U.S.ARMY

ARMY HANDBOOK FOR LEADERSHIP

TRANSITIONS

The Army Leader Transitions Handbook is designed to help leaders plan and execute a successful transition to a new leadership position. The intent is to provide a ready reference for all leaders: direct, organizational and strategic. The Army Leader Transitions Handbook offers a methodology to help leaders transition into a new leadership position as effectively and efficiently as possible. The handbook contains best practices and proven techniques from military and civilian sources. The Army Leader Transitions Handbook provides leaders with a step-by-step process for assuming a new leadership role starting from the time the leader is notified of the new leadership position to first day actions and considerations for the first 90 days and beyond. Although presented as a checklist, the Army Leader Transitions Handbook should be viewed more as a menu of ideas for the leader to choose. Preparation is the key to a successful leader transition.

1. PREPARATION

Understand Organization
- Internal/External Stakeholders
- Outgoing Leader
- Capabilities
- Requirements
- Results
- Culture

Develop Transition Plan
Conduct Self Assessment
Produce Initial Documents
- Plan of first 90 days
- Philosophy, In-Brief, Performance Objectives

Complete Army Transition Requirements
- PCCs
- CDR/1SG Courses
- Property Inventories

Prepare for Ceremonies
Complete Installaion In-Processing

2. FIRST DAY

Execute ceremonies
Establish First Day Priorities
- Who to meet; What order; Where
- Recall Rosters Updates
- Propert Transition

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Expedite Learning
- Environment
  - **Internal** – interviews, surveys, meetings, in-briefs
  - **External** – higher, HQ, Installation Personnel, etc.
- Subordinates
- Study, Observe, Question
  - Listen = Access

Build Credibility
- Competence/Skills
- Establish LD Plan
- Be Visible

Determine Preliminary Findings & Initial Assessment
- Assessment Problems
- Quick Wins

Validate Findings & Assessment
- Challenge feedback and observations

4. ALIGNMENT AND TEAM BUILDING

Review & Develop Organizational Alignment
- Vision (or Focus)
- Mission
- Goals
- Objectives

Establish Key Milestones
Secure Quick Wins
- Confidence, trust, credibility
- Momentum
- Avoid pitfalls: dogmatism, forgetting endstate

Consider Organizational Redesign
- Necessity
- Alignment complete
- Structure
- Processes
- Interrelationships
- Integration of work effort

Build the Team
People with authority, resources, freedom, systems, and culture to complete tasks

Establish Sense of Urgency
Creativity and insights brought forth by anxiety and change

5. ESTABLISHING ROUTINES

Establish Routine Meetings
Progress, resource allocation, feedback

Initiate STRATCOM Plan
- Vision, Mission, Goals, OBJs, Milestones
- Quick-Wins
- Culture/build unity

Build Coalitions
- Internally and externally
- Capitalize on others

Eliminate Needless Constraints

6. TRANSITION OVER

Facilitate the Next Transition

7. SUSTAINING

Manage Systems & Operations

USING THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended for all leaders. Although this handbook describes the leadership transition process and timeline in a linear, sequential fashion, you can tailor this process and timeline to meet your specific transition needs. Some leaders may be going through their first transition, with very little time, and little guidance. Others may be thoroughly experienced at transitions yet have not captured these experiences properly and are looking for a comprehensive aid. Leaders at both ends of the spectrum and in between can use this guide to help shape their transition strategy. Based upon your own assessed requirements, use this guide as a tool to meet your transition needs, or use specific phases or segments to fill known gaps.

A leadership transition occurs every time a leader assumes a new position and must lead others with new and/or broader responsibilities. For most Army leaders transitions occur into new units or organizations. The leader will be the new face among a mix of existing and new personnel. It is imperative that transitions occur efficiently and effectively particularly during this era of persistent conflict and high operations tempo. Leadership transitions can occur for many different reasons (selection, promotion, lateral move, permanent change of station move, etc), in every type of organization (operating force, generating force), at every level of leadership (direct, organizational, and strategic) and across all cohorts (officer, enlisted, and Army civilians). The challenges of leadership are often greatest when there is a leadership transition and thus a shift in roles and responsibilities. The Army reassigns leaders with regularity; yet has not formalized this significant event in its leader development process.

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PHASE ONE | PREPARATION

Notification to Day One

Leadership transitions often have no stated goals or outcomes. The new leader probably will not be given a plan. Most organizations will provide the incoming leader with a planned set of activities during the transition period. The organization may have an agenda, i.e., to showcase itself and to avoid change. The period between your notification of a new leadership position and the day you assume responsibility provides the potential to contribute significantly to the organization's success. After assuming a new leadership role, time will become your most constrained resource, so taking advantage of this time is critical. Assessing and gaining an understanding of the organization, the environment within which it operates, the internal and external factors affecting the organization and conducting a self-assessment (which many overlook) are important aspects during Preparation. These critical actions can help you gain the initiative and build momentum during the first few months that can be vital to improving the organization. The following are some effective methods and a compilation of techniques and considerations which have been used successfully by other leaders before they assumed responsibilities.

Step 1: Gain an Understanding of the Organization

Leader Advice

Managing transitions is a leadership responsibility. Leader transitions within the Army are significant events for any organization due to their complexity and impacts upon the organization as a whole.

Before you arrive or start at your new unit, gather information that will be useful in developing a sense of the organization's mission and how it achieves it. Organizational charts, briefings, mission statements and histories provide background information on the formal aspects of the organization. Networking with colleagues and acquaintances about what they know about the organization is a way to gain insight into the organization. The main goal during this step is to gather as much valid, relevant information to help you assess the state of the organization and how you may want to reshape it.

To assist in later decision making, leaders should categorize relevant information into groups to facilitate understanding of the organization's context. One possibility is to group the information into training, maintaining, leading/developing, caring and readiness categories.

Make Initial Contact — Introduce yourself and ask for ideas on what you should do to prepare for your new position. Keep in mind that the outgoing leader is still in charge of the organization, so respect that relationship/position. Learn as much as possible without interfering in current affairs. Establishing a good dialogue with the current leader is essential for a seamless transition.

Request Organizational Documents — Following the initial contact, ask the current leader or designated contact to send copies of items needed to gain an understanding of the unit's capabilities, requirements and results, i.e. unit's MTOE/TDA; long range training plan; tactical, maintenance and garrison SOPs; current policy letters; etc. This will help you understand how the organization operates.

Determine Organizational Capabilities — Determine what the unit is capable of performing by referring to organizational documents such as: MTOE, TDA, property books, core function regulations, manpower surveys, etc.

Identify Organizational Requirements — Determine the unit's current requirements by referring to organizational and higher HQ documents such as: mission, METL, annual and quarterly training guidance, higher HQ Intent, long/mid/short-range training schedules; tactical, garrison, maintenance SOPs; rating schemes. Review applicable branch or proponent specific field manuals and Army regulations and system-oriented technical manuals.

Review Organizational Results — Conduct a review of results oriented organizational documents to gain an understanding of where they currently stand: Unit ARTEPS/EXEVAL results, quarterly training briefs, USR-TSR (TRADOC only), MRE-CTC AARs, inspection reports; climate surveys, etc.

Coordinate Discussions Points — As time permits, discuss the following: Current mission and organization, thoughts on upcoming training and education requirements, operational events and OPTEMPO, goals and priorities already established for the unit, the higher leader's intent, guidance and long range plan, the current and projected key personnel situation, experience level of subordinates, the organization's strengths and weaknesses, two or three events that impacted the organization and the results, the overall organizational climate and reputation, disciplinary situations and investigations currently in progress, and finally, ask what should be changed if he or she had it all to do over again.

Outgoing Leader's Assessment An important item to obtain from the current leader is a list of key contacts and current 'hot issues'. A bookshelf of binders about previous event history is usually not as helpful as a thin binder of concise information on the organization from the outgoing leader's perspective and explanation of the issues (why it was hot and why these had not already been resolved.) This thin binder should be prepared in a format that answers 'questions I wish I had asked when I took over as leader'. Incoming leaders should be wary of unwittingly adopting outgoing leaders' preconceptions about abilities, previous performance and/or past mistakes of subordinates.

Understand Organizational Culture Review organizational documents to make an initial assessment of the organization's culture, such as: Review higher HQ philosophy letters, read command policy letters (from organization and higher HQ): helps define the current organizational environment and culture, what's currently important, conduct a legal review of organization to identify disciplinary trends (ART 15s, AR15-6 Investigations; etc), and read the organization's and higher HQ CCIR/SIR – these are the non-negotiables.

Identify & Meet with Organizational Key Stakeholders

As part of your awareness of environmental conditions, you should identify key stakeholders and learn what they value about the organization that you will be leading. A stakeholder is anyone who affects or can be affected by an organization's actions. The list below describes information you can obtain from internal and external stakeholders to improve your understanding of the environment.

INTERNAL KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Superiors Establish early relations with your future immediate boss. Consider this the most important stakeholder relationship because it can: Open access to available resources, ensure expectations are set up front, establish a means to provide regular status reports, and provide the opportunity to present and coordinate your leader transition timeline.

Chain of Command Discuss expectations, goals and receive initial guidance from your Rater, Intermediate Rater and Senior Rater.

Peers Discuss different ideas and programs. Don't be reluctant to adopt others' good ideas.

Staff (if applicable) and Higher HQ Staff Meet initially to discuss systems, processes, SOPs within the organization (how we do business here).

Subordinates Meet with everyone you will rate or counsel. Initially just meet to introduce yourself. Formal counseling should not occur until later.

Other Special Interest Internal Stakeholders Contact other special stake-holders, e.g. Family Readiness Group (FRG).

EXTERNAL KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Installation or Garrison You may meet with these stakeholders after you assume the new leadership position (see Phase III, step 1), but early contact may prepare you for your new position and help you better anticipate problems. Meet with personnel external to the organization who focus on the organization's well-being (e.g., Installation / higher HQ Chaplain, SJA, Inspector General, Installation EO, Safety Office, DSCRM [budgeting], WTU commander, hospital commander, clinic OICs, ASAP personnel, AG, DOL, DPTM, CPAC/CPOC, etc) early on.

Branch and Technical POCs Contact branch or technical points of contact. Examples include the Logistics Assistance Representative (LAR) and School Centers of Excellence.

Supported Units (if applicable) Visit the organization(s) you support – show that you care how well your unit supports others. Visit frequently and speak with their subordinates to get their impressions of your organization.

Branch and Technical POCs Visit the organization(s) you support – show that you care how well your unit supports others. Visit frequently and speak with their subordinates to get their impressions of your organization.

Other Organizational SMEs Contact other experts in similar organizations.

Determine how often you should interact with your stakeholders over the course of your transition and tenure (once, weekly, monthly, etc) and in what venue (meeting, email, etc). Additionally, aside from your immediate boss, determine who the priority stakeholders are. For all stakeholders determine their interests, the impact they have on your organization, and the purpose of each meeting.

Step 2: Develop a Transition Plan

Develop a Formal Transition Plan — In coordination with the departing leader, develop a formal transition plan. The plan should be focused on the organization - not necessarily on you as the new leader. Focus on people and nest the transition schedule within the existing organization's battle rhythm.

Handover of Other Jobs & Functions — Military leaders usually transition during high permanent change of station (PCS) cycles. Ensure a smooth handover of other jobs/functions from the position you are leaving to assist your successor and preclude issues that require your follow-up.

Key Information Flow — Ask the outgoing leader to share information with you in advance to increase your situational awareness. This is especially critical if the unit is deploying soon after the leader transition occurs. This also allows you (and your family) some predictability regarding upcoming requirements.

Office Handover Plan — Synchronize schedules for vacating and occupying the office. Try to ensure that the outgoing leader leaves you with the organizational equipment necessary to do your job. Having automation items, phones, pens, pencils, in/out boxes in place prepares you to lead your organization from day one.

Step 3: Conduct a Self-Assessment

Understanding yourself is a powerful skill for every leader. If you understand your strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies under various conditions you will have a better understanding of yourself. If you know yourself, you can know better how to interact with others and how they are likely to interact with you. Various tools are available to help you gain that understanding:

Army Multi-Souce Assessment and Feedback — This program centers on 360o assessments obtained from multiple sources with feedback given based on the different perspectives. Assessments and comments are collected from the assessed leader (self), superiors, peers and subordinates. Assessments are obtained on leader competencies and attributes – the essential ingredients of an Army leader (see Appendix A, FM 6-22). A feedback report is generated comparing results across the different sources. Results are provided to the assessed leader and are anonymous and confidential. Coaches are often used to facilitate interpretation of the feedback. After internalization of the results the leader develops a plan to act on the feedback. (Link available at http://msaf.army.mil).

Center for Army Leadership's (CAL) Self Development Handbook — This handbook offers exercises and information you can use to determine your self-development direction and start immediately working toward it. If you already have a direction for your self-development, the handbook will also help you achieve progress in that direction. (Link available at https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/376783).

Leadership Transitions Customized Courseware — The courseware consists of several key elements essential to successful transitions: Prepare for Transition, Develop Goals, Optimize Learning, Develop Strategy, Manage Change, Shape the Transition Environment, Build Teams, and Focus/Align Team Effort. The courseware allows users to tailor training materials to specific needs. Users access this at the CAL AKO website or Army eLearning https://usarmy.skillport.com/skillportfe/login/usarmylogin.cfm. New users must register with eLearning. Then login, select "Army Custom Curricula" and scroll to "Center for Army Leadership - Leadership Transitions". This contains a subfolder for each topic. These subfolders contain numerous courses, tools, job aids, and simulations to help a leader transition into a new leadership position.

SELF READINESS FACTORS

PHYSICAL

Assess your physical fitness and train accordingly. Physical training may be one of the first events the Soldiers and civilians will see you do; it is a chance to set an initial good impression.

TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL COMPETENCY

Review your individual Soldier skills. Soldiers and civilians will evaluate you on your competence. Don't ask them to do something you cannot do in this area.

Read professional, applicable publications. Maintain technical proficiency; stay current.

ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS

Brush up on personnel management, especially leader development. Know UCMJ, promotions, administrative discharge procedures, drug and alcohol programs, family advocacy procedures and officer, enlisted and civilian rating procedures.

Be computer proficient when you arrive. Most Army communication is completed via automated systems. Ensure that all uniforms are serviceable. Learn the organization's unit history. Get your personal life in order. Take care of any family, health or physical problems prior to assuming the leadership position.

LEADER ADVICE

Take your time; organize your thoughts and comments. Everything you say will be critiqued by someone.

Step 4: Produce Initial Leader Transition Documents

After developing your situational awareness, reflect on what is important to you from a leadership standpoint. Document your leadership philosophy and assignment goals. The leader should prepare these supporting transition documents.

Leadership Statement — Even if not at command level, you will need a statement about how you are going to lead your organization. Quality leadership philosophies include the following characteristics:

- It is appropriate, as a new leader, to write your leadership statement. Documenting provides your subordinates a reference they can use for clarification of your intent and style.
- Your statement sets the tone for the organization. Keep it short (preferably not to exceed one page in length), but make sure it says what you mean. You will be judged by what is important to you and your ability to live up to it.
- This is your initial chance to make sure your organization knows what you expect. You should publish it soon after you take over.
- Keep it to one page but use bullets, not paragraphs. This will allow you to easily brief your entire organization (like in a theater) and since your unit (the people in it) will change often due to PCS or task organization it will save you (or your staff) time by just doing it once.
- Thoughtfully prepare and rehearse what you will say the first time you talk to your personnel. Be prepared to cover your statement of what you expect of yourself as their leader and those things you consider non-negotiable.

Vision or Focus — Vision is a brigade-level and higher term. Focus is a battalion-level and below term. Both are a conceptual image of the desired future for the organization. The statement should be short and concise with every word meaning something. Take every opportunity in your organization to use them and promote the ideas behind them. Add the ideas to the core competency for your unit or organization. Obtain feedback on them from your subordinates prior to publishing.

Calendar Items — Synchronize your transition events and activities for your first 90 days with the organization's current battle rhythm (daily, weekly and monthly) and current calendar of events (short, mid and long range).

Major Duties Responsibilities and Performance Objectives — Provide your list of major duties, responsibilities and performance objectives from your support form to all subordinates prior to their initial counseling.

Organizational Inbrief — Be prepared to brief everyone about yourself and address those things that you value. Inform every one of your expectations of them and the organization. Consider addressing the following topics: values, ethics, objectives, integrity, priorities, discipline standards, training and education, safety, maintenance, leadership, Soldier and family care. Use this as the basis for a recurring 'Newcomers brief'.

Leader of Introduction to Family Members — Write a letter of introduction to family members and align it with the Army Family Covenant. This shows your commitment to Soldiers, civilians and their families.

Business Cards — Prepare business cards in advance of your first day. These are useful when coordinating with stakeholders. They are one small indication that you truly want to maintain contact.

CCIR SIR — Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) and Serious Incident Report (SIR) are standing requests for what you always want to be informed about. These are so important that you expect to be interrupted or awakened to be notified. You should refer to the higher HQ CCIR / SIR in the development of your priority standing information or incident requirements.

Initial Counseling Forms — Prepare initial counseling forms for all subordinates you will rate.

Personal Biography — Develop or update your personal biography. Depending on your level of leadership, it may be needed for various publications or scheduled appearances.

Assumption of Command Memo — Draft an assumption of command memorandum as appropriate per AR 600-20.

Initial Policy Letters — Prepare initial policy letters. These can be based upon previous leaders' policies, higher HQ mandates, what you think is important, etc. Before you publish them have the Inspector General (IG) and Staff Judge Advocate review to ensure enforceability and legality.

Leader Advice

Balance continuity with the necessity of change.

Step 5: Complete Mandatory Leader Transition Events

BN/BDE Level Pre-Command CSM Courses (If applicable) — Identify opportunities and schedules for required courses. Typical leader transition event courses include Pre-Command Course/Command Sergeants Major Course (PCC) and Tactical Commander's Development Program (TCDP); and branch, technical and specialty PCCs.

- These courses are conducted at Fort Leavenworth and at branch schools. They provide refresher training to assist you in preparation for command.
- Encourage your spouse to participate in the Leavenworth PCC. It is an excellent opportunity for the two of you to discuss expectations and agree on respective and shared roles in unit activities.

Company CDR and 1SG Courses — Company Commander and First Sergeant Courses are post-specific and differ somewhat in intent across locations. All are oriented to company level leadership responsibilities.

Change of Leadership Property Inventory Requirements — Refer to inventory procedures described in AR 710-2, AR 735-5, DA PAM 25-30, DA PAM 710-2-1 and Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP). Be careful that accounting for property does not take precedence over focusing on the organization's people.

Various Other Regulatory Requirements — Mandatory events within 90 days for company level include a Command Climate Survey (AR 600-20) and command inspections (AR 1-201). Identify other requirements that apply to your specific organization, level of leadership and the type of position.

Relief-In-Place (RIP) and Transition of Authority (TOA) — Some transitions will involve relief-in-place and transition of authority. These are only executed in an operational (deployed) environment (FM 3-90).

Step 6: Prepare for Change of Command/Change of Responsibility Ceremony (as required)

Invitations — Outgoing and Incoming Leaders

Your Speech — Rehearse your comments. When you address the organization, keep your remarks brief. Remember the day belongs to the outgoing leader. Know who is in the audience and recognize VIPs in your remarks.

Rehearsal Time and Location — The time and place of the event is scheduled by the staff. Coordinate with the staff.

Ceremonial Narrative and Script — The sequence of events is developed by the staff. Make any requests of them, but remember they work for the outgoing leader.

Program with Biographies — Check the program and provide biographical information to include past duty assignments, awards, and family information

Reception — Select location and caterer. Schedule your reception for nearby, but separate from the change of command / responsibility site.

All Resource Requirements — Check that details have been planned and prepared for (public address system, color guard, etc).

Step 7: Complete Installation In-Processing Requirements (If applicable)

Complete your own in-processing to ensure you are later free from distractions. This also allows you to gain a first-hand appreciation of how your Soldiers and civilians are treated. Try to get your family settled at home prior to assuming the leadership role. Familiarize yourself with the installation, training areas, post facilities and the services available for your Soldiers, civilians and their families.

Leader Advice

The situation dictates the approach one takes during the first 90 days. New leaders should conduct an assessment prior to taking over and continue for the first two to three weeks. Be careful of jumping to conclusions. There is nothing more disruptive than having a new leader who comes in and dictates personal priorities, objectives and intent on the first day, as they may be way off the mark from what the organization really needs in terms of purpose, direction and motivation.

PHASE TWO | FIRST DAY

Day One (D Day)

The first day is an important one in your new organization. What you do – and who you spend time with on the first day - will signal to Soldiers and civilians what and who is important to you. For commanders this should be your 'top NCO' as this transmits the value you place on your enlisted leadership. How you operate will be a preview of the changes ahead for the organization. If you delegate the scheduling of your day or go along with previously scheduled appointments, you are sending a sign that you do not care to manage your own time and that you are satisfied with being reactive to the demands requested of you. Two important steps should be part of your first day.

Step 1: Execute Change of Command/Responsibility Ceremony (as required)

Participate in a change of command or responsibility ceremony as appropriate.

Leader Advice

The new leader should see all personnel in the first 48-96 hours – for an introduction and discuss philosophy a bit. This is different than setting a course for the first 90 days; it is part of the assessment. The new leader can determine a lot about an organization, and so can the Soldiers and civilians regarding their new leader, just by how the meeting is arranged, organized and executed.

Step 2: Establish First Day Priorities

The incoming leader should develop and control these priorities – not subordinates or staff. Do not schedule too much for the first day. A good rule of thumb is to minimize disruptions at the Soldier level.

Determine Who to Meet Who you meet with first sends an unspoken message to everyone in the organization. Consider meeting only initially (day one) with a select few. For example, at the command level, consider meeting with the CSM, XO, S3, subordinate commanders and staff. Open communications early. Leave plenty of time for visits to see Soldiers at their duty stations or in training. Establish the relationship with your organizational peer (enlisted/officer/civilian) early and showcase its importance to everyone. Your counterpart (i.e. 1SG for CO CDR) deserves your unconditional trust right from the start. Tell your peer that you expect complete frankness and openness in your dealings with each other. Listen to how they see their role then discuss your vision of their role. Limit your first day meetings with those you deem essential within the time allocated prior to normal close of business.

Determine what to Address when You Meet The subjects you cover when you meet are next in importance with whom you meet.

- Review your leadership statement. Let them know your expectations of them and what they can expect from you and your spouse.
- Ask for input on existing programs.

Have the key leaders explain their jobs, how they see their roles and their expectations and standards.

- Ensure that the staff (if applicable) understands their support role.
- If not done already, task an immediate subordinate to set up and orchestrate the transition schedule for the next 90 days. Be specific about what you want.

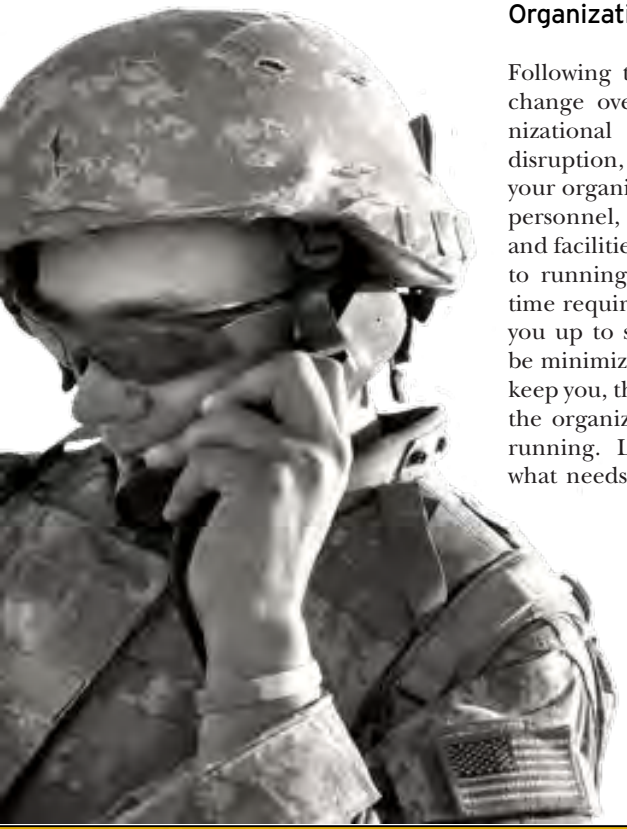
Determine Where to Meet and What to Visit Determine where to meet individuals – in your new office, conference, room, on their turf, etc. Also, visit all facilities and activities as soon as feasible (showing yourself around on first day will leave a lasting impression). Ensure that all facilities used by your Soldiers are operated efficiently and effectively for their benefit and well-being.

Update Phone Trees/Recall Rosters Everyone within your organization should know how to contact you if something should occur.

Leader Transition Tools Take care of administrative requirements for access and communications. Make sure you have the tools in place for your first day:

- Office turnover/keys.
- Communications: Blackberry/cell phone/voice mail, etc.
- Knowledge Management tools established/updated.
- Email setup (NIPR/SIPR). Websites updated – public/intranets (photo/bio).
- Knowledge Networks (BCKS forums, announcements, etc).
- Government vehicle transition.

Phase III of your transition occurs generally over the next 30 days of your new assignment. During this time you are obtaining information to confirm your initial assessment. You objectively assess the capabilities of your people, the teams in your organization and the whole organization collectively. You will be determining how the environment impacts your people and your mission and getting a better sense of opportunities and the absolute, nonnegotiable requirements. As you make your assessment you will be establishing credibility to those both inside and outside your organization. The main objectives of this phase are to understand and develop a relationship with your people, to identify problems and to identify new opportunities. All of these will be achieved by carefully developing a better understanding of all of the elements of your organization.



Step 1: Expedite Learning to Assess the Organization and your Subordinates

Following the first day of your leadership change over, devote your efforts to organizational transition. While minimizing disruption, you must further learn about your organization. Take a good look at your personnel, equipment, training, education and facilities; focus on those things essential to running an effective organization. The time required for the organization to bring you up to speed is a 'cost' which needs to be minimized. To minimize this cost and to keep you, the leader, from overly consuming the organization, you must hit the ground running. Leaders must quickly decipher what needs to be sustained and what areas of interest need immediate attention. To expedite your learning process, involve key leaders in the process. What may be obvious to you may not be obvious to a junior leader. Use the opportunity to create a learning organization.

UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Internal Activities

Use the following activities to develop an understanding of the organization.

- Conduct organizational climate surveys (AR 600-20). Climate surveys are a valuable tool for assessing organizational attitudes and morale and for identifying underlying problems and issues.
- Conduct subordinate leader and staff (if applicable) in-briefs (formal or informal). Focus on essential areas, systems and statuses such as: personnel, maintenance, budgeting and financial management, training, education, facilities, safety, etc.
- Conduct organizational in-brief(s). Aside from meeting with key leaders on day one, meet with the rest of the organization – as a whole or in group settings (squads, sections, staff, departments, officers, NCOs, Soldiers, civilians, etc) in the following days. These meetings serve two purposes. First, they are a venue to establish your subordinates' initial impression of you and secondly, they are useful for quickly gauging the command climate and getting information from different levels. At each meeting, you should ask the group to help "bring you on board" as the new leader by answering some basic questions such as:
  What do you believe this organization does well?
  What do you believe this organization does poorly?
  What would you change if you could?
- Tour work areas within your area of responsibility. Focus on the environment. Look at the facilities you're responsible for or that your Soldiers frequent and ask yourself some questions: Would I eat here? Would I work out here? Can I train using these resources? Can I maintain my property in this facility?
- Validate the organizational battle rhythm.
- Review upcoming events, commitments and taskings. Focus on the critical tasks to help define the organization's immediate priorities and provide understanding of where to concentrate your efforts. Focus on 3 or 4 priorities and adjust over time.

External Sources

Meet with outside personnel that focus on the organization's well-being (i.e. Installation/higher HQ Chaplain, SJA, Inspector General, Installation EO, Safety Office, DSCRM (budgeting), ASAP, AG, DOL, DPTM, key civilian or union leaders, etc) early on. They are useful sources to gauge the status of your organization's command climate and across them you may identify trends.

- Review higher HQ staff observations.
- Study previous higher HQ command inspection program results.

Understanding Subordinate Personnel Leadership

Always find time to talk to your subordinates. Listen to them. Find ways to communicate with them early, not to conduct reconnaissance on their area of responsibilities, but to get a feel for what is on their minds, their concerns and how they assess situations. Understanding their strengths, weaknesses, competence, developmental needs, motivation and issues can help you understand how to improve their effectiveness thus improving the organization.

Leader Advice

Give subordinate leaders more freedom and latitude to lead.

Review Formal Assessments

Review the following sources for background on personnel.
- ORBs/ERBs, Support Forms, Personnel Qualification Records on key people.
- Operational / Training Performance Records (MRE/CTC/Operational Deployment AARs).

Informal Assessments

Take the opportunity to observe leaders and subordinates in informal settings.
- Contact higher staff and leadership to gather their impressions of your organization and personnel.
- Continue to be visible around your organization. Get out and walk around. This time, focus on individuals rather than facilities discussed earlier. Spend time in the motor pool, at training sites and in the field talking to Soldiers, civilians and leaders doing their jobs. Never be too busy to stop and share thoughts and ideas with your subordinates. Visit your unit billets during duty hours, at night and on weekends. Talk to staff duty NCOs and visit with Soldiers. Observe subordinates every chance you get to determine their state of discipline, standards and morale. Being seen early also pays dividends by building confidence and gaining the respect of your subordinates.
- Assess the initial level of experience between yourself and subordinate leaders. For example, leading at the brigade level is different than the battalion level. At battalion level, your troop, company and battery leaders may have five to eight years experience and you will have 17 to 20 years. The gap is significant. Therefore the battalion-level leader provides more precise guidance, direction, mentoring and direct leadership than at the brigade level. At the brigade level, the commander is separated by just one to three years in experience and much less detailed guidance is required for subordinate leaders.

Initial Counseling

- Conduct initial counseling of subordinates. Be committed to getting support forms and conducting initial counseling within required time-frames (within first 30 days).
- Consider providing separate letters outlining your expectations for everyone you rate. Use the letter as the basis for their initial counseling sessions during which you discuss philosophy and goals. See FM 6-22 Army Leadership (OCT 06) for the different types of counseling, your responsibilities as a counselor, techniques, the four-stage process, and examples.
- Set-up follow-on quarterly performance counseling sessions to provide ample preparation time.
- Use the Developmental Counseling courseware module for tips on how to counsel and what to avoid (http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/dc/index.asp)

Step 2: Build Credibility as the New Leader

As a new leader in the organization, be prepared to be "sized up" by your subordinates as you strive to gain confidence and credibility. Credibility and trust are essential in your ability to influence and lead the organization effectively. Leaders gain this trust through open communication about ethical standards, expectations and exhibiting leader attributes and competencies expected of all Army leaders. The following are just some of the ways leaders can start to gain credibility early.

Conduct Organizational In-Brief(s)

Not only does conducting the inbrief help you gain an initial understanding of the organization and environment, it can also help you establish initial credibility. Talking to all your subordinates (as soon as possible after the leadership transition occurs) about what is important to you and what you value as their leader will help establish trust. In addition to items discussed earlier, share some of the following:

Your background.
Your leadership statement, vision, or focus.
Your expectations and standards.
Your commitment to Soldier, civilian and family welfare.
Your commitment to safety.
Your stance on training and education.

Consider how you will convey this information. A story from your background that provides the basis for your vision or why you have certain expectations can be a compelling way to engage your audience. Leaders can reveal a lot about themselves and retain the attention of their followers when they use stories to make a point.

Demonstrate Competence — Subordinates will respect a leader who is technically and tactically competent, willing to listen to their ideas and who leads from out front.

See What Soldiers See — Consider the Soldiers' perspective, especially before making a decision about new organizational policies or practices.

Attend Training — Meet your troops at ranges, on guard duty and during squad and crew training. Do physical training with different groups regularly. Ensure subordinates are conducting training meetings IAW FM 7-0 and TC 25-30.

Implement an Organizational Leader Development Plan — Often one of the essential areas overlooked by new leaders is a deliberate plan to develop subordinate leaders. CAL's Commander's Handbook for Unit Leader Development (https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/376783) is an effective tool to use to develop leaders in spite of today's fast paced environment. Although produced with commanders in mind, all leaders can use it to develop their leader development strategy regardless of level. There is no better way to demonstrate that you care about individuals than to support their development and attainment of their professional goals.

Display Good Time Management — Time management is critical to your success and builds credibility with your subordinates. Prioritize, delegate and don't let crisis management monopolize your time. Providing subordinates with predictability (part of time management) builds credibility and trust. Additionally, be prompt on all actions involving your Soldiers and civilians. Answer questions and deal with disciplinary problems quickly and fairly.

Empathetic Actions — Quickly learn the names of your subordinates and their spouses. Be aware of weddings, births, graduations, etc. Always visit your Soldiers, civilians or family members who are in the hospital. If they sense you have a genuine concern for their personal well-being, they are apt to be more open and loyal. Getting to know subordinates and allowing them to get to know you will build trust. It shows you care. Never pass up an opportunity to talk with your Soldiers or civilians.

Establish Ethical and Moral Climate — You are the role model for the ethical and moral climate of the unit. Your example speaks for what is acceptable and what is not. Empower your Soldiers to do what's right both legally and morally.

Step 3: Determine Preliminary Findings and Initial Assessments

Preliminary Findings and Initial Assessment - A Way — Lay out the preliminary findings and initial assessment of what you have assessed from early observations. This assessment can be conducted informally. You could conduct a formal survey or sensing sessions to further determine initial findings. Some questions to consider for a survey are:

- What are organizational strengths?
- What are organizational weaknesses?
- What are organizational opportunities and potential initiatives?
- What are organizational vulnerabilities?
- Where must the organization assume risk?
- What is the current culture?
- What predictable surprises should we anticipate near and far term?
- What are the top three things you would like to communicate to the new leader?
- What are the top three engagements – audience and purpose – that you would recommend for the new leader?
- Categorize responses (i.e. training, maintaining, leading/developing, caring and readiness) to organize findings and try and tie them into your organization's core functions (responsibilities), competencies, or METL as a baseline – this enables the sorting and categorizing of the responses. You also need to examine how these initial findings may impact your organization's vision (focus), mission, goals, objectives and milestones being developed.

Leader Advice

Trust towards subordinates and demonstrated character: these traits must be exhibited during the early stages of leading the organization.

Identifying Problems

Identifying problems for resolution is essential to your assessment. Consider potential problem areas:

- By program or system (training and education, maintaining, leading/developing, caring and readiness)
- By subordinate organization or staff element
- By person

Identify the cause of problems and whether they are recent or long-standing. Knowing the cause will often lead to identifying a solution.

Identify Quick Wins/Short-Term Victories

Quick wins provide a means to establish a leader's credibility and to lay the foundation for trust. They must be feasible, attainable and be important to you and your boss (higher HQ). They initiate momentum and lay the foundation for achieving long term goals and objectives.

Leader Advice

Don't change things for the sake of change. Immediate changes should be made only for situations that involve safety or troop welfare, or because they are incompatible with your values.

Step 4: Validate Preliminary Finds and Initial Assessment

As a final step to your assessment, ensure a cross section of the key stakeholders within the organization have an opportunity to challenge, question, or confirm the findings and assessments. Probe the assumptions and facts that underpin the preliminary findings or initial assessments. To make any of this work you must be open to feedback and criticism and be sensitive that subordinates may not be equally open to criticism from the "new boss." Asking questions and listening to the answers (even if leaders may not agree) provide team members a stake in helping you gain a better understanding.

PHASE FOUR | ORGANIZATIONAL

Day Thirty to Day Sixty

ALIGNMENT AND TEAM BUILDING

Phase IV is focused on alignment and team building. Organizational alignment and team building involve having everyone synchronized. Alignment refers to operating with shared purpose and strategies to achieve the mission. You must make sure that people, processes and systems are aligned to fulfill the organization's vision, mission, goals and objectives. Alignment requires you to ensure that Soldiers and civilians understand the direction that the organization needs to go and are committed to achieving its goals. Subordinates who understand the big picture, are collectively aligned and are committed to the mission have the basic elements to succeed as a high performing organization.

Team building is an integral part of alignment. Teamwork is based on commitment to the group, which in turn is built on trust. Trust is expecting that others will act for the team and keep its interests ahead of their own (paragraph 8-23, FM 6-22). The trust that Soldiers have in their buddy or the rifleman next to them is more powerful than the national strategy or the mission in the theater of operations. Under severe, life-threatening conditions, Soldiers take care of their duties because of their teammates. You have the responsibility during this phase of your transition to ensure that teams and teams of teams are well trained and working well together.

Step 1: Review and Develop Organizational Alignment

Your assessment of organizational alignment depends on your ideas for what you want the unit to achieve under your direction. Your commander's intent and guidance are used to shape your vision along with your understanding of the unit's METL and known or anticipated missions and priorities. You should assess how well the whole organization and key individuals are aligned to your vision. The distance between where they are and where you want them to be will determine how much alignment is needed. Shifts in alignment can be one of the greatest challenges of your transition. Patience, flexibility and a good understanding of influence techniques on your part will help make any needed realignment a smoother process.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT KEYS

Vision (or Focus) — Where do we want the organization to go? Vision is the means by which leaders provide direction and purpose to an organization. Clarity of direction through vision helps with unity of effort and allows honest assessments of what needs to be done to increase efficiency and the efficacy of the organization.
- Share with broad audience
- Gain support
- Use as a compass to guide organization

Mission — What task and purpose clearly indicate the action to be taken and the reason (who, what, where, why). Adjust as necessary.

Goals — How do we intend to get to our destination? Broadly defined, these are generally qualitative performance requirements. (Example infantry battalion: Attain a 'T' on all METL tasks; 100% Soldier and Equipment (10/20 standards) Readiness, etc)

Objectives — What do we need to do well to reach our goals? Identify the specific measures that define success.

Location of Strategic Planning — Conduct this as an offsite. Getting away from the daily routine interferences of the workplace will assist the team in the sharing of ideas and increase dialogue. Providing all the members a read-ahead packet with all relevant information will assist in their preparation and increase efficiency.

Step 2: Establish Key Milestones

During this step, set milestones and objectives that are aligned with your intent.
- Provide subordinates milestones that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and time-bound (deadlines) and Tangible.
- Determine resource requirements.
- Provide individuals an understanding of expectations. Provide shared metrics across the organization to ensure unity of effort.
- Establish milestones to provide another means to help build teams.
- Allow leaders/organizations to assess progress and to make adjustments to subordinates' responsibilities, tasks, etc.
- Fix responsibilities for the lead (and assists) to plan, execute and track progress.

LEADER ADVICE

Don't make big changes the first 30-60 days unless necessary. This time will allow you to really see how things operate, then change what needs fixing or upgrading. The organization will most likely have good people who only want to succeed and will help you lead the organization.

Step 3: Secure Quick Wins/Short-term Victories Identified Earlier

- Use the above milestones to verify (or adjust) the quick wins identified earlier.
- Initially focus your resources on the quick wins to ensure their success, but only if the organization's mission is adhered to first.
- Secure initial confidence, credibility and trust.
- Build momentum.
- Avoid initial pitfalls: incomplete assessment, dogmatism, forgetting endstate, etc.

Leader Advice

Spend more time listening and talking to subordinates.

Step 4: Consider Organizational Redesign

Sometimes the best way to achieve alignment is to change the structure of the organization so that it more directly matches the purpose and functions that you have established. Take into account the following when you initiate redesign:

- Organizational redesign must address: Structure, processes, interrelationships and the integration of the work effort. This systems approach allows leaders to comprehend the multiple factors that create the organizational context.
- Any change must take into account the components of the strategic alignment and the organization's core deliverables and capabilities to provide those deliverables.
- Organizational redesign should establish a flexible and accommodating organizational structure. A focus on the management of the processes and specifically the way participants interact and process and share information is important to creating adaptability.

Step 5: Build the Team

This step of Phase IV involves creating or sustaining high-functioning teams. First you must assess how well teams operate in the organization. There are many types of teams in an organization, some formal, some informal and some that are teams of teams. Start by asking key personnel about the state of teamwork and cooperation within the organization. Confirm their assessments with your own checks. Refer to Chapter 8 of FM 6-22 to better understand the three developmental stages of teams: formation, enrichment and sustainment. For each stage FM 6-22 gives ideas about what actions you can take to develop teams in general and specifically for deployments. Guidance is also provided on what the team member does to contribute to team building. Leaders also have the difficult task of resolving conflicts among team members and dealing with breaches in trust that attack teamwork. These are some additional ideas on team building:

Create Unity of Effort — Recognize that building your team and creating unity require your subordinates to have clarity of purpose, a say in decisions that affect their lives (you have to empower individuals) and a leader who can be a unifying force.

Critical Thinking — Develop your subordinates' abilities and capacities for intellectual and critical thought – it is important. The actions of your subordinates, based on their own critical thinking in the near term, will dictate the success of the organization's (team) vision in the long term. One of the best ways to develop critical thinking in your organization is to demonstrate it yourself. Consider alternative views. Assess if information, conclusions and recommendations are relevant, accurate and feasible. Be willing to accept risks. Show that you want the best answers possible. Let others know that you desire that they engage in critical thinking and that it requires an investment in effort.

Develop Individuals Develop individuals into leaders who can fit into the right roles (train one-up concept). This sets the foundation for building and developing teams. FM 6-22 describes what you can expect as the typical stages of team development.

Leader Requirements As their leader, provide teams with:

- Authority. The more leaders empower subordinates based on a shared purpose, the more influence leaders have.
- An ear for listening. Listening to your subordinates gives individuals a share in the organization's future.
- Resources to complete required tasks.
- Teambuilding events (organized activities, MDMP training event, etc), team incentives (awards, rewards, etc) and social events to build camaraderie and unity.
- Mission orders. Tell them what they need to accomplish; not how to do it. Allow subordinates freedom of action to stimulate their initiative within your intent.
- A disciplined culture that all teams recognize is essential to unifying the force.
- An organization with cohesive, integrated systems whose leaders embrace clear constraints; but also allow people freedom and responsibility within the framework of those systems.

Leader Advice

Be tough with subordinate leaders. Challenge them to peak performance.

Personnel Alignment Align personnel with organizational structure based on functional and technical competencies. Assess your personnel to determine if the right people are in the right jobs. You may choose to: keep personnel in place (doing well), keep in place but develop (needs help), reassign (not in right position), replace (not performing).

Step 6: Establish a Sense of Urgency

Leadership transitions and change usually means heightened anxiety. You have the opportunity to capture creativity and insights brought forth by this anxiety. Exploit this opportunity to establish a sense of urgency and maximize this window of opportunity for strategic alignment and team building. Build a climate of honesty and integrity. Clarifying vision and securing early victories all work toward creating a sense of mission and urgency.

Leader Advice

More structure up front and early meetings, reports, providing guidance, managing schedules may be required to comprehend the organization's status, to determine where friction points exist, to see the issues facing the organization.

This stage of the transition timeline is highlighted by establishing routine methods to continually assess and monitor the progress of the organization. Leaders should initiate a communications campaign (to include establishing Knowledge Management Systems) to establish 'buy-in' and sell the organization to internal and external stakeholders. Additionally, building coalitions is also essential in helping everyone achieve a common purpose of continued improvement.

Step 1: Establish Routine Meetings (weekly/monthly/quarterly)

formal way to assess and monitor progress, allocate resources or gather feedback – this can be done through training meetings, maintenance updates, staff meetings, daily huddles, QTBs, etc.

Step 2: Initiate Organizational Communication (STRATCOM) Plan

- Develop message to reinforce vision, mission, goals, objectives, milestones.
- Be proactive in getting your message out.
- Review with the organization and stakeholders at least semi-annually.
- Shapes organizational culture and builds further unity.

Step 3: Build and Sustain Knowledge Management Systems

• To create, store and share information within the organization.
• Employ different venues (AKO, forums, installation intranet, web sites, etc.)
• As an important component of the overall STRATCOM plan.
• As a beneficial way to promote the organization to internal and external stakeholders.

Step 4: Build Coalitions Internally and Externally

• Meet with individuals and organizations that have an interest and can affect organizational outcomes, interests and resources.
• Build coalitions to reduce redundancies and gain efficiencies, capitalize on others' strengths and provide mutual support.

Step 5: Eliminate Needless Constraints

Assess what functions, systems and meetings are not directly related to the organization's vision, mission, goals, objectives and milestones. Eliminate the unnecessary ones.

Phase VI follows the conclusion of the transition timeline. Sustainment is the time to reap the benefits of the comprehensive transition process your organization has executed by continuing to monitor all the systems and programs you have implemented in order to ensure its success. Additionally, it's never too early to start preparing the organization for the next leader. Your experience, having just completed the transition process, will ensure the new leaders' and the organization's ultimate success.

Step 1: Manage Organizational Systems and Operations

• Manage organizational systems that you decided to employ (or sustain) as a result of the overall organizational assessment and transition - these disciplined systems and operations should promote open communications and proactive thinking.
• Be agile and adaptive enough to adjust to the inevitable crises that arise over time.
• Continue to focus on building loyalty, trust and commitment to sustain the organization's change and improvement.
• Monitor the organizational culture – continue to assess through organizational venues (meetings, training events, counseling sessions).
• Assess, understand, plan, prepare, execute and revise strategy - leaders should continually refine strategy to match changing circumstances. This ensures the organization remains relevant and prepared to meet the evolving challenges.
• Develop subordinate leaders.

Step 2: Facilitate the Next Transition

What are you doing now to ease the transition of the organization when you leave the leadership position? It's never too early to think about your transition with the incoming leader.

• Set them up for success (i.e. provide relevant documents, assessment, reduce the amount of excess property).
• Incorporate the incoming leader into battle rhythm functions (e.g. staff meetings). They get a sense of the way the organization operates and shorten the time period needed to conduct an initial assessment, allowing for a smoother transition between leaders. They gain a deeper understanding of the way the organization is operating along with the "why" behind the leadership team's decisions.
• Prepare a continuity book that contains information the new leader will need to know almost immediately. Some items to consider: MTOE/TDA, alert rosters, current battle rosters, Army Physical Fitness Test data, legal actions brief, reenlistment data, last quarter's quarterly training brief, organization (and higher headquarters) training calendars, Family Readiness Group data, standard operating procedures and rosters.

For further information or to submit comments on this handbook, contact the Combined Arms Center—Center for Army Leadership at (913-758-3160 or http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL

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