well as allowing the knowledge built by the B2C2WG to be shared across the command. By focusing on these running assessments, you can prevent constantly briefing the leadership on progress and challenges.

1.4. Individual Leader-Assessment (See ToL Tip F)

As leaders, we each individually bring valuable knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the team. Before we can be an effective high-performing team, we need to know ourselves and then consider how our "style" might impact a larger leader-team composed routinely across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture. Once the team is formed, it is valuable to spend a few minutes telling everyone else about ourselves using some of the questions in ToL Tip F. Review these questions individually prior to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Forming the JIIM Team

Any leader-team, new or old, must understand how they will operate, share, communicate, and collaborate. Awareness of 'where' the team is located/posted is necessary for those wanting to join the larger team. This stage helps develop a shared understanding.

Existing leader-teams may revisit this stage each time they are assigned a new task or mission as a way to re-calibrate the activities. The more experience the team has working together and the more trust, the quicker the team will move through this stage. Use the three-step LTX methodology to work through each sub-stage.

2.1 Develop Shared Understanding

This initial discussion focuses on gaining clear understanding of the mission/task at hand.

2.2 Developing Leader-Team Purpose

Use the LTX described earlier in the Coaching Guide. Central to this stage is shared understanding of who is in charge and who is in support, or what each agency brings to the leader-team.

2.3 Understand the Operating Environment

This may be called the Interagency Preparation of the Area of Operation. Ask the following:

- What do we know about the geography?
- What do we know about the culture?
- Get specific and consider how the culture affects decision making, relationships, etc.
- What do we know about the political environment?
- Who is in charge, who pulls the strings, is there an informal chain of command or leadership, what is their agenda, etc.?
- Where do we get help answering these questions?

2.4 How Will We Operate?

Ask the following:

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- What technologies are available and how will we use IM/IT? Who has what issues?
- How will we create documents together? Posting, versions control, editing...
- What will the leader-team's routine schedule look like? (Work cycle or team rhythm)
- What are the leader-team expectations for returning phone calls, replying to email, collaboration, etc.?

Do the following:

- Develop a leader-team operating agreement. These are informal rules of engagement (ROE) and should be written down. See Tip D for examples of operating procedures.

Stage 3: Doing the Work

- Understand the shared mission (more specific than in Step 2). What must we have done by when?
- Build shared actionable understanding.
- Identify cues and indicators that require changes in direction.

Stage 4: Sustaining the JIIM Team

Once the leader-team has formed and reached a level of high performance, it must have a deliberate process to sustain it. The following are general principles that can help sustain the high performance of your leader-team.

4.1 New Leader-Team Members

- Identify, contact, and incorporate as early as possible.
- Acquire rapid access to LAN and operating sites.
- Introduction to the leader-team.
- Determine in what areas the new member will lead.
- Introduction to team processes and knowledge centers.
- Explain operating agreements.
- Introduce new leader to team; include socially.
- Have a standing "mentor-apprentice" training plan.
- Explain how key decisions are made.

4.2 Loss of a Team Member

- Identify a backup for everyone, a "wingman."
- Conduct focused exit interview: KM and LT performance. Capture how things were done, not just what was done.
- Begin capturing knowledge as early possible: file transfers, updated Rolodex, etc.
- Obtain new contact information and win agreement for continued collaboration.
- Have a standing "mentor-apprentice" training plan.
- Recognize the outgoing leader and formally say goodbye.

4.3 Mission Change

- Return to LTX: Update Vision and Purpose.
- ID new competencies required.
- Reform team (as needed).
- Identify processes and habits from old mission that will remain relevant or are now outdated.
- Update operating agreements.
- Rebuild trust and confidence by working through the LTX.

4.4 Introducing New Technology into the Leader-Team

- Identify experienced users. If any, they take the lead until each in the leader-team is proficient.

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- Formulate a training and implementation plan.
- LTX: Impact on mission, capabilities, and other technologies.
- Update operating agreements.

4.5 Deliberate Practice of the High-Performing Leader-Team Qualities

- Everything is a learning opportunity. Do all learning in the context of the purpose.
- Use LTX to practice working smarter.
- Frame discussions in terms of shared purpose and vision. Repetitive reinforcement.
- Cultural awareness: operating environment, team members, agency nuances, etc.
- Preface decisions in terms of “In our agency, we tend to...” This will help maintain actionable understanding and shared trust.
- Periodically reviewing Negotiation and Conflict Management principles will help deflate conflicts before they arise.
- Consistently reviewing ToL, IT, KM will help the leader-team maintain core high-performing leader-team (HPLT) competencies.

4.6 Conducting a Virtual Meeting

1. Everyone attends the meeting in the same way.

The most successful virtual meetings take place when *everyone* is virtual. Even when the majority of people are in the same location, it works better when everyone dials in. This puts people in close proximity to their information, comfortable at their own desks, and participating with the same advantages and challenges.

2. Use screen sharing with a conference call.

For example, use a screen sharing (web conferencing) technology like Adobe Connect. This is mandatory. Otherwise, people lose focus.

3. Have a timed-out agenda for the meeting.

Without one, you waste the precious resource of real-time communication. A good agenda ensures that the meeting is for an important purpose. It also guides you in knowing how long to spend on each item.

4. Rotate new roles.

Facilitator, note-taker, and telephone buddies are critical skills everyone learns. The facilitator is the person who leads the call, makes sure you follow the agenda, and encourages participation by frequent prompting and polling.

5. Begin each meeting by getting “voices in the room.”

At the start of the call, project the face clock where a picture of each person on the call appears at a different hour on the screen. Using this virtual conference table makes facilitation easier and encourages people to announce their names each time they speak, for example, “This is Michelle at 3 o’clock.” Reinforce this behavior at least until everyone agrees that they can recognize one another’s voices.

6. Send “read-aheads,” avoid status reporting, and spend most of your time resolving conflict and making decisions.

Do everything you can outside the meeting, including bringing yourself up-to-date on project status. Status reports are sometimes necessary but they are not the best use of same-time conference calls. It’s hard to resolve differences and make complex decisions, so use the precious real-time for that.

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7. Check-in with everyone periodically during the meeting.

One successful team uses a process whereby they stop the meeting every 10-15 minutes and call on people by name to elicit questions, comments, and concerns. Although the team reports that this technique was rough and choppy the first few times, with practice, it became part of the culture.

8. Check-out around clock.

At the close of the meeting, make sure everyone participates in a brief After Action Review (AAR). This allows all to reflect on what they've done together and to say goodbye—both simple trust-building practices.

4.7 Adjourning the Team

- Mission is completed.
- Does the team room become the archive/repository of the work done/knowledge base?
- Knowledge base needs to be made discoverable.
- AAR capturing what happened and put the context back into the organizational processes.
- What have we learned and why is it important?
- The **teachable point of view**. How do I package what was learned? This involves product and process. How do you close the door on the process?
- Team Peer Assist: How do we assist a new or follow-on leader-team learn from our experience?

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ToL Tip C: Informal vs. Formal Coordination

Formal: The approved process within any organization for gaining a decision and officially communicating those decisions to others.

Informal: The use and transfer of pre-decisional data, information, and knowledge by whatever means to increase situational awareness and quicken our ability to coordinate activities and resources to accomplish a mission, often across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture.

You must agree about coordination within the leader-team and be aligned with the acceptable informal and formal coordination policies and programs shared across the various boundaries of organization, level, function, or culture present in the members of the leader-team.

Improved shared situational awareness builds shared actionable understanding and brings out both acceptance and challenges that can be better addressed early in the process.

The use of informal collaboration and coordination does not circumvent the formal decision authorities and formal decision processes.

Informal coordination and collaboration increases the speed at which we are capable of making a decision and increases the options and responses available due to larger, more diverse socialization across the various boundaries represented within the leader-team.

Formal Tools and Processes

Ask your leader-team the following:

- What are the formal processes we need to participate in?
- What are the documents that outline those processes?

Examples may include the following:

- Headquarters/Agency approved decision memo with routing (this may be performed electronically through a workflow process).
- Email: Some organizations use email as a means to approve minor decisions. Vertical and horizontal use of To, cc, Bcc.
- Formal decision briefing and meetings.
- Decision memos: Decision memorandums are generally used as a follow up to meetings where verbal decisions were made. Once these enter the system they are part of a formal process.
- Boards Bureaus, Committees, Cells and Working Groups (B2C2WG)
- Video Teleconference (VTC) (may also be used informally).

Informal Tools and Processes

Examples may include:

- Instant Messaging (Texting)
- Blog
- Wiki
- Community of Practice
- Phone (may also be formally applied)
- Button 2: Adobe Connect or any other web conferencing application
- Emerging Social Networking Tools (for example, a team could leverage Facebook to keep in touch)

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ToL Tip D: Operating Agreements: Rules of Engagement for a Culture of Collaboration

Operating Agreements should be developed in Stage 2 of the leader-team's development process and revised as often as necessary to ensure continued, informal collaboration endorsed in principle by organization leadership. The following are provided as examples. Each organization will have its own set of operating agreements, and some may be handed across boundaries.

The rules of thumb below reflect shared common human expectations (hopes) that exist across boundaries and therefore that can underwrite preparation of any operating agreements agreed within the leader-team.

Rules of Thumb that Can Underwrite Your Operating Agreement

- There is an established collaboration and sharing agreement based on trust!
- Nobody likes to be surprised!
- Nobody likes to be hung out to dry!
- Trust and sharing are a two-way street—both vertically as well as horizontally.
- People at the top like to know the truth.
- People below the top want to know early on what's coming down.
- All want data, information, and knowledge by whatever means to increase situational awareness. If relevant, "more is better."
- All want the ability to go anywhere they need, whenever, across boundaries to coordinate actions and the resources to do the job faster, better, and easier.

Note: Sometimes a fast decision is imperative. In such cases, silence is assumed consent. However, silence-as-consent can often cause confusion through a presumed understanding. When crossing boundaries of culture, agency, and nationality, this is particularly problematic.

When dealing across boundaries, "you scratch my back, I scratch yours." The more trust that exists across the boundaries of level, organization, function, or culture, the more informal you tend to operate.

A "Draft" (or "Working Paper") header on informal correspondence (including emails, blogs, wiki entries, etc.). This could be highlighted at the top, while the text below follows the action officer signature block.

JOHN SMITH,
CPT, IN
ToL, EUCOM

"Views or opinions expressed are not to be interpreted as command positions. They reflect command sensing that informal collaboration among leaders across functions, organizations, cultures, or levels can create better shared understanding of issues and policies. This is informal sharing of content so that all can be more fully informed when necessary formal decision processes are exercised."

When coordinating informally, everything must be marked or referenced (simply tell everyone at the beginning of the teleconference) as pre-decisional.

We must fully explain the "ground rules" and then underwrite misunderstanding of processes of informal coordination as increased sharing occurs. Life is friction, errors occur, particularly crossing boundaries. A responsibility of senior leaders is to explain what is or is not appropriate and then counsel when errors occur. The gain of greatly increased shared actionable understanding far transcends the cost of occasional errors.

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Handling Violations of Trust

What happens when someone uses pre-decisional information to one's own advantage? As you begin to coordinate/collaborate, you will generally start with a small circle of leaders and expand outward, probably across boundaries, as you learn of new contacts that could assist in accomplishing the mission. It is important to make sure they understand the rules in which you share pre-decisional information and what sensitivities and limits to circulation across boundaries exist.

Occasionally someone will abuse your trust. Usually it will not be done intentionally and is because they didn't realize the limits or rules of engagement (ROE). If someone continues to abuse the trust in informal collaboration, they should be routinely cut out of the loop and excluded from the informal coordination. Usually this will make that person's job more difficult for them, so there is high incentive to be seen as a trusted agent and to safeguard pre-decision information during the informal stage of coordination particularly across boundaries of organization, level, function, or culture. The word about effective sanctions of trust if abused will spread rapidly "through the grapevine."

Examples of Team Rhythm Activities and Agreements

Category	Agreement	Notes
Weekly Con Calls	Meetings will begin within two minutes of start time; members encouraged to log in to <u>SameTime</u> or NetMeeting five minutes early. No status reporting; hot topics only	Core members to attend; let someone know if you cannot attend. Note taking, facilitation will rotate.
Between Meetings	Update task progress in Team Room prior to meetings; alert Team Leader to hot agenda topics	Proposed for 1 month trial at April 15 meeting
Team Room	All project materials posted to team room including working documents, meeting agendas, meeting notes, online discussions	We'll monitor use on a weekly basis for first month then reassess to see what's working, what's not
Responsiveness	Requests for information expected to be answered within 24 hours except weekends and holidays--no weekend work	We'll review this in a month to see if it's working; need to post world calendar with holidays
Availability	Everyone to post their whereabouts on a daily basis, forward phones to mobile if traveling	
Email	Only for 1:1 communication -- period!	Reassess every week to see if this is practical

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ToL Tip E: Measures of Leader-Team Effectiveness

Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) helps us measure improvement. These questions can be conducted as a survey of leader-team members, or observation methods can be used. They are not intended to be a scientific measurement, but rather a barometer of activity required to move organizations towards cultures of collaboration across boundaries.

Examples of MOE

How will we know if we are performing at higher levels? Look for these indicators in your people:

- Leader-team members feel connected and challenged by their work and take pride in it.
- Leader-team members feel empowered to try new approaches to their work.
- Leader-team members can make decisions and take actions across boundaries increasingly in the face of uncertainty.
- Leader-team members encourage one another and their ideas across boundaries, grouped or virtual.
- Leader-team members constructively discuss and challenge one another's ideas and approaches.
- Leader-team members feel comfortable collaborating and coordinating pre-decisional across boundaries, including levels—both bottom up and top down.
- Leader-team members are quick to resolve differences and find common ground.
- Leader-team members feel safe sharing ideas and collaborating with one another. Sharing, sharing, sharing.
- Leader-team members feel confident to brief superiors about their levels of informal coordination across boundaries.
- Leader-team members have and use standard operating agreements (ROE) for how to work formal and informal collaboration, particularly across boundaries.
- Transition and succession plans within leader-teams are understood and facilitate smooth handoff of responsibilities across boundaries.
- Leader-team members quickly identify barriers and obstacles to collaboration and find effective workarounds.
- Leader-team members do not feel that "everything must go through the boss" before it is shared, particularly across boundaries.

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ToL Tip F: Individual Preparation for High-Performing Leader-Team Membership

We each individually bring valuable knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the leader-team. Before we can be an effective high-performing team, we need know ourselves and then consider how our “style” might impact a larger team. Once the leader-team is formed, it is valuable to spend a few minutes telling everyone else about ourselves using some of the questions below.

Remember that your answers to the questions below are shaped by your organizational bias and cultural habits. Highlight with your leader-team where differences in perspective occur and discuss ways to overcome the differences. Think and project beyond yourself—seek first to understand other leader-team members’ positions before stressing your own.

What is this leader-team about?	What do you know so far?
Why am I on this leader-team?	What skills, knowledge, and abilities do I bring?
What knowledge do I need?	Make a quick list
What skills should I acquire?	
What relationships should I cultivate?	How should I build that relationship? What do we have in common?
Who do I know that’s not on this leader-team and may be useful to the team?	How big is my personal Rolodex (contact list or address book)? Extend across boundaries?
What experiences have I had that will be helpful?	How do I tell a short story about the experience to others to help them understand my perspective?
What tools (IM/KM) will I need to be able to use?	Am I comfortable with technology? What tools will the leader-team need to use? How do I get access or learn to use these? Who will teach and coach me?
How does my experience and learning style fit with this leader-team?	How do I learn best? Hands on, by listening and trying, by reading... Discuss your style with other team members and plot the different styles. Discuss how to balance these styles when team work is produced.
How do I like to receive: objectives, deliverables, milestones, tasks, guidance, etc.?	Do I like specific and clear tasks, general guidance with lots of latitude? Do verbal instructions work well or do I need written requirements?
How many people are on this leader-team and where are they from?	What do I know so far? How diverse is the team? What boundaries have been crossed? So what?
What biases about organizations, functions, levels, or cultures represented on this leader-team do you have?	Getting these out early helps break down barriers and establish effective team operating procedures.
What are your pet peeves about working in a leader-team?	Getting these out early helps everyone understand and accept your style and establish agreements as to how you can effectively work together.

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ToL Tip G: The Initial Team Assessment

Purpose

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Everyone has same picture of overall purpose. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Team discusses, agrees, and reviews clear, simple goals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Everyone follows same process for doing similar work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Team looks for ways to interconnect and improve work processes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Everyone understands the deliverables. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Team develops and reviews measures and milestones for deliverables. |

Scale

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat Agree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

People

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. People have the freedom and flexibility to do their work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Team continuously clarifies roles, responsibilities, and competencies needed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Leadership widely distributed and shifts as needed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Individuals are encouraged to lead and to follow as appropriate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Key system interdependencies are clearly articulated. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. People are encouraged to talk across levels. |

Links

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. A variety of media are available and accessible. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Team knows how to use collaboration tools consistently and creatively. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. Team has collaboratively established and actively applied operating agreements. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. Team actively implements strategy for engagement across organization boundaries. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. Team members build "social capital" through multiple connections. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. Team has high level of trust. |

Time

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. Team has clear milestones and schedules of dates. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. People are aware of ongoing key team dates and cultural calendar. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. Task timelines are collaboratively established. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. Team is able to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 23. Team has clear view of its life cycle and current phase. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 24. People discuss team processes and suggestions for improvements. |

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ToL Tip H: Coaching Tips and Techniques for High-Performance Leader-Teams

The Coaching Role

Coaching is the art of improving the performance of others.

Coaching refers both to specific interacting skills—used in both formal and informal settings—and the encouragement of long-term performance/achievement interacting across boundaries.

- A good coach listens first, asks questions, provides feedback, and helps generate creative ideas.
- A good coach encourages and facilitates leader-team development across boundaries.
- A good coach uses questions to generate discussion so the leader-team may reach its individual and shared conclusions.
- Good coaches avoid telling people what to do, or how to do it. Rather, they interact in ways that are persuasive across the various boundaries present in the leader-team.

Why Coach?

By coaching, leaders free up more of their own time and improve the leader-team's performance across its various boundaries. Coaches delegate more and supervise less to boost leader-team productivity and confidence. Coaching the ToL approach can come from within the team or an external source. It takes effort to develop the positive ToL qualities and maintain performance let alone improve it.

Coaching the Leader-Team Exercise (LTX)

The LTX is based on asking a series of questions to make the leader-team address issues early on and before a crisis. The questioning creates dialogue, which improves awareness and leads to a higher degree of actionable understanding. Through the dialogue, the leader-team develops shared understanding and trust.

When coaching a leader-team exercise:

- Frame initial questions at clarifying the task and the situation. Often you will have disagreements on both.
- Find common ground. Get agreement on one issue everyone can agree to.
- Build to another agreement. When there is disagreement try to get at the specifics of what is disagreed upon.
- Often breaking down a task or mission gets at the specifics, which can easily be negotiated.

Once you have described the requirements and the situation (to include the operating environment) you can ask: “What would that look like?” or “How would we work through this situation?” Coaching the leader-team to describe the situation out loud builds mental models of actions required, obstacles, and workarounds and helps develop leader-team consensus and shared understanding.

Once the situation has been described (each team member should contribute), ask “What if?” questions. **Do so in a manner that is not offensive to the culture of one or more leader-team members.** This expands leader-team perspectives. Next, ask for a recap of actions, things the team agrees upon and disagrees on. Ask what operating procedures (ROE) will need to change. Ask “Who is doing what?” so that the expectations are clear.

Repeat the exercise as often as needed to ensure clarity and understanding. Remember, in most JIIM teams authority over leader-team members is limited and our best work is done through co-opting others and providing a positive result to their organization as well as yours.

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COMMON OBSTACLES TO BUILDING LEARNING-RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADER-TEAM MEMBERS	
<u>Obstacle</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Inter-Cultural Approach to Conflict	Different organizations have different approaches to conflict resolution and problem solving. Some confront the issue directly while others are more suggestive or cordial and assume the other party is sensitive to what they communicate. Others may have formal conflict resolution procedures. Use the LTX to determine the various conflict/resolution cultures in your leader-team and identify differences early. Then adopt an approach to conflict that is agreeable to all. Consider addressing this agreement in your Operating Agreements.
2. Organizational Regulatory Obstacles	As your leader-team progresses through its job or mission, make it common to continually identify conflicting laws, regulations, and policies that govern each leader-team member. For example, contracted personnel, government employees, and military all have different labor laws or judicial systems they must adhere to, which can influence such things as work schedules, individual taskings, and levels of collaboration. The LTX will help you find solutions and compromises. For recurring issues, consider a collaborative body of knowledge to these obstacles, such as a wiki, to track and adhere to them so the leader team does not "reinvent the wheel."
3. Uncommon Language or Lexicon	Language and lexicon can vary widely. Even those who speak the same language can have a difficult time when their agencies use different lexicons, such as military acronyms. One way to help overcome organizational language barriers is to build a collaborative list defining the various acronyms, abreviations, and terms. Other workarounds include translator tools such as iGoogle, websites such as www.acronymfinder.com , or even translators themselves. The ideal solution is to pair those who speak common languages together whenever possible. When you use the LTX and develop a scenario, be mindful of the use of terms and lexicon that is not shared by all.
4. Incompatible Data/IM Systems and Tools	Because organizational needs differ, various products are used and are often incompatible across organizational boundaries. Find the most commonly understood IM tools and systems that can accomplish what your leader-team needs. Often, you must default to the "lowest common denominator." Select the tool with the best availability and capability to provide a Common Operating Picture (COP). As a rule of thumb, always have a standing training plan for the systems being used to enable leaders who come from a different digital culture.
5. Incongruent Security Access	Not all members may have the same level of access to classified, or even unclassified information--especially civilian agencies, NGOs, and foreign personnel. If possible, ensure all members have the proper security access <u>before</u> joining the team. In some cases interim clearances and access can be granted relatively quickly. If the person does not have the proper clearance level and cannot obtain an interim clearance, the only options are to place that person in a position that doesn't require the higher level of clearance or find a replacement. Consult a security manager whenever a situation with foreign access to classified information is required. In some cases, security access may prove to be a barrier that cannot be overcome.

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COMMON OBSTACLES TO BUILDING LEARNING-RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEADER-TEAM MEMBERS	
6. Incompatible or Competing Organizational Interests	Even though individual leaders may share a common purpose or vision, their parent organizations may not. In these cases, it is imperative that the leaders are able to communicate the leader-team's vision and needs to the team and seek understanding. When leaders find themselves at cross-purposes, strive for the basic agreements and build from there. Formal negotiations may be needed to resolve an impasse. Check existing bodies of knowledge that may yield insight into solutions. Or, find the right person who is willing to listen and able to correct the situation or who can persuade the right authority. Once corrected, it's a good idea to update the shared Rolodex that identifies who the key players and decision makers were and what role they played in the solution. Solutions may also be adopted into operating agreements to avoid further complication.
7. Time, Distance, and Uncommon Work Schedules	In the worst cases, mixing up time zones can cause mass confusion or mission failure. One easy solution is use Zulu time (GMT) throughout the leader-team regardless of time zone. Create a common calendar for the leader-team. Obtain work schedules and calendars from all leaders and set mutually beneficial meeting times. Some agencies and countries have different customs with time off and holidays which can also complicate matters. Ensure all understand the lag times involved when collaborating and working across time and distance. This can also be an early source of conflict. Consider using the LTX to identify conflicts in schedules and holidays and get them hammered out in the beginning.
8. Preconceived notions, ideas, or dogmas about the partner organization(s)	As diverse services, agencies, organizations, and nations come together to collaborate, they may bring with them perceptions of the other organizations. Whether from experience or culture, preconceived notions can taint a leader-team's approach to certain team members. The main tools for breaking through this barrier are steps 2.2 (Understand the Operating Environment) and 2.3 (How will We Operate). The LTX is also designed to identify hidden expertise and bias. Engage in a discussion early on to identify differences and discuss compromises. Nothing overcomes bias and preconceived impressions like building trust and confidence in one another and achieving results. Over time, most people will learn to work with each other, but the goal should always be to develop <u>mutual respect</u> .
9. Incompatible concepts of authority and how it should be implemented	The range of power structures and cultures is as diverse, complex, and can become one the most pretentious causes of conflict. Authoritarian cultures, such as the military, are accustomed to issuing orders that are followed without question, quick action, and little or no criticism. Egalitarian cultures, such as academia, may be more accustomed to open question, discussion, and professional criticism to vet decisions and achieve consensus. The leader-team's Operating Agreements should address authority and decision-making directly. In this manner, Operating Agreements can act as a Leader-Team's <i>Bill-of Rights</i> , where clear boundaries and expectations are formed early and can serve as a future reference point for every leader. Use the LTX to determine what system will work best for your Leader-Team in particular situations.
10. Conflicting demands or expectations on leader-team member by parent organization.	Every leader wants and needs to achieve success with his or her respective organization. The formulas for success are as varied as the number of organizations represented in the leader-team and will most likely continue to apply toward evaluations, recognition, and promotion. Unless the leader-team empowers its leader-members to succeed individually, it could prove difficult to achieve a shared vision/purpose. The leader-team should be empathetic to individual needs and responsibilities. Individual leaders should not assume that other members will understand the demands being placed on them and will need to clearly communicate those needs to the leader-team.

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ToL Tip I: Building Relationships

The social processes the team uses in carrying out the work will enhance a member's capacity to work together independently in the future. The transforming process has chain reaction characteristics; professional and social relationships based on universal trust and confidences expand rapidly and freely, and lead to the emergence of high performance.

Through the ToL approach, the team improves trust as members build relationships and see firsthand the skills and work ethic each member brings to the team (competence). Likewise the group develops team competencies as they learn to work together and accomplish a sum greater than the individual members could achieve. As the leader-team works together it performs successfully, which in turn develops confidence and acts as an accelerant generating even higher performance.

Teams of leaders are adept at building relationships, global collaboration, working with new technologies, and overcoming obstacles imposed by traditional hierarchy—they thrive on workarounds. The ToL methodology is not an exercise or training; it is a way of thinking, understanding, and acting. This approach helps a team of leaders develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to support the high-priority issues facing the team, and it enables them to identify and overcome obstacles that can prevent them from accomplishing the mission.

Some Points to Remember

1. Identify and include all stakeholder representatives in the leader-team.
2. Establish a personal rapport with other leaders by finding initial commonalities. Examples could be:
 - Common history/experiences
 - Common contacts/interests
 - Common competency
3. Determine the leader-team's readiness to collaborate.
4. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each other leader-team member.
5. Distinguish between values, interests, and positions.
6. Build personal relationships.
7. We are in this together. Our success is interdependent, not independent. Close socialization fosters further growth of mutual confidence and trust among members of leader-teams.
8. The close relationship of team members to each other, and to members of other teams is the primary mechanism which transforms previously top-down bureaucratic and organizational structures into a bottom up/lateral knowledge and "best practices" generator.
9. Due to the pervasive nature of the collaboration within the framework of the rapidly forming relationships, the process of transformation helps to demolish the existing organizational barriers.
10. Individuals and groups who have been physically and/or organizationally isolated convert into "swarms" and converge whenever needed based on the exact match to the requirements of the task and mission at hand. Such swarms are essential when addressing new problems affecting performance at a complex level.
11. Improved relationship, communications, and collaboration have been shown to restore coherence to disorganized multi-organizational efforts and help in aligning them with the underlying organizational strategies.

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ToL Tip J: Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Vision and Purpose

Shared Vision exists when members of the team have a common understanding of the following:

- The overall mission
- Goals and sub-goals of the mission
- Strategies for reaching the goals
- Team members' strengths and weaknesses
- Values and preferences of the team as a whole and the individual members
- The roles each member will play
- The big picture, i.e. how this particular mission contributes to a larger purpose

Benefits of Shared Vision: It's widely known that teams with shared vision have better coordination and less conflict than teams without.² Members of such teams tend to be better able to predict one another's behaviors and act quickly in the face of changing circumstances. Leaders of these teams are more confident in giving their members more responsibility, which in turn increases the team's ability to adapt. ToLs comprise members from many backgrounds, organizations, cultures, and agencies, each bringing his or her own skills, biases, and agendas. It is easy to see, then, how this can result in members not having common vision. Through the ToL LTX process, team members can identify where differences exist and come to a common understanding more rapidly.

Getting Started with the ToL Process to Develop Shared Vision

This initial discussion focuses on gaining clear understanding of the mission/task at hand. To begin the exercise, share the vignette you've chosen with the team and prompt a discussion with any or all of these questions. Make sure that each team member shares what they would do given the scenario and explains why they would do that:

- What is important about this mission/task and why?
- What team and or mission goals need to be considered and why?
- What strategies should the team consider to reach these goals and why?
- Which team members should be responsible for what and why?
- Whom should the team collaborate with?
- Who needs to be co-opted/recruited into the mission and what does the team have to offer them?
- What are the higher HQ (commander) preferences or what guidance do they offer?
- What would the team expect in the way of resources from our higher HQ and why?
- What workarounds might the team use to deal with this situation?"

Once the initial conversation is complete, use the next period of time to compare and contrast what members have said. Then engage a conversation around "what ifs" that extend the vignette in different ways. It's best to manage the conversation such that people's responses are short and specific with prompts such as these:

- How would the team recognize this new situation if it occurs?
- What would be some cues or indicators?
- How would this new development affect the overall mission?
- In this new situation whose roles would change? And to what?
- What could the team do to prevent this new situation from occurring?
- Would the team need to develop workarounds for this situation?

² Linda Pierce, Ph.D. US Army Research Institute, Scenario Training for Adaptive Leaders, initial draft concept. 2008

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ToL Tip K: Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Trust

Among the meanings associated with trust is the expectation that a person has a high level of integrity and is highly dependable. People are willing to put themselves at risk because of their confidence that the other person will do what they expect. Rapid development of trust is important because team members typically:

- Have different backgrounds and experiences
- Must quickly work together as one team
- Have little experience or exposure with one another
- May make assumptions about one another's experiences or competencies and establish false expectations that could erode team effectiveness

People tend to initially develop trust by superficial factors such as rank, position, résumés, or combat patches, which can lead to assumptions about a person's prior experiences and or qualification. These assumptions can incorrectly influence trust as they may not be accurate. However, direct experience with one another over time allows team members to develop more informed, deeper levels of trust.

ToL LTXs offer a process for developing deeper levels of trust more quickly by discussing prior experiences in a context common to the team. This development of trust combined with building on small successes, results in improved confidence across the team, which in turn, adds to more trust and confidence.

Getting Started with the ToL Process to Develop Shared Trust

Again, with the vignette in hand, begin a conversation about team members' prior experiences in similar situations. It is advisable to begin by sharing your own experiences in comparable situations. Avoid hypothesizing what you might have done and instead discussing why you did what you did. The "why" provides insights into your skills and your thinking process, both of which contribute to developing trust. It is equally important to be straightforward with the team about areas where you have no experience.

Have the team members share prior experiences to similar situations with prompts such as:

- What similar situation have you been in and how did you handle it?
- How could you apply that experience to this one?
- What help would you expect from your team members in a situation like this and why?
- What skills or knowledge do you think we need for this situation that our team does not have?
- What would concern you in regard to this team's ability to deal with this situation and why?
- What workarounds would we use to deal with this situation?

As with the previous exercise, be sure to compare and contrast team members' experiences and consider alternatives.

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ToL Tip L: Leader-Team Exercise Questions to Develop Competence

As with the previous LTX, have the team create a situation in the context of the operation (or use a situation you have already developed together as a leader-team), focusing the discussion this time around the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to develop a shared understanding of team competencies required to accomplish the mission. Also discuss whether those knowledge, skills, and attitudes are resident in the leader-team. This serves as a gap analysis, building trust as honest conversation reveals the team's strengths and areas for improvement. As recommended above, encourage discussion of the reasons behind people's answers, which provide insights into the skills, knowledge, and abilities that help develop competence. As per the previous exercises, prompt discussions with these kinds of questions:

- What skills or knowledge do we need to successfully deal with this situation?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation? If yes, what did you do and why?
- What skills did you need to be successful? What would your experience tell you are the skills we would need and why?
- Who on the leader-team possesses those skills?
- Who on the leader-team is best suited to provide those skills?
- How would we develop those skills?
- Would we need any specific workarounds to deal with our lack of competency in this situation?
- With whom should we collaborate?
- Who needs to be recruited into the mission and what do we have to offer them?

Complete the discussion by comparing and contrasting what each leader-team member brings to the team, considering alternative situations and workarounds.

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ToL Tip M: Conflict Resolution Tips and Techniques

Negotiating Principles³

- Set the tone early, offset any bad rumors, be candid.
- Use "human factors" and be open about feelings and motives; this will enhance trust.
- Avoid presenting too many issues; highlight the strongest ones.
- Avoid deadlines, lessening the chance for needless concessions.
- Summarize frequently; this enhances understanding.
- Present arguments calmly, without personalization, and make sure they are logically supported.
- Avoid use of personal opinions in arguments.
- Avoid ultimatums and other forms of non-negotiable demands.
- Acknowledge the validity of the other leaders' arguments. Do so will help encourage participation.
- Avoid known cultural taboos that may exist within the leader-team; respect known cultural biases.

1. *Separate the substance of the deal from the relationship with the people.*

- Be hard on the dilemma, as consensus develops through extensive sharing, but soft on the people.
- See the dilemma from inside their shoes.
- Make your proposal consistent with their values, which is often a "lowest common denominator" across boundaries.

2. *Focus on shared values and interests, but not on the positions each side takes.*

- Values shared across boundaries define the deal.
- Each leader in the team has multiple interests; be clear on yours, discover theirs.

3. *Brainstorm options for mutual benefit.*

- Be creative; think outside the box.
- Having an open mind and a willingness to hear and consider new or different ideas and perspectives is crucial when crossing boundaries.
- Identify shared interest.

4. *Use objective criteria for decision-making.*

- Strike a deal based on shared principle, not pressure.
- Agree on fair standards and procedures as shared across boundaries.
- Frame issues as a collaborative quest.

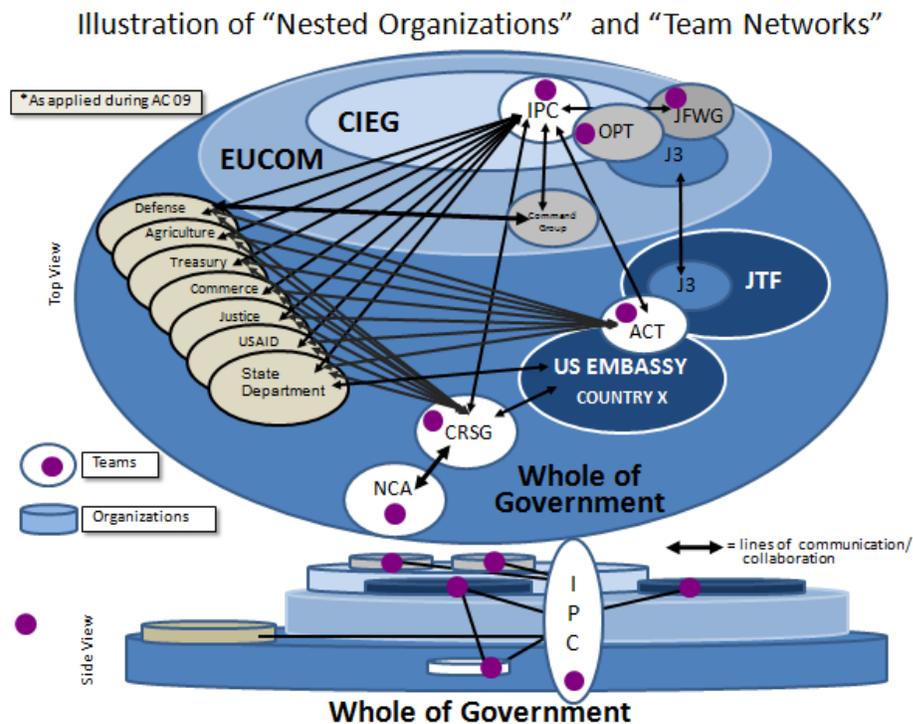
³ Fisher, R., & Ury, W. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. The Harvard Negotiation Project.

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ToL Tip N: Nested Teams

In today's fast-changing environment, teams are frequently nested into a larger network of effort. However, their inoperability is often spotlighted as the natural byproduct of stove-piped biases, cultures, regulatory systems, geographical dispersion, methodologies, inconsistent languages or lexicons, and juxtaposed organizational interests. These boundaries serve as obstacles to interoperability and high performance. Consequentially, friction and stagnation reduce agility and ability with, at times, deplorable results.

In the example below, the whole of the U.S. Government (WGA) represents the larger entity with its nested departments, their sub organizations and embassies, military geographical commands (EUCOM) with their subordinate commands (JTF) all nested to support a common cause. The teams of leaders, represented by the white ovals and red dots, serve as points of coordination, integration, and collaboration allowing each organization's voice to be heard at each level as well as bringing the weight of that organization's resources to bear on the problem set they are most capable of addressing. The nesting implies a commonly held and agreed upon purpose and vision. The lines represent the connections and denote the complexity and quantity of groups that must be orchestrated.



Reference key:

IPC = Integrated Planning Cell from the U.S. Government comprised of representatives from each government department or agency and assigned in a crisis to the Geographical Command.

ACT= the Advanced Civilian Team from the U.S. Government comprised of representatives from each government department or agency and assigned to the Embassy in the affected country and the Joint Military Task Force (JTF).

CRSG= Department of State lead Office of the **C**oordinator for **R**econstruction and **S**tability **G**roup located in Washington, D.C., and comprised of representatives from each U.S. Government department and agency. CRSG provides recommendations to the NCA.

NCA= the National Command Authority. The President of the U.S. and his closest advisors on National Security.

Other teams represented here show only a small representation of the doctrinal and ad hoc teams that are formed and operational during a national crisis.

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ToL Tip O: Conducting a Virtual Meeting

Wise Virtual Meetings

There are a handful of “rules” that, if observed, can make virtual meetings even more effective and efficient than face-to-face meetings.

1. Everyone attends the meeting in the same way.

- Some believe that the most successful virtual meetings take place when everyone dials in—regardless of their location. This puts people in close proximity to their information, comfortable at their own desks, and participating with the same advantages and challenges. But, if you have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, surround it with as much social face time as possible. Extensive research indicates that dense social networks build trust.

2. Use screen sharing with a conference call.

- For example, use a screen sharing (web conferencing) technology like Adobe Connect. This is mandatory. Otherwise, people lose focus. The Harvard Business Review article found that four out of five successful “far-flung teams” used the combination of conference calls, screen sharing, and an online repository or team room as their key enabling technologies.

3. Have a timed-out agenda for the meeting.

- Without one, you waste the precious resource of real-time communication. A good agenda ensures that the meeting is for an important purpose. It also guides you in knowing how long to spend on each item. As noted above, avoid meetings that are longer than 90 minutes due to inevitable attention lag after that length of time. Once the team is in synch, you can set the agenda in real-time; as trust grows, this becomes easier.

4. Rotate new roles.

- Facilitator, note-taker, and telephone buddies are critical skills everyone learns. The facilitator is the person who leads the call, makes sure you follow the agenda, and encourages participation by frequent prompting and polling. Though the team leader often takes this role, many successful virtual teams rotate facilitation.
- The note-taker is the person who literally takes notes during the meeting and posts them as soon as possible. This person is responsible for reporting and synthesizing the key aspects of the meeting such that anyone who couldn't attend can follow the conversation.
 - “The next item on the agenda was the review session on September 16, 2008. Jenni suggested we invite the CG's chief of staff. We decided to hold the whole review virtually because of possible scheduling conflicts.”
 - Keep the notes to a page, if possible, and date them. Include the agenda.
 - List the names of those attending and those invited who could not attend.
 - One highly successful virtual team keeps track of Decisions, Due Outs (responsibilities with due dates), and Parking Lot (for discussion at a later time).
 - Edit the notes immediately after the call when the information is still fresh.
 - When you schedule the meeting, remember that you'll need at least another hour after the meeting to complete this task so, as note-taker, block out that time as well.
- The telephone buddies are the people who agree to phone those who are attending remotely during the meeting breaks. This way, those who are not physically present continue the dialogue with those in the room. It's a small gesture to accommodate the need to continuously build relationships.

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5. Begin each meeting by getting “voices in the room.”

- At the start of the call, project the “face clock”—where a picture of each person on the call appears at a different hour—on the screen. Using this “virtual conference table” makes facilitation easier and encourages people to announce their names each time they speak, for example, “This is Capt Jones at 3 o’clock.” Reinforce this behavior at least until everyone agrees that they can recognize one another’s voices.
- Remember, the first time a new person joins the call, the team needs to revert to self-identification each time they speak. Pose an unexpected trust-building question (e.g., “What did you have for breakfast?”) to ensure that everyone speaks at the start of the meeting. Use early moments of a meeting to celebrate achievements, opening the session on a positive note.

6. Send read-aheads, avoid status reporting, and spend most of your time resolving conflict and making decisions.

- Do everything you can outside the meeting, including bringing yourself up-to-date on project status. Status reports are sometimes necessary but they are not the best use of same-time conference calls. It’s hard to resolve differences and make complex decisions so use the precious real-time for that. Thus, use the meeting to generate heat: Discuss, disagree, decide.

7. Check-in with everyone periodically during the meeting.

- One successful team uses a process whereby they stop the meeting every 10-15 minutes and call on people by name to elicit questions, comments, and concerns. Although the team reports that this technique was “rough and choppy” the first few times, with practice, it became part of the culture.

8. Check-Out Around Clock.

- At the close of the meeting, make sure everyone participates in a brief after action review (AAR). This allows all to reflect on what they’ve done together and to say goodbye, both simple trust-building practices.
- Make sure that those who are face-to-face talk into the microphone.
- Don’t engage in any purely face-to-face team-building activities, e.g., no ropes courses, because there is no way remote members can participate.
- Discourage audible side conversation but encourage the use of chat during meetings to keep back-channels open and to allow trust-building to continue, much as it would when people are face-to-face, nodding approval and indicating differences of opinion.

9. Use IT applications to maintain “open” rooms.

- Take advantage of any of these applications to cut down on meeting set-up time and reduce the need for pre-ordination. Any of the following will allow you to have a constant “open” virtual room: Skype, Adobe Connect, CENTRA, IBM SameTime, MS Live Meeting, and Go To Meeting.

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ToL Tip P: Example of Organizational Collaboration Guidance

To be effective, leader teams need to commit to shared ways of working and interacting. This is particularly important for teams that lack the familiarity of daily face-to-face contact and for those coming from diverse organizations and cultures. By agreeing to certain common behaviors, you can codify a set of operating principles that address many areas where such teams can go astray. Because your leader-team usually exists across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture, you may not have traditional rules and regulations that apply to every situation. Thus, your team may have to invent new approaches that are consistent with the common thrust of the participating organizations' procedures. In order to develop informal and formal collaboration within and among leader-teams the following Commander's Guidance is provided:

1. Collaborate! Sharing knowledge is more powerful than owning knowledge. Share, share, share!
2. Leaders, supervisors, and decision makers are responsible for making collaboration a natural method of accomplishing staff actions and informing juniors and seniors of ongoing efforts. Mentoring, training, and personal example are critical to establishing a collaborative environment.
3. Using knowledge obtained through informal collaboration with everyone involved is the operating principal. This is especially important when collaborating across boundaries of organization, level, function, or culture where acceptable use of knowledge shared may not be as well understood.
4. The use of informal collaboration and coordination should never circumvent the formal decision authorities and formal decision processes, but it is the methodology we will use to enable those authorities to take well informed actions to accomplish their executive responsibilities.
5. Knowledge shared through informal collaboration builds solutions in a quick, effective manner, but should not be perceived as a formal position, decision, or policy of the Command.
6. When coordinating informally, everything must be marked or referenced (as simple as stating at the beginning of a teleconference) as pre-decisional. Add the following language to email exchanges when collaborating across boundaries or an environment where trust has not been established: "This is informal sharing of content so that all can be more fully informed when necessary formal decision processes are exercised."
7. Absolutely ensure the collaborative environment meets the appropriate classification and information security requirements. Classification levels are not a barrier to effective collaboration, but they remain necessary protection of information and knowledge that provides us freedom of action.
8. When collaboration is abused or misused, restrict or deny access to the individual or group until trust is re-established. The goal, however, is to return the individual or group back into a trusted status as soon as the abuse/misuse is identified and resolved. In the interim, ensure you notify others who may be surprised or impacted by the violation.

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ToL Tip Q: Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAR	After Action Review
ATRRS	Army Training Requirements and Resource System
B2C2WG	Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups
BCKS	Battle Command Knowledge System
CAC-K	Combined Arms Center-Knowledge
CoP	Community of Practice
DoD	Department of Defense
Etc.	“Etcetera”, meaning to continue in that fashion
HPLT	High Performing Leader-Team
IM	Information Management
JIIM	Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational
KM	Knowledge Management
LTX	Leader-Team Exercises
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness
OODA	Observe, Orient, Design, and Act
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SKA	Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes
ToL	Teams of Leaders
VTC	Video Teleconference