Building and Maintaining a Positive Climate Handbook

July 2020

U.S. ARMY

Center for Army Leadership

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Chapter 1: About This Handbook

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to help command teams and other leaders build and maintain a positive climate in their organization. To meet this goal, this handbook covers—

- Why Climate Matters and How It Affects Your Organization.
- The Leader's Role in Building Climate.
- Assessing an Organization's Climate.
- Developing a Plan to Improve Climate.
- Implementing the Plan for Change.

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook supports command teams and leaders of civilian organizations with methods to—

- Transition into a new leadership role.
- Improve morale, readiness, and performance.
- Manage disciplinary issues.
- Conduct formal or informal command climate assessments.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook covers topics using a combination of text, callout boxes, graphics, job aids, case studies, and discussion questions. While most of the information in this handbook is the same as in the Building and Maintaining a Positive Climate IMI lesson, the handbook expands on the IMI lesson by providing more detailed information as well as including examples and case studies.

Chapter 2: Why Climate Matters and How It Affects Organizations

Organizational climate refers to the perception and attitudes of Soldiers and Army Civilians as they interact with their peers, subordinates, and leaders. **Climate can significantly influence many critical outcomes such as readiness, performance, morale, motivation, mutual respect, and discipline.** Therefore, it's essential that Army units and organizations be committed to promoting healthy, positive climates.

All members of an organization are responsible for contributing to a positive climate (ADP 6-22, AR 600-100). However, leaders have specific requirements to assess, develop, and maintain a positive climate. This chapter explores climate and its effect on how organizational members operate.
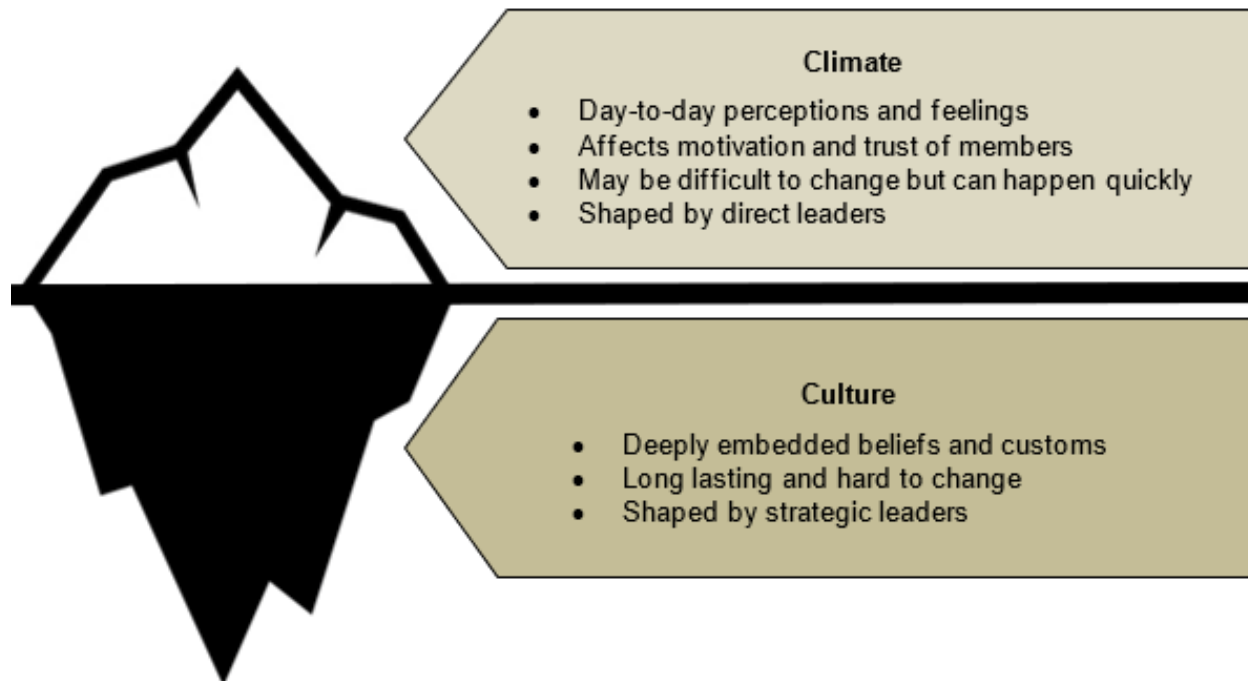
"A positive command climate instills a sense of trust within units. It facilitates a strong sense of discipline, comradeship, self-respect, and morale. It helps Soldiers develop a desire to do their fair share and to help in the event of need. In turn, Soldiers know their leaders will guard them from unnecessary risk."

~ ADP 6-0 Mission Command

WHAT CLIMATE IS AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM CULTURE

The terms climate and culture are often used interchangeably. While both climate and culture describe the environment in which leaders lead their organization, the terms are quite distinct. Strategic leaders shape an organization's culture while organizational leaders shape the climate of their units and organizations. It's important for organizational leaders to understand this distinction so that they know what they have influence over and what they don't. Figure 1 below illustrates some of the key differences between climate and culture.

Figure 1: Climate Versus Culture

Climate
- Day-to-day perceptions and feelings
- Affects motivation and trust of members
- May be difficult to change but can happen quickly
- Shaped by direct leaders

Culture
- Deeply embedded beliefs and customs
- Long lasting and hard to change
- Shaped by strategic leaders

Army Culture

Culture consists of a shared set of beliefs, values, norms, and symbols that unite a group and characterize the larger institution over time. Culture evolves slowly; it's deeply rooted in long-held beliefs passed from one generation of Soldiers to another and communicated in Army policies, doctrine, customs, traditions, songs, and ethos. In the case of the Army, those characteristics vital to Army culture are trust, military expertise, honorable service, stewardship, and esprit de corps. Leaders use culture to let members of the organization know they're part of something bigger than just themselves, that they have responsibilities to those who have gone before and those who will come after.

Army Climate

Climate is how members think and feel about their organization and comes from their shared perceptions and attitudes about the organization's daily functioning. It also affects members' motivation and the trust they have in their team and leaders. Climate is generally a short-term experience, depending on a network of personalities within the organization that changes as people come and go. Therefore, it's easier to change climate than it is to change culture.

HOW CLIMATE AFFECTS ORGANIZATIONS AND HOW MEMBERS OPERATE

An organization's climate affects its members' motivation, job satisfaction, morale, cohesion, commitment, initiative, trust, and ultimately their overall performance. High performing organizations require a positive command climate. Members in organizations with positive climates can better address challenges and achieve better results. On the other hand, members in organizations with negative climates often struggle to adapt to changing environments, don't work well as a team, have increased disciplinary issues, and fail to meet expectations. Table 1 lists some of the impacts of both negative and positive climates.

Table 1: The Impact of Negative and Positive Climates on Organizations

Impacts of a Negative Climate	Impacts of a Positive Climate
- Lower morale. - Increased conflict among organizational members. - Decreased trust and cohesion. - Decreased communication both among organization members and between members and leadership. - Decreased unit preparedness and operational readiness. - Decreased ability to accomplish mission tasks. - Decreased Soldier and leader retention. - Increased discipline problems. - Increased risk for sexual harassment and assault.	- Increased likelihood of mission accomplishment. - Improved operational readiness. - Increased productivity. - Improved overall unit and individual unit member performance. - Increased personal growth and development of unit members. - Exercising disciplined initiative and taking appropriate risks within the commander's intent.

Negative Climate Has Ties to Sexual Harassment and Assault

Another serious impact of a negative climate is the increased risk of sexual harassment and sexual assault in organizations. Findings from the 2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members indicate there is a positive correlation between unhealthy workplace climates and the risk of sexual assault. These data also indicate that unhealthy climates marked by sexual harassment, gender discrimination, workplace hostility, lack of unit cohesion, and lack of personal responsibility incrementally increase the risk of experiencing sexual assault. The odds of sexual assault were also higher for members indicating their command took less responsibility for preventing sexual assault, encouraging reporting, or creating a climate based on mutual respect. Figure 2 illustrates how climate affects the likelihood of sexual assault in organizations.

"…women who experienced sexual harassment were at three times greater risk for sexual assault than average. While men have a much lower risk of sexual assault compared to women, men who experienced sexual harassment were at twelve times greater risk for sexual assault than average. In sum, survey results found a positive correlation between unhealthy workplace climates and the risk of sexual assault."

~ 2018 DOD Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military

Figure 2: Climate's Impact on Sexual Harassment and Assault in Organizations

CASE STUDY: CLIMATE AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS

Review the following case study and answer the reflection questions. The answer key can be found in Appendix A.

One battalion has two companies with very different climates. CPT Jones commands Alpha Company, and the Soldiers benefit greatly from her leadership. Since assuming command, her focus has been on team building across the company and empowering Soldiers to think outside the box when performing their duties. CPT Jones is deliberate in communicating her vision to the company and listens actively when Soldiers share information with her. As a result, Alpha Company has strong team cohesion, and Soldiers share similar goals and values. Members of Alpha Company work well together to solve challenges and are able to adapt and change course when conditions change. Due to CPT Jones' efforts, Alpha Company has a positive climate. This positive climate influences everything Alpha Company does and increases the likelihood that they'll achieve mission success.

CPT Jensen commands Bravo Company. While he tries to motivate and engage his Soldiers, Bravo Company lacks cohesion and doesn't seem to have strong bonds of trust. CPT Jensen has noticed that Bravo Company Soldiers don't communicate well with one another and sometimes are disrespectful to those of a higher rank or level of authority. Morale in the company tends to be moderate at best, and the number of discipline problems has increased. Furthermore, when Bravo Company faces unexpected changes to a task or mission, the company's platoons and squads aren't able to adapt quickly. The company doesn't operate as a cohesive team, and conflicts between individuals or squads often go unresolved for long periods. Many Soldiers aren't proficient in their jobs, which has caused their teams to struggle.

During a recent training rotation, Bravo Company didn't perform well. There was poor communication between the company command team and platoons and, to make matters worse, the most proficient Solders were pulled away for an additional tasking. As a result, there was a lack of coordination of platoons' activities, which led to missed opportunities tor platoons to support on another. At the end of the training rotation, the company received a poor evaluation.

Reflection Questions:

What did CPT Jones do to create a positive climate in Alpha Company?
How did a positive climate affect Alpha Company?
How did a negative climate affect Bravo Company?

RESOURCES

Leaders can review the resources below to learn more about the importance of climate and how it affects organizations.

Websites and Army Resources:

- ADP 6-22,*Army Leadership and the Profession* (2019).

- FM 6-22, *Leader Development* (2015).

- AR 600-100, *Army Profession and Leadership Policy* (2017).

- AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (2014).

- Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, Fiscal Year 2019 (2019).

- *Unit Fitness*. Defense Centers of Excellence (2011).

- TC 6-22.6, *Employee Engagement* (2017).

Chapter 3: The Leader's Role in Building Climate

One of the greatest influences on an organization's climate is the quality of its leaders. In fact, recent Army research found a positive relationship between leader effectiveness and a unit's command climate, as illustrated in figure 3.

According to AR 600-100 and AR 600-20, Army leaders and commanders are responsible for shaping their organization's climate by promoting fair and equal treatment and creating opportunities for all Soldiers, civilians, and family members. Organizational leaders can improve their organization's preparedness by addressing weaknesses within the organization's climate. This chapter describes how leaders can impact their organization's climate.

Figure 3: How Leader Effectiveness Impacts Command Climate and Organizational Readiness

How Leaders Impact Climate

As illustrated in figure 4, leaders establish the tone of their organization through behaviors they demonstrate and the behaviors they encourage and reward in others. These actions, in turn, influence their members' behavior and perceptions of what they perceive as appropriate or inappropriate. Organizational members' perceptions then establish the norms and expectations that become ingrained in the organization's climate. Leaders can affect their organization's climate by modeling appropriate behavior, maintaining Army culture and core values, and caring for their members.

Figure 4: How a Leader's Actions Impact Climate

Modeling Appropriate Behavior

Effective leaders model the positive behaviors they want others to emulate by maintaining standards and providing effective examples through their actions. Some ways leaders can model appropriate behavior include:

- **Displaying Character.** Leaders can display character by modeling standards for performance, completing tasks on time, personal appearance, physical fitness, and ethics. They can also display character by modeling sound judgement and reasoning, determination, persistence, and patience.

- **Exemplifying the Warrior Ethos.** Leaders can demonstrate the Warrior Ethos both on and off the battlefield by showing resilience during prolonged and demanding conditions and by doing the right thing despite adversity, challenges, and setbacks.

- **Leading with confidence in difficult situations**. When challenged with a difficult situation, leaders should demonstrate competence in their leadership abilities, display confidence and composure even when situations aren't going well, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity or setbacks.

- **Demonstrating competence**. Leaders can model technical and tactical competence by performing their duties to high standards. They should also share their knowledge of how to use equipment, procedures, and methods, while also showing how they remain innovative at the same time.

- **Demonstrating conceptual skills.** Leaders can demonstrate conceptual skills by modeling how to think critically about complex situations, understand cause and effect relationships, develop plans, and lead others.

- **Seeking diverse ideas and points of view.** Leaders should encourage honest communication and be open to alternative explanations and approaches for resolving difficult problems.

Maintaining Army Culture and Core Values

Leaders should establish a climate consistent with Army values and culture. When a leader's actions are consistent with Army culture, it helps strengthen bonds of mutual trust and build cohesive teams. Leaders who create a positive climate aligned with the larger Army culture set themselves and their organizations up for success. However, when there is a disconnect between these values and actual practices—for example, if a leader participates in or turns a blind eye to unethical or negative behaviors occurring within the organization—it can breed cynicism, compromise mutual trust, and decrease morale.

Caring for Members

The best leaders care for the welfare of their Soldiers, Army civilians, and their families. They balance the needs of the mission and the welfare of their members by regularly assessing members' mental, physical, and emotional well-being and providing appropriate relief when needed. Detecting change in morale and actively seeking honest feedback about the health of individuals indicate care as well as simple actions such as listening patiently and addressing families' needs. Good leaders also create a rewarding climate of shared mutual trust and pride in team contributions to mission accomplishment.

Leaders should also place a high priority on developing their subordinates to promote learning and growth and enforce standards. When leaders care for their organizational members and develop their subordinates, they increase unit satisfaction and help improve team cohesion and camaraderie. On the other hand, when a leader "sends the message" that they don't care for the welfare and development of their organizational members, they risk creating a climate with poor morale and a lack of trust.

CASE STUDY: A LEADER'S IMPACT ON CLIMATE

Review the following case study and answer the reflection questions. The answer key can be found in Appendix A.

> CPT Hernandez, a company commander, noticed that his unit's Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) scores were lower than he'd like. Many Soldiers and their leaders seemed satisfied with ACFT scores that were meeting or barely above the minimum standard. To motivate his unit and improve ACFT scores, CPT Hernandez set up a competition that used a scoreboard with various fitness metrics. CPT Hernandez regularly updated the scoreboard so Soldiers could see how they and their squad ranked compared with other unit members.
>
> After a few months, CPT Hernandez noticed that his Soldiers weren't interacting with one another in the same way and both unit morale and enthusiasm to do PT seemed to be declining. Upon reflection, CPT Hernandez realized that the competitive environment he had fostered may have had the opposite effect from what he had intended.
>
> To improve the unit's climate, CPT Hernandez got rid of the unit scoreboard and began to focus Soldiers' attention on a new motto he wanted them to embrace, "If one fails, we all fail." CPT Hernandez's new strategy was to get Soldiers to view success in terms of incremental improvements made across the unit rather than in terms of who was the absolute best. This strategy began working, and he saw an increase in helping behaviors and positive interactions between unit members. After a few months, CPT Hernandez noticed that his unit's focus on teamwork had increased camaraderie and morale, and by the next ACFT, the unit's scores also improved.
>
> **Reflection questions:**
>
> Why do leaders and commanders have more responsibility for climate than organizational members?
> How did CPT Hernandez's strategy have a negative impact on his unit's climate at first?
> How did CPT Hernandez improve his unit's climate?

RESOURCES

Leaders can review the resources below to learn more about the role leaders play in building climate.

Articles:

- Journal of Business Ethics. Leaders, Values, and Organizational Climate: Examining Leadership Strategies for Establishing an Organizational Climate Regarding Ethics. Michael Grojean, Christian Resick, Marcus Dickson, and Brent Smith (2004).

- Leadership's Impact on Organizational Climate. Jorge Estrada (2018).

- How Leaders Can Influence Workplace Climate. Anthony Schulzetenberg and Joe Colihan (2018).

Websites and Army Resources:

- ADP 6-22. *Army Leadership and the Profession* (2019).

- AR 600-100, *Army Profession and Leadership Policy* (2017).

- AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (2014).

- How Leaders Can Influence Workplace Climate. Anthony Schulzetenberg and Joe Colihan (2018).

Chapter 4: Assessing an Organization's Climate

In order to build and maintain a positive climate, leaders first need to understand the current state of their organization's climate. This chapter explains the factors that contribute to an organization's climate and ways in which leaders can determine the health of their organization's climate against these factors.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO AN ORGANIZATION'S CLIMATE

Several factors contribute to an organization's climate. Army research has identified climate factors from how they relate to critical individual and unit-level outcomes, such as morale, readiness, and mission accomplishment (see figure 5). In addition, an organization and its climate exist within the larger Army structure. The elements shown circling the climate factors are all part of the larger system that can affect an organization's climate. Leaders should keep this larger system context in mind as they think about what may be causing certain issues and how they might affect them.

Figure 5: Factors that Contribute to Climate
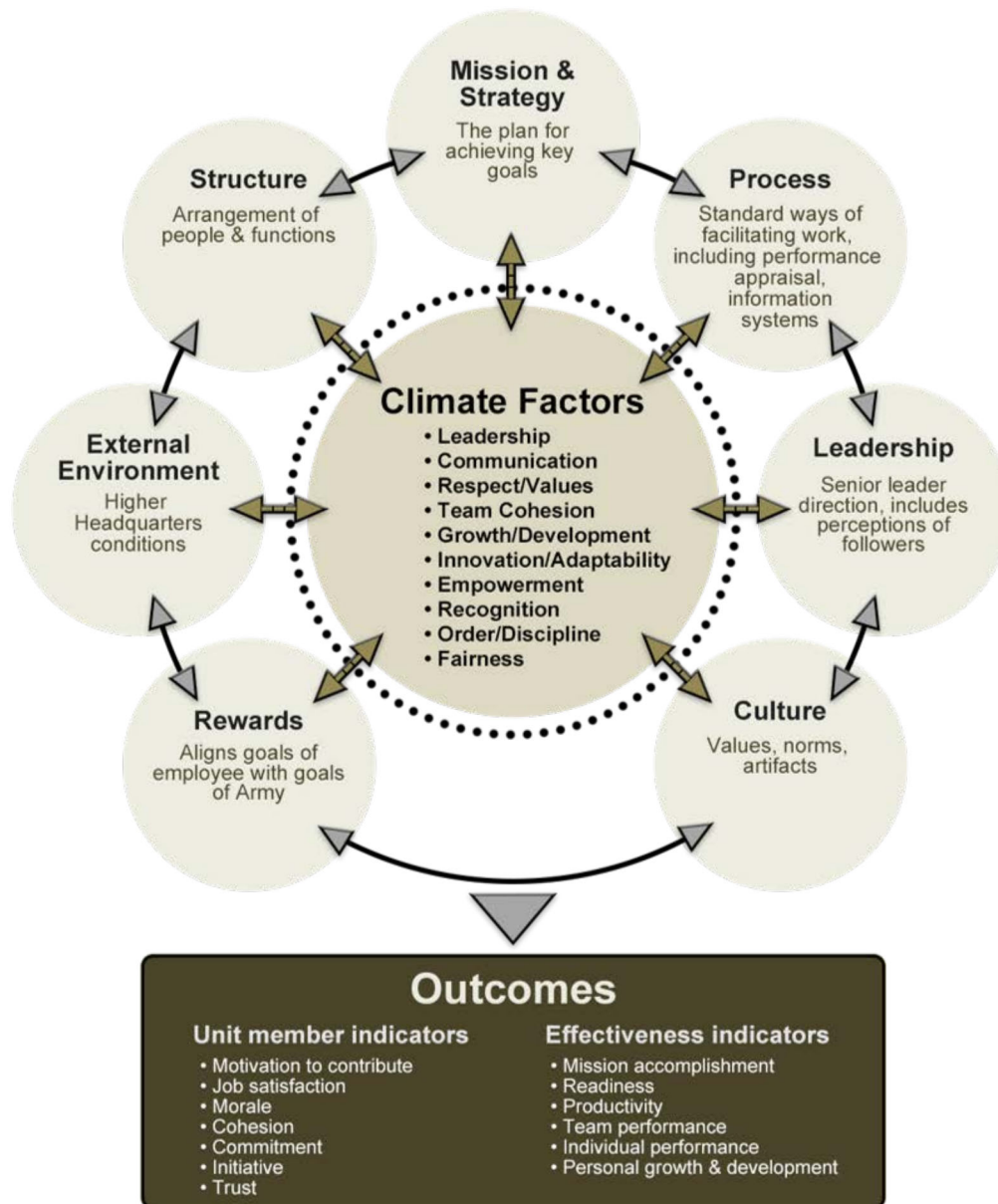
The Army identified 10 factors that affect climate in organizations. These factors are described below along with indicators of strength and indicators of areas for improvement.

Leadership

Leaders maintain manageable workloads for subordinates during periods of high operational tempo (OPTEMPO), provide members with necessary resources within their control, and are available to members. Leaders also set the example for their subordinates by doing the right thing the right way and by addressing and eliminating the use of counterproductive leadership behaviors.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
- Members take prudent risks and exercise disciplined initiative. - Members are engaged in tasks. - Members volunteer for challenging assignments. - Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. - Leaders are available to meet with members. - Leaders serve as a role model for members. - Members have the resources to complete tasks.	- Counterproductive leadership behaviors are observed. - Accidents occur at a high rate. - Members lack enthusiasm when completing tasks. - Members struggle to manage their workloads. - Members perceive that leaders aren't being authentic.

Communication

Information flows both up and down the chain of command and there is a clear messaging of objectives and expectations, commander's intent, and purpose. Honest and candid communication is also encouraged.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
- Members raise issues with their leaders. - Leaders seek advice and help from members. - Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. - Leaders inform members about issues affecting their organization.	- Conflict between members is common. - Members often don't meet expectations. - Members perceive that leaders don't act on information they receive. - Leaders rarely provide feedback.

Respect/Values

All members are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender. Hazing, bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment/assault, and disrespectful behavior of any kind aren't' tolerated.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
- Diversity and inclusiveness are supported and celebrated. - Prohibited practices are prevented and stopped. - Leaders treat members respectfully. - Members perceive that leaders model Army values.	- Hazing, bullying, and discrimination are observed. - Diversity and cultural differences are misunderstood or feared. - Members experience sexual harassment and/or sexual assault.

Team Cohesion

Organizational members work well together, collaborate, and look out for one another. Organizational members also tend to be more reliable, feel included, are proud to be in the unit, and contribute.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members exhibit a willingness to work together toward shared goals. • Members overcome challenges together and adapt to changing conditions. • Members regularly share best practices, lessons learned, and guidance with one another. • Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. • Members socialize and have good relationships.	• Conflict between members is common. • Members feel excluded and that they don't belong. • Members don't help when other members struggle. • Members lack trust in one another.

Growth/Development

Organizational members have the resources to improve their skills and abilities and can grow personally and professionally. Members are allowed to make honest mistakes and receive coaching and mentoring to learn from their mistakes.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members regularly participate in formal and informal development activities. • Members have individual development plans (IDPs) and their IDP goals align to mission achievement. • Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities. • Leaders delegate tasks appropriately. • Leaders give members challenging or stretch assignments as opportunities to grow. • Members take disciplined initiative.	• Members don't receive adequate opportunities to learn desired skills. • Members don't seek out career development opportunities. • Members don't have clear career paths, developmental goals, or awareness of the competencies they need to develop. • Organization and member performance don't meet expectations. • Members avoid taking risks. • Leaders don't discuss career development goals with subordinates. • Leaders don't offer coaching and mentoring opportunities.

Innovation/Adaptability

Leaders foster innovation and adaptability by valuing and encouraging creative and diverse ideas. Organizational members are encouraged to solve problems, remain flexible, and embrace new challenges.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members share new ideas. • Members use creative problem solving. • Members take prudent risks and disciplined initiative. • Members view challenges as opportunities. • Leaders encourage open communication. • Leaders recognize members for sharing creative ideas. • Members question traditional assumptions.	• Members struggle to adapt to changing environments. • Members don't take risks. • Members focus solely on getting work done and don't allocate time to develop ideas for improvement.

Empowerment

Organizational members are trusted and supported to do their jobs. Tasks are delegated appropriately, and members are encouraged to exercise disciplined initiative within the commander's intent.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members know what is expected of them and have the authority to carry out their work. • Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities. • Members are allowed take prudent risks and exercise disciplined initiative to accomplish tasks. • Leaders delegate tasks appropriately. • Members are allowed to solve their own problems. • Leaders provide members constructive feedback.	• Leaders micromanage their members. • Assignments are unclear and ambiguous. • Decisions are second-guessed and sometimes reversed. • Members lack trust in one another and leadership.

Recognition

Members are valued for their skills and recognized for accomplishing tasks, doing the right thing, and doing work that exceeds expectations.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members are motivated to improve their performance. • Members understand how their performance affects the overall success of the organization. • Members feel that they are a valued part of the team. • Leaders recognize their members' achievements. • Healthy competition is observable.	• Members struggle to understand performance expectations. • Members fail to take initiative. • Members lack job satisfaction.

Order/Discipline

All members are held accountable to the same Army standards. Discipline is enforced consistently and fairly, and order is maintained.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Members understand the expectations they are held to. • Standards are enforced consistently. • Organizational events have high attendance. • Members pay attention to details. • Workspaces are clean and organized.	• Disciplinary issues are common. • Leaders don't maintain order. • Members are often late or absent from scheduled events.

Fairness

Organizational members' work assignments, opportunities, and advancement are based on their performance and abilities, not unrelated factors.

Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators
• Guidelines, requirements, and policies are applied equally to all team members. • Members have equal opportunities to expand their skillsets. • Assignments are based on members' skills and abilities. • Evaluations are objective and accurate.	• Leaders receive a high number of complaints. • A perception of favoritism exists. • Members lack job satisfaction.

DETERMINING THE HEALTH OF AN ORGANIZATION'S CLIMATE

Leaders should periodically assess the overall health of their organization's climate. Figure 6 shows a process leaders can use to rate their organization on each of the climate factors introduced earlier in this chapter. This will help pinpoint areas of strength and areas for improvement and diagnose any problems. After compiling the results of their assessment, leaders should share their findings with organizational members as appropriate. This section dives into the details of each step used to determine the health of an organization's climate.

Figure 6: The Process and Techniques for Determining the Health of Your Organization's Climate

Step 1: Rate Your Organization on Climate Factors
- Conduct battlefield circulation
- Advertise your open-door policy
- Hold sensing sessions
- Have conversations
- Leverage anonymous feedback

Step 2: Identify Strengths and Areas to Improve
- Review and categorize information
- Look for clusters
- Compare findings with previous assessments

Step 3: Diagnose Problems if Needed
- Look at situational factors
- Review command climate survey results or other feedback
- Consider your impact as a leader

Step 4: Share Results as Appropriate
- Decide who to share results with
- Focus on improving weaknesses and building strengths

Rate Your Organization on the Climate Factors

Leaders need to know how their organizations fare on each factor. To assess the current state of their command climate, it's helpful if leaders develop a rating scale continuum to make comparison of results easier, similar to the example in figure 7.

Figure 7: Climate Factor Rating Scale

Factor	Ineffective	Partially Ineffective	Neutral	Partially Effective	Effective
Leadership	○	○	○	○	○
Communication	○	○	○	○	○
Respect/Values	○	○	○	○	○
Team Cohesion	○	○	○	○	○
Growth/Development	○	○	○	○	○
Innovation/Adaptability	○	○	○	○	○
Empowerment	○	○	○	○	○
Recognition	○	○	○	○	○
Order/Discipline	○	○	○	○	○
Fairness	○	○	○	○	○

Leaders can use several methods to collect feedback about how their organization rates on the different climate factors, including conducting battlefield circulation, advertising an open-door policy, holding sensing sessions, having conversations, and leveraging anonymous feedback. Leaders should use their best judgment to determine which method or combination of methods will work best for their organization.

Conduct Battlefield Circulation

Conducting battlefield circulation is one strategy leaders can use to gather information about the health of their organization's climate. It's important that leaders prioritize their people over administrative tasks. This means getting out of the office, walking around, talking to Soldiers and civilians, and looking for the general indicators explored earlier. Leaders should pay attention to what is happening in their organization, particularly the overall level of morale of their organizational members.

Advertise Your Open-Door Policy

Another way leaders can gather information about their organization's climate is promoting an open-door policy. Leaders should advertise their open-door policy to everyone in the organization. It's also extremely important that leaders act on issues brought to their attention during open-door policy interactions. By acting on these issues, leaders send the message to their members that their feedback is meaningful and makes a difference. It will also encourage members to continue to go to their leader with concerns.

Hold Sensing Sessions

Conducting regular informal sensing sessions can help leaders take the pulse of their organization and uncover issues that need to be addressed before they surface in the more formal command climate surveys.

Leaders can hold these sessions with either immediate subordinates or leaders and subordinates two levels down. For instance, a company commander would meet with squad leaders or a battalion commander would meet with platoon leaders. If leaders are sincere and authentically strive to better the organization through these types of sessions, subordinates will respond positively and honestly.

Have Conversations

Leaders can learn a lot about the climate of their organization by having conversations with their members. One method that can be used to engage members in conversation is collecting feedback on 3x5 cards. Give each member a 3x5 card to list three things on one side that are working well in the organization and three things that aren't working well on the other side, similar to the example illustrated in figure 8. Leaders then list the members' responses on a whiteboard and have them rank order or vote on which items they feel are most important. Next, take the top three items and discuss with members how to sustain the organization's strengths and how to improve on the organization's weaknesses.

Figure 8: Collecting Feedback on 3x5 Cards
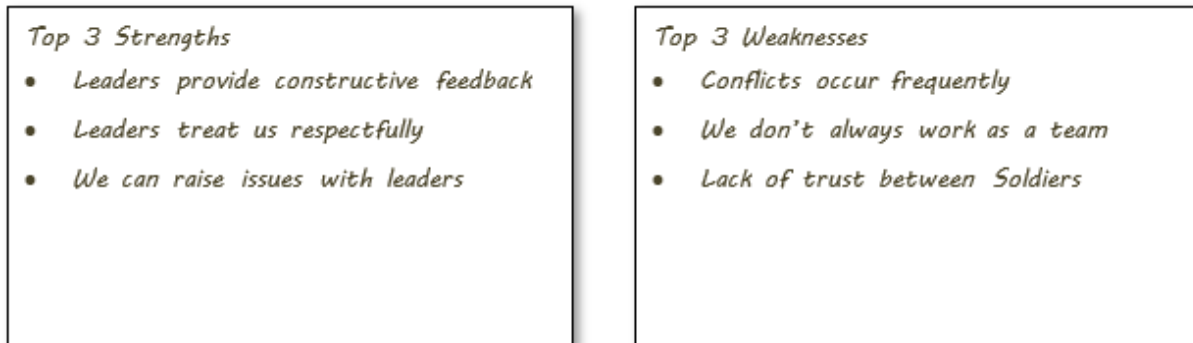
While having conversations is a great way to engage some organizational members, it's likely that not everyone will feel comfortable speaking candidly with an organization's leader. Therefore, offering a means to provide anonymous feedback may be a more amenable way for all organizational members to have a voice.

Leverage Anonymous Feedback

When organizational members aren't comfortable speaking directly with leadership, leaders can put out a comment box that allows members to bring concerns to their attention anonymously. Comment boxes aren't without their limitations, however. Some members may use it for petty complaints rather than bringing forward serious issues that need to be resolved. While the intention is to collect feedback anonymously, some members may also be concerned that their leaders will attempt to identify and seek out those who submit feedback.

Another way to leverage anonymous feedback from organizational members is through a command climate survey. Command climate surveys focus on the overall climate and morale of the unit and are required of some organizations (see AR 600-20). Leaders can leverage the results of the survey to uncover areas of strength and areas for improvement in their organization. While surveys can be a valuable resource, they should be used sparingly to prevent survey fatigue. Figure 9 shows sample results of feedback collected anonymously and reported in a DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Report (https://www.deocs.net/).

Figure 9: Feedback Sample from DEOCS Report

This sample shows the number and percentage of participants that strongly disagreed, disagreed, slightly disagreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, slightly agreed, agreed, and strongly agreed with statements about their senior leadership. The leader can review this feedback to learn how participants perceive his or her abilities.

Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Most organizations won't have a climate that's entirely positive or entirely negative. Organizations will likely have a mix of positive and negative factors. To build and maintain a positive command climate, leaders must both attend to areas for improvement while working to sustain known strengths.

To identify an organization's strengths and weaknesses, leaders can start by reviewing the information they gathered and categorizing it into areas in which their organization is currently strong, doing okay, or in need of improvement. For example, leaders who conducted a command climate survey should review both the quantitative and qualitative data for the following (this information can also be used to help diagnose problems in the next step):

- Questions or clusters of favorable ratings that indicate strengths to enhance, particularly those that help them meet their strategic goals

- Questions or clusters that have a high percentage of unfavorable responses that are important for high performance

- Questions or clusters in which the percentage of favorable or unfavorable responses has changed significantly over time (such as more than 5% or 10% from the last survey)

- Additional insights and trends provided in the open-ended comments

- If demographic information was collected, trends across segments of the population (for example, if the feedback on an issue comes primarily from higher ranking or lower ranking members of the organization, it might provide insights into underlying issues)

Next, leaders should identify the top three climate needs and top three climate strengths. The reason for selecting the top three of each is to help leaders focus their efforts. It's better to select only the top priorities and make significant progress on them than to select several focus areas and make limited progress. After reaching their goals on the top priorities, leaders can work on additional areas.

Diagnose Problems

For climate factors identified as areas for improvement, it's important that leaders investigate what may be causing the problem. Leaders should reflect and think about why the issue may exist. This can help them determine a solution that addresses the organization's true need. Leaders should also consider how much control they have over the problem so that they can focus on ones they can influence.

Look at Situational Factors

Situational factors can also lead to climate issues. For example, a high workload or a lack of resources can have a negative impact on an organization's climate. When assessing situational factors, leaders should remain objective and seek to identify the root causes of climate issues. This may require questioning preconceived notions that may distract from identifying actual root causes.

Remember that changes in climate can also be caused by external factors, such as a shift in mission priorities similar to what was illustrated in figure 5. Leaders should be able to recognize the impact these external factors may have on climate and how best to respond to them.

Consider the Leader's Impact

When diagnosing problems, leaders should also consider how **they** affect their organization's climate. One way leaders can reflect on their impact is to honestly answer the questions in table 2.

> "The greatest influence on an organization's climate is the quality of its leadership"
>
> ~ AR 600-100

Table 2: How Leaders Affect Their Organization's Climate

Questions	Yes	No
Do you invest time in subordinate development?	☐	☐
Do you clarify roles and expectations for organizational members?	☐	☐
Do you treat organizational members fairly and consistently?	☐	☐
Do you invite organizational members to ask questions and share ideas?	☐	☐
Are you open to input and feedback from organizational members?	☐	☐
Do you recognize members for their achievements and celebrate accomplishments?	☐	☐
Do you avoid demonstrating counterproductive leadership behaviors?	☐	☐

A "no" response to one of the questions above may indicate an area where you could be contributing (inadvertently or not) to a negative climate. When leaders realize they could be contributing to a negative climate, they should consider what changes they could make in their own behavior to help create a more positive climate. Conversely, when leaders answer "yes" to any question, it indicates that they're contributing to a positive climate and should continue to do those things to keep contributing to a positive climate.

Share Results as Appropriate

After determining the health of the organization's climate, leaders should use their best judgment when deciding with whom to share the results. For example, if the results aren't positive, a leader will want to avoid demoralizing the organization's members and instead may share the results with a few key leaders in the organization. If results indicate issues among the lowest-ranking members of the organization, a leader may share the results with all of his or her subordinate leaders. There may be instances where sharing results with all members of the organization is effective, but this depends on the leader's relationship with organizational members.

Sharing results of climate assessments creates transparency and can help leaders gain buy-in from organizational members for the next steps. It also helps reinforce with others that honest feedback improves the organization and can prime them for change as the leader develops a plan of action.

RESOURCES

Books:

- Designing and Using Organizational Surveys. Allan Church and Janine Waclawski (1998).
- U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board. The Survey Results Action Guide.

Websites and Army Resources:

- *Unit Fitness*. Defense Centers of Excellence (2011).
- How Leaders Can Influence Workplace Climate. Anthony Schulzetenberg and Joe Colihan (2018).
- Command Climate Navigator.
- AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (2014).

Chapter 5: Developing a Plan to Improve Climate

Once leaders understand the current state of their organization's climate, they can develop a plan to both build on areas of strength and improve areas of weakness. This chapter provides some strategies and techniques leaders can use to improve their organization's climate along with tips on how to prioritize which strategies to choose and develop a plan for change.

BRAINSTORMING STRATEGIES BY CLIMATE FACTOR

Based on what leaders learn about the health of their organization's climate, they'll need to determine what strategies to use to build and maintain a positive climate. Not all strategies will work for all situations. Therefore, leaders will need to determine which strategies work best and tailor their solution based on their specific circumstances. Leaders can use the links in Table 3 below to jump forward to a list of potential strategies specific to each climate factor as well as jump back to refresh on the description of each factor.

Table 3: Climate Factor Strategies and Descriptions

Leadership	Communication	Respect/Values	Team Cohesion	Growth/ Development
Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies
Innovation/ Adaptability	Empowerment	Recognition	Order/Discipline	Fairness
Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies	Link to Description Link to Strategies

Leadership

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *leadership* climate factor:

- **Be authentic and lead by example**. In order to build or restore trust with their organizational members, leaders need to be true to themselves. They should assess the situation and act accordingly, which may involve tempering their own natural inclinations. Leaders should also lead by example by demonstrating that they practice the same values and behaviors they expect from their organizational members. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Leads by Example, The Value of Self-Awareness IMI lesson, and the Beyond People Skills: Leveraging Your Understanding of Others IMI lesson.)

- **Serve as a change agent.** Leaders should be a catalyst for change in their organization. Help organizational members recognize that the environment is changing and build consensus as change is occurring. Model critical and creative thinking and encourage it from others. Ask questions about how tasks can be performed better and involve those who know the tasks. (For more information, refer to the ADP 6-22 Leads by Example section and FM 6-22−Uses Appropriate Methods of Influence to Energize Others as well as the Making Influence Count IMI lesson, Being an Adaptable Leader in Times of Change IMI lesson, and Creating and Promulgating a Vision of the Future IMI lesson.)

- **Build your self-awareness.** Leaders should observe others' actions and reactions around them. They should also identify their strengths and limitations and reflect to understand how their thinking and actions are influenced by their experiences and where their biases lie. By developing self-awareness, leaders are more likely to be accepting of others' ideas and benefit from them. A lack of self-awareness can potentially alienate others because the leader misunderstands the impact of their actions on them. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Maintains Self-Awareness and The Value of Self-Awareness IMI lesson.)

- **Establish clear goals and objectives.** Leaders who establish clear and realistic goals create a positive command climate in which collaboration, dialogue, mutual trust, and shared understanding can occur. Articulate team expectations and clarify connections to Army and organizational goals and objectives to enable members to understand what needs to be done. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Provides Purpose as well as the Clarifying Roles IMI lesson and The Leader's Role in Providing On-the-Job Learning and Support IMI lesson.)

- **Consider the impact of previous commanders.** In cases of transition, consider the leadership of previous commanders and their impact on the unit. Meet with key stakeholders early on to learn about the previous commander's leadership style. Review previous command climate surveys if possible. Ask organizational members about the challenges they've faced and what concerns they have. This will allow leaders to learn best practices that have already worked and they should continue and what actions they should try to avoid. (For more information, refer to the Army Handbook for Leadership Transitions.)

Strategy in Action:

After taking command of Foxtrot Company, CPT Howell met with his subordinate leaders to learn about the company's existing command climate and the previous commander's leadership style. CPT Howell learned that the previous commander didn't consistently explain her expectations of Soldiers, and teams were often chewed out for reasons they didn't understand. This led to perceptions of favoritism and unequal standards within the unit. To avoid this mistake, CPT Howell created a graphic that illustrated his expectations for everyone in the company along with the company's mission statement and motto. He then printed the graphic on posters and hung them in high-traffic areas around the company headquarters where everyone could see them. By doing this, CPT Howell helped align his expectations with the company goals.

Communication

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *communication* climate factor:

- **Encourage open and candid communication.** Practice transparency by sharing information with organizational members about Army goals, organization focus areas, and process and policy changes. Create an environment where others feel free to contribute and know that their ideas and input are valued. Remain calm, objective, and facts-focused when receiving potentially bad news. Show respect for members' opinions even while disagreeing with them. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Encourages Open and Candid Communications as well as the Navigating Contentious Conversations IMI lesson, Art of Asking Questions IMI lesson, and Being an Adaptable Leader in Times of Change IMI lesson.)

- **Increase the quality and frequency of feedback.** Use feedback to reinforce desired behaviors through praise and encouragement and to redirect less desirable behaviors. A good way to do this is by using specific examples and guidance. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Makes Feedback Part of Work Process as well as the Seeking and Delivering Face-to-Face Feedback IMI lesson.)

- **Facilitate bottom-up communication.** Provide regular opportunities for organizational members to share their perspective. Ask members questions and listen to their input. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Encourages Open and Candid Communications as well as the Achieving Shared Understanding IMI lesson.)

- **Act on information and feedback received.** Ensure members feel that their feedback and ideas are appreciated, useful, and help inform decision making. Inform them of the actions taken as a result of their feedback. Failure to act on their feedback may give members the impression that their input isn't important and lower morale. (For more information, refer to the Seeking and Delivering Face-to-Face Feedback IMI lesson and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

Kristen Swanson struggled to improve communication between employees in her department. After talking to a trusted colleague, she realized that while she encouraged her employees to provide feedback, she rarely received any. When she did receive feedback, she didn't explain how she used it to make improvements. Moving forward, Kristen made a concerted effort to explain how she used the feedback she received to make changes in the department. For example, one employee provided some suggestions on how to improve the structure and file naming system for the department's shared online workspace, which would improve efficiency in storing and retrieving documents. This was just the type of feedback she wanted from her employees. To recognize the employee for providing feedback, Kristen sent an email to all staff explaining how the employee's suggestion positively affected the department.

Respect/Values

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *respect/values* climate factor:

- **Set the example by modeling Army values.** Personally model Army values in all decisions and actions. Treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious belief. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Displays Army Values.)

- **Treat members of the organization with dignity and respect.** Organizational members should feel that they're valued members of the team. Treat people with courtesy, politeness, and kindness – this can be a simple greeting in the hallway or asking questions to show interest in their opinions. Never insult, use name-calling, make disparaging comments, or belittle people or their ideas. Be aware of body language, tone of voice, and demeanor as they convey information in addition to words. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Sets Personal Example for Trust and FM 6-22−Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

- **Immediately address issues of harassment and other prohibited practices.** Ensure all organizational members, including leaders, are held accountable and receive the proper consequences if harassment, discrimination, or other prohibited practices occur. (For more information, refer to FM-6-22 - Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

Strategy in Action:

While eating in the food court, CPT Wilson overheard two Soldiers make negative remarks about another Soldier's religion. After hearing these remarks, CPT Wilson decided to make an on-the-spot correction and approached the two Soldiers. She explained that what she heard was inappropriate and disrespectful. She reminded the Soldiers that, in accordance with Army Values, they're required to treat fellow Soldiers as they want to be treated. The Soldiers acknowledged that their conversation was disrespectful and apologized to CPT Wilson for their behavior. This interaction caused CPT Wilson to reflect on other ways the Army Values weren't being demonstrated consistently in her company. She then considered some ways that she and the first sergeant could model the positive attitudes and behaviors they'd like to see.

Team Cohesion

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *team cohesion* climate factor:

- **Provide a foundation for good relationships among organizational members.** Good relationships with colleagues are key drivers of morale within organizations. Leaders should encourage members to spend time getting to know one another and set up opportunities for them to socialize, such as staff parties, shared lunches, and celebrations. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Builds Trust and FM 6-22−Fosters Teamwork, Cohesion, Cooperation, and Loyalty (Esprit de Corps) as well as the Building Working Relationships Across Boundaries IMI lesson.)

- **Build trust among team members.** Encourage openness and support norms and values that create positive, mutually beneficial conditions for the team. Demonstrate these values by taking prudent risks and creating transparency in decisions and actions. For example, keep people informed of goals, activities, and results; follow through on actions; and don't overpromise and under deliver. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Builds Trust and FM 6-22−Fosters Teamwork, Cohesion, Cooperation, and Loyalty (Esprit de Corps) as well as the Building Trust IMI lesson, the Rapid Team Stand-up: How to Build Your Team ASAP IMI lesson, and the Fostering Team Unity IMI lesson.)

- **Create a culture of shared knowledge.** Encourage team members to regularly share best practices, lessons learned, and other information and guidance with one another. Provide time at staff meetings for organizational members to share project successes and discuss current challenges. Encourage information sharing and collaborative problem solving among team members. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Expands Knowledge of Technical, Technological, and Tactical Areas and the Fostering Team Unity IMI lesson.)

- **Effectively harness conflict.** When conflicts occur, look at it as an opportunity to explore opposing viewpoints. Encourage organizational members to identify and discuss potential problems and develop solutions to address the issues. If conflict exists between colleagues—and does not involve illegal, hostile, or discriminatory behavior—allow them to manage the conflict themselves but stay involved and give support. Provide one-on-one guidance for managing the conversation as needed. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Negotiates, Builds Consensus, and Resolves Conflict and the Managing Conflict IMI lesson.)

- **Celebrate team accomplishments.** Define success by team accomplishment rather than individual achievement to encourage members to work together effectively. Promote teamwork across units and discourage us-versus-them thinking and behaviors. Acknowledge and celebrate team accomplishments to build cohesion. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Fosters Teamwork, Cohesion, Cooperation, and Loyalty (Esprit de Corps) as well as the Motivating Through Rewards IMI lesson and the Fostering Team Unity IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

To improve team cohesion and knowledge sharing in Bravo Battery, CPT O'Conner started a series of weekly professional development sessions where subordinate leaders created and delivered presentations on relevant topics they were interested in. The response from unit leaders was very positive, as these sessions allowed them to share information and best practices on topics such as vehicle maintenance, subordinate development, and fitness. The success of these sessions prompted CPT O'Conner to start a similar series for the junior enlisted in Bravo Battery.

Growth/Development

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *growth/development* climate factor:

- **Support formal and informal learning opportunities.** Developing others is a deliberate and continuous process. Nominate and encourage members to take advantage of developmental opportunities. Show organizational members that learning and development are valued by supporting formal and on-the-job learning to encourage growth in their current roles, self-developing through formal and informal means, promoting a climate where mistakes are used as learning opportunities, openly discussing what went right and wrong in personal past projects, and observing subordinates' performance and providing feedback. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Creates a Learning Environment as well as The Leader's Role in Providing On-the-Job Learning and Support IMI lesson, the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson, and the Creating and Supporting Challenging Job Assignments IMI lesson.)

- **Empower subordinates through delegation.** Proper delegation allows subordinates to learn and grow. Push tasks and decisions down to the lowest practical level to help subordinates' decision-making confidence. Provide clear intent, set realistic project goals for subordinates, and allow them to take prudent risks. Provide feedback and support to enhance the learning. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Facilitates Ongoing Development and the Enabling Subordinates Using Mission-Focused Delegation IMI lesson, Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson, and Creating and Supporting Challenging Job Assignments IMI lesson.)

- **Use effective coaching, mentoring, and guided discovery learning.** Use these techniques to support subordinates' development through positive reinforcement, prompted self-reflection, and analysis. Integrate these methods into existing activities. Help individuals understand their current performance level and provide guidance on how to reach the next level. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Counsels, Coaches, and Mentors, FM 6-22 Chapter 3, Mentorship and Guided Discovery Learning, and the Every Leader as a Coach IMI lesson.)

- **Encourage organizational members to learn about career programs.** Career programs assist the Army Civilian workforce to set and reach their career goals. Take time to introduce staff to the career program supporting his or her occupational series. Explain how career programs can support development and familiarize staff with their career program managers. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Facilitates Ongoing Development, FM 6-22–Supports Professional and Personal Growth, The Leader's Role in Providing On-the-Job Learning and Support IMI lesson, and the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson.)

- **Discuss career development goals with each subordinate regularly.** Listen to organizational members' career aspirations. Candidly discuss with them their strengths, developmental needs, and courses of action to improve and develop personalized and structured development plans, which can guide their efforts to attain the work skills and knowledge they need. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Assesses Development Needs of Others, FM 6-22–Facilitates Ongoing Development, and the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

Michael, a division chief, regularly holds performance meetings with his direct reports to discuss their career development goals. He also supports formal and informal learning opportunities, especially when employees' developmental interests align with organizational needs and priorities. Recently, one of his subordinates, Susan, expressed interest in improving her skills by attending the Civilian Education System (CES) Intermediate Course. Michael agrees that this would be a good opportunity for Susan's professional development, and the knowledge and skills she'd gain from the course will benefit upcoming work priorities. He confirms Susan's eligibility for the course and that funding is available for her to attend. Susan and Michael then work together to determine the optimal time for Susan to attend the resident phase of the course, so that it coincides with a slower workload period for the division.

Innovation/Adaptability

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *innovation/adaptability* climate factor:

- **Encourage open communication and expression of diverse viewpoints.** Set up weekly meetings with organizational members that are strictly planned for open discussion and consistently reinforce that you value their input and ideas. Encourage members to share their ideas even if they question the consensus. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Encourages Open and Candid Communications and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

- **Reinforce creative ideas.** Acknowledge those who come up with new ways to get the job done while still complying with Army regulations. This will show organizational members that you value individual contributions. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Creative Thinking and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

- **Allow flexibility in how goals are met.** Empower organizational members to come up with their own ways of accomplishing tasks while providing boundaries so they can't go too far astray. By doing this, leaders may discover new and innovative processes that they would have missed if they'd dictated how to complete the work. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Encourages Subordinates to Exercise Initiative, Accept Responsibility, and Take Ownership and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

- **Question assumptions.** Innovation requires questioning assumptions. It's only when you question your assumptions that you can let go of them and move forward on a path that leads to new ideas and innovations. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Creative Thinking and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

- **Play devil's advocate.** Select someone to play devil's advocate to defend an opposing view or position. This can help organizational members escape mental ruts and look at things from new perspectives. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Creative Thinking and the Seeking and Incorporating Diverse Ideas IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

Alpha Troop has several very new platoon leaders. Their troop commander, CPT Pierre, has been helping them think through some of their challenges and mental blocks, reinforcing that they need to be adaptable and question assumptions. Recently, 2LT Stewart was planning how 1st Platoon could support an upcoming brigade exercise that had rapidly changing details. To support 2LT Stewart, CPT Pierre asked 2LT Holmes to play devil's advocate by poking holes and offering opposing opinions about the plans. This helped 2LT Stewart think critically and become confident in his plans.

Empowerment

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *empowerment* climate factor:

- **Delegate authority when appropriate.** People value opportunities to be responsible for their own work, be creative, and be respected for their abilities. Allow them to practice leadership by delegating authority to them to assign tasks to others and run meetings and other activities. Hold organizational members accountable for their work and meeting established goals and deadlines. This will help them achieve better results. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Provides Purpose and the Enabling Subordinates Using Mission-Focused Delegation IMI lesson.)

- **Encourage members to solve their own problems.** When organizational members have problems, it presents a chance for them to practice decision-making. To encourage decision-making, listen to the issue but don't instantly provide an answer. Ask probing questions to lead them to determine the right answer on their own. When they arrive at an appropriate solution, compliment them and tell them you have faith in them to figure it out and that you trust their judgment. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Encourages Subordinates to Exercise Initiative, Accept Responsibility, and Take Ownership; the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson; the Creating and Supporting Challenging Job Assignments IMI lesson; and the Enabling Subordinates Using Mission-Focused Delegation IMI lesson.)

- **Trust organizational members.** Trust organizational members to make a decision or step into a role that pushes them before they've had a chance to prove themselves. Having trust will give them confidence, which is crucial for their personal development and sense of autonomy. It also encourages them to take ownership of their work. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22 Encourages Subordinates to Exercise Initiative, Accept Responsibility, and Take Ownership; the Building Trust IMI lesson; and the Enabling Subordinates Using Mission-Focused Delegation IMI lesson.)

- **Involve organizational members in goal setting and planning activities.** Seek out ideas, knowledge, and insights from organizational members and, whenever possible, invite them to advise on important decisions. Look for opportunities to have members determine how to achieve assigned tasks. Agree on what constitutes a successful outcome and then let them chart their own course. This builds ownership in the process and may result in them discovering a better way to get the work done. When that happens, recognize them for it. If they choose a poor methodology, ask questions that will enable them to see better options and give them another chance. (For more information, refer to The Leader's Role in Providing On-the-Job Learning and Support IMI lesson and the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson.)

- **Provide constructive feedback.** Regardless of the outcome, let organizational members know how they're doing. Organizational members need feedback to further develop their knowledge and skills. Provide regular, ongoing feedback and coaching to organizational members to increase their awareness of performance. Use assessment techniques and evaluation tools, such as after-action reviews, to encourage members to identify lessons learned. Talk them through their mistakes and encourage them to think about how they can avoid making the same mistakes in the future. Don't punish members for their candor. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Makes Feedback Part of Work Processes, the Seeking and Delivering Face-to-Face Feedback IMI lesson, and the Supporting the Developing Leader IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

After learning that Alpha Company needed improvement in the *empowerment* climate factor, CPT Oates focused on empowering subordinate leaders with more responsibilities. He chose SFC Lewis, who had been performing well and had asked for increased responsibility, to lead the detachment of Soldiers that would directly support the brigade headquarters for the next three weeks. This role was challenging and would require SFC Lewis to be adaptable and creative when solving problems. CPT Oates placed his trust in SFC Lewis to make decisions autonomously in this role, while remaining available for any questions or guidance. This helped increase SFC Lewis' confidence to succeed.

Recognition

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *recognition* climate factor:

- **Acknowledge organizational members' achievements.** Acknowledge organizational members for doing exceptional work and for going above and beyond by sharing their achievements with other members during meetings and in other written communications. Give clear, specific performance feedback so staff understand why they are recognized. Even a simple pat on the back or thumbs up as appreciation of the member's hard work can go a long way. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Recognizes and Rewards Good Performance section and the Motivating Through Rewards IMI lesson.)

- **Use healthy competition.** Leaders can use healthy competition to motivate organizational members. For example, recognize a Soldier for earning the most improved fitness test score or top crew gunnery score. (For more information, refer to the Motivating Through Rewards IMI lesson.)

- **Leverage multiple resources.** Find out what organizational members value and motivates them to improve performance. Consider creative options such as face time with leaders or opportunities to attend training events to network with Soldiers from other organizations. Resources that may not be considered tangible rewards can also be powerful. For example, to reward Soldiers' efforts to make improvements, give them an interesting task to work on or involve them in decisions related to the organization's mission. (For more information, refer to the Beyond People Skills: Leveraging Your Understanding of Others IMI lesson.)

Strategy in Action:

CPT Stokes, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) commander, has focused on making recognition a major aspect of the unit's climate. Earlier this year, a private in HHC struggled to regain his physical fitness after recovering from a serious injury and had a difficult time staying motivated. A specialist in HHC decided to work with the private after hours and on weekends to keep him motivated and focused on losing weight and becoming physically fit again. After three months and steady progress, the private passed the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). CPT Stokes was proud of both Soldiers and shared the story of the private's success with LTC Sloan, the battalion commander. At an HHC formation, LTC Sloan recognized both the private and the specialist for their dedication and presented each of them with a commander's coin for a job well done.

Order/Discipline

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *order/discipline* climate factor:

- **Demonstrate self-discipline.** Leaders need to set the example. One way to do that is by controlling their own behavior and by doing the harder right over the easier wrong. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Applies Discipline.)

- **Consistently enforce standards.** Some may associate discipline only with regulations and the consequences for errors in judgment and conduct. However, discipline is the means by which leaders advance the standards that are the hallmark of good Army units and organizations. When assigning tasks, explicitly state the standard of performance and expectations. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Enforces Standards.)

- **Hold organizational members accountable.** Encourage positive behaviors and discipline negative behaviors. Enforce discipline impartially and consistently with all members of the organization. This includes attending to mundane details that may seem less urgent than an organization's key tasks but are necessary to ensure success. Examples include preventive maintenance checks and services, pre-combat checks and inspections, effective Command Supply Discipline Programs, Organizational Inspection Programs, and training management. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Sets and Maintains High Expectations for Individuals and Teams.)

- **Set clear expectations.** Create expectations that are clear and understood by all members. Communicate expectations across the organization regularly. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22−Sets and Maintains High Expectations for Individuals and Teams.)

Strategy in Action:

During a recent inspection, CPT Jones learned about inconsistencies in vehicle services performed by the maintenance platoon. Specifically, two NCOs felt pressured to complete all their services within a short timeline to meet reporting requirements. Because the maintenance platoon didn't have enough time to perform all vehicle services to standard, the NCOs advised their junior enlisted Soldiers to document the services as fully completed even though they weren't. To address this issue, CPT Jones first met with the two NCOs to gather facts and understand the situation. After learning it was an error in judgment on the part of the NCOs, CPT Jones explained his expectations for meeting standards for vehicle services in the unit. He met with the junior enlisted Soldiers involved and explained his expectations to them as well. CPT Jones then made sure that, going forward, his expectations were clear and understood by all members of the unit. He also encouraged unit members to voice concerns about high workloads, unrealistic timelines, or the need for additional resources to complete the work to standard.

Fairness

Leaders can use the following strategies and techniques to improve the *fairness* climate factor:

- **Demonstrate consistency, transparency, and openness.** Apply the same guidance, requirements, and policies to all members in the organization. Having different standards for different team members will make others perceive a leader as unfair. This becomes apparent when some team members receive benefits, rewards, and privileges that others with similar achievements are not. It can really backfire on the leader when poor performers are allowed to slide. It can also lead to resentment and hostility within the organization. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

- **Provide equal opportunities.** Create an environment in which equal opportunities are provided. In other words, team members should feel that they have a fair chance to earn a reward or privilege if they work hard enough for it. In addition to rewards, leaders should distribute task assignments, their attention (i.e., through developmental actions), and feedback equitably. In meetings, organizational members should be offered a fair chance to speak up or present ideas. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

- **Encourage and support diversity and inclusiveness.** Actively seek to integrate all members of the organization. Encourage learning about and leveraging diversity. Consult with a trusted member to discover biases that members may hold toward others based on their character, personality, religion, race, ethnicity, or culture. Discuss the biases and develop strategies to overcome them. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

- **Be fair.** By being fair, leaders avoid showing favoritism when making personnel decisions and maintain consistency when holding organizational members to Army standards. Ensure that all organizational members receive constructive feedback and are provided personal support in their professional development. It's important to note that some may require more time and effort than others. However, regardless of time and effort spent, leaders are still showing fairness because they remain equally committed to each team member's success. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Encourages Fairness and Inclusiveness.)

- **Remain objective and accurate when completing evaluations.** Base evaluations and recommendations on demonstrated performance. Be sure to provide proper feedback along the way so that evaluation results are not a surprise. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22– Supports Professional and Personal Growth.)

- **Prepare members for career advancement.** Ensure members have the training, skills, and abilities to tackle challenges when they advance into a new position. Track member performance to use as documentation when making recommendations for advancement. (For more information, refer to FM 6-22–Facilitates Ongoing Development.)

Strategy in Action:

LTC Gomez is committed to developing the lieutenants in his organization. Aside from observing their performance, he meets with them one on one every month. After starting the monthly meetings, LTC Gomez quickly learned that the lieutenants had different levels of skill proficiency. LTC Gomez tailored the types of questions he challenged them with and what he recommended they focus on. He knew that more of his time was needed to develop two of the lieutenants that struggled the most, but he didn't want to ignore the development of the other three lieutenants. Therefore, he remained focused on helping each lieutenant make incremental progress without showing favoritism toward those performing higher or lower than the others.
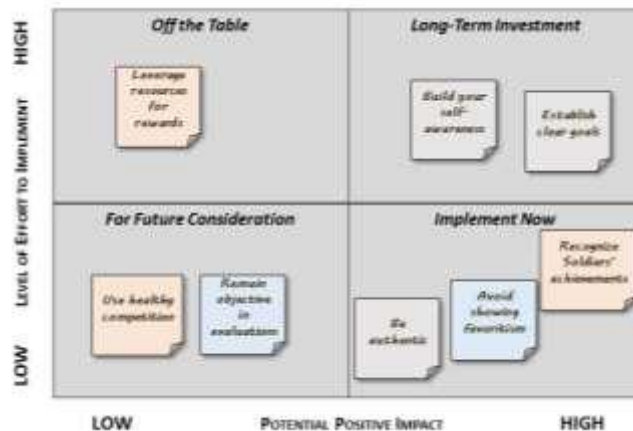
PRIORITIZE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE CLIMATE

After brainstorming a list of strategies to address priority climate factors, leaders can prioritize these strategies using an Effort vs. Impact Matrix like figure 10.

Figure 10: Sample Effort vs. Impact Matrix related to Leadership, Recognition, and Fairness Climate Factors

This matrix can help leaders prioritize which strategies to select based on the level of effort required to implement (the y-axis) and the potential positive impact they would have (the x-axis). Strategies may fall into any of the four quadrants and some might overlap quadrants. How a leader plots the strategies within this matrix depends on their organization and the context in which they're operating. A description of each quadrant of the matrix follows:

- **Off the Table (high effort to implement-low impact):** These actions require a higher level of effort to implement and won't have a large impact. Therefore, leaders should focus their time elsewhere. An example might be implementing a new online system to communicate with dispersed staff and allow them to engage with the leader in an online forum. Note actions that address, respond to, and/or create a climate in which people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect should NEVER be tabled.

- **Long-Term Investment (high effort to implement-high impact):** These actions require a lot of effort but are worth it because they have a high impact. Consider how to invest in implementing these actions over time. These types of investments may change your climate over time and are extremely valuable.

- **For Future Consideration (low effort to implement-low impact):** These actions aren't hard to implement, but they also don't have a high impact. Leaders should consider them as potential actions to implement in the future.

- **Implement Now (low effort to implement-high impact):** These actions are those that are relatively easy to implement and will have a high positive impact (i.e., a lot of "bang" for your "buck"). These actions are helpful to show quick forward progress and positive improvements.

DEVELOP A PLAN

Once leaders have determined the strategies that can positively affect their climate, they're ready to create a plan for implementing change.

First, a word of caution: **avoid change for change sake**. Constant change, especially when seemingly at whim, can cloud the leader's vision, create chaos, and be detrimental to team dynamics. When this happens, subordinates can lose interest and become apathetic, waiting for the day when the "new guy" comes in and takes over. Instead, leaders should only institute change when the climate requires it. Before making a change, leaders should ask themselves:

- Why is change necessary?

- What are you trying to fix?

- Does your team have the capability or capacity to change?

After answering these questions, leaders can start thinking strategically about what goals they want to accomplish with their change.

Choose Goals Strategically

When developing a plan, leaders should start by creating goals so they can focus the change. When choosing goals, leaders should visualize what their ideal outcome looks like, similar to figure 11. For example, leaders should ask themselves, "What does success look like for this goal in my unit?" The reason why leaders visualize their goals is that if they can see it, they're more likely to achieve it.

Figure 11: Examples of Leaders Thinking about Goals Strategically

Leaders should also make sure their goals for change fall within their sphere of influence. For example, a goal of implementing more efficient workflow processes is usually within a leader's control. However, changing the process for Army personnel recruitment, hiring, or assignment is often not within a leader's control. When planning for change, leaders should consider what they can influence and what is beyond their control. Figure 12 provides an overview of these items.

Figure 12: What Leaders Can and Cannot Control
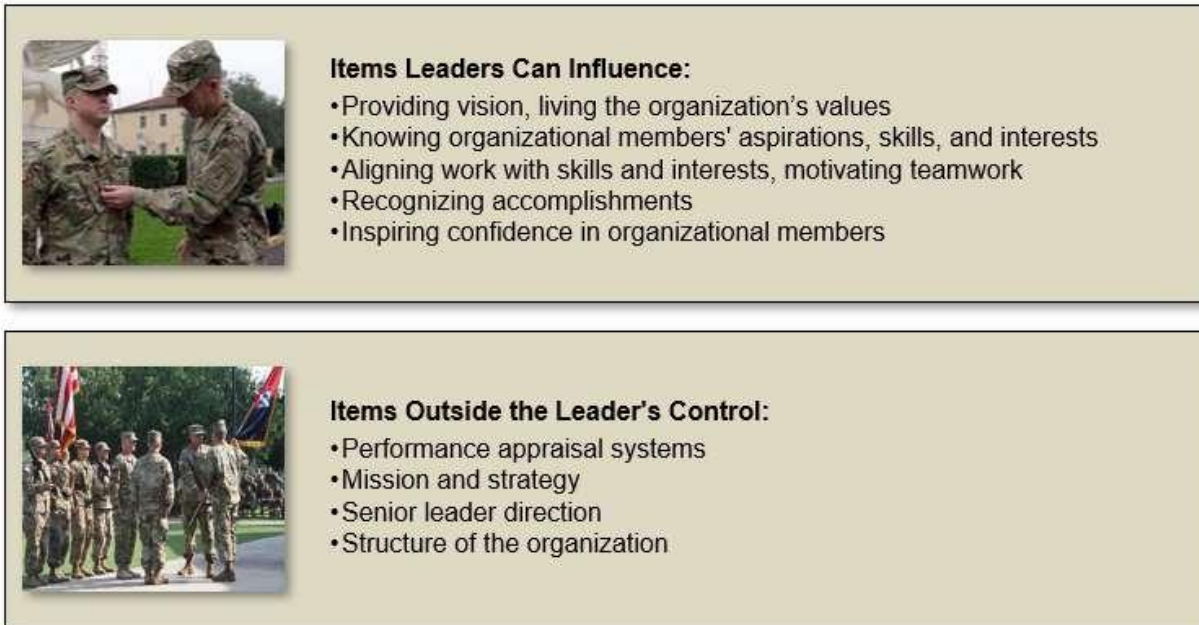
Create the Action Plan

Once leaders have chosen their goals, they can develop a detailed action plan for implementing the change. The plan should both build on strengths and improve areas of need. It is recommended that leaders document the action(s) they'll take along with associated steps, responsible parties, timeline, and success metrics. Figure 13 shows a sample plan for improving the Order/Discipline climate factor.

Figure 13: Sample Plan for Improving the Order/Discipline Climate Factor

Actions

Actions refer to the strategies prioritized in the Effort vs. Impact Matrix. For instance, an action might be to conduct regular informal discussions with Soldiers to solicit their ideas for addressing problems and improving processes.

Steps

The steps describe how to implement each action. For example, to implement an action that involves informal discussions/interactions with Soldiers, the steps might be:

1. Review the unit calendar to identify opportunities where informal discussions could naturally occur (unit training area, during PT, etc.).
2. Reserve time in your calendar for the identified informal opportunities.
3. Conduct informal discussions.
4. Record themes from discussions and identify how to address any problem areas.

Responsible Parties

Responsible parties are the people responsible for implementing each step. For example, the leader might be the responsible party or the leader may want to involve others along the way to carry out specific steps.

Timeline

The timeline indicates when the responsible party should complete each step in the plan. If the leader anticipates roadblocks or challenges, he or she can adjust the timeline to account for these in advance.

Success Metrics

Having success metrics will help leaders know how successful they've been in carrying out their actions. For example, the target might be conducting at least eight informal discussions with Soldiers and identifying up to three improvements based on those discussions.

What to Consider Before Implementing Change

Change of any kind can make members uneasy. This feeling of uneasiness can come from—

- Not understanding the reason for the change.

- Concerns about departing from the status quo.

- A lack of trust in the leader's ability to implement change.

- Concerns that change can generate additional problems.

- Feeling overwhelmed.

As a result, leaders may be met with resistance from their members when trying to implement change. Often this resistance is simply disguised anxiety about how changes might negatively affect them or bad experiences they've had in the past. When members don't know all the answers, they can feel like they've lost control. By reducing members' anxiety about change, leaders are more likely to be successful in achieving their change goals.

Reducing Concerns about the Unknown or Its Impact

Organizational members often become anxious about change due to concern about the unknown or because they aren't sure how the change will affect them. Here are some tips leaders can use to address this concern:

- Help organizational members understand what the change will be and the reasons behind the change.

- Tie the change to common goals to make the reason for change more compelling.

- Embed the desired outcome into stories that show how the actions are possible and how all sides can benefit.

- Mitigate the negative impact of change on organizational members through transparency, open and honest communication, and by setting realistic timelines.

Reducing Concerns Based on Past Experiences

Some organizational members may feel anxious about change because of experiences they've had in the past. For example, if a leader is transitioning into an organization that previously had an ineffective leader, members may not be resisting change, but rather reacting out of concern for what they expect may happen again.

Tips leaders can use to help reduce organizational members' anxiety include:

- **Be curious about their experiences.** Leaders should ask about the challenges members have faced and their concerns. By listening to their members, leaders show that they're interested in members' well-being and role in the unit. It also helps get buy-in from members and makes them feel like they have a voice in the organization. Before talking to members, it might helpful to refer to previous assessments where some of this information may already be documented.

- **Explain rationale behind actions.** Members' anxieties can easily lead them to misinterpret the leader's comments and behaviors. To reduce this possibility, consistently explain the reason why things are being done a certain way and don't make them guess.

CASE STUDY: PREPARING TO BUILD A POSITIVE CLIMATE

Review the following case study and answer the reflection questions. The answer key can be found in Appendix A.

Morale in Echo Company has declined over the past two months. The company commander, CPT Murphy, has his suspicions about why this has occurred, but he decides to investigate further by collecting anonymous feedback through a command climate survey. Upon receiving the results of the survey, CPT Murphy organizes the feedback into three categories: Strengths, Average, and Needs Improvement. His analysis was based not only on the survey responses but also on the trends he has seen through his own observations. CPT Murphy determines that two areas for improvement for Echo Company are the *team cohesion* and *communication* climate factors.

After thinking about these climate factors further, CPT Murphy identifies a connection with recent problems in Echo Company's squads and platoons. There have been discipline problems, two new NCOs haven't integrated well into the unit, and newly assigned Soldiers seem to lack basic proficiency in their assigned duties. During a training exercise just the other day, the company didn't perform well. There were heated disagreements between leaders and there was a general lack of cooperation between squads and platoons. While CPT Murphy hoped these issues would resolve themselves, it appears things are getting worse.

To be transparent, CPT Murphy shares the survey results with the entire company during a companywide standup meeting. During the meeting, he explains that he expects members to work together and that he is committed to improving cohesion and communication. Following the meeting, CPT Murphy is surprised to hear from one of his subordinate leaders that the conflict between platoons has increased. This subordinate leader also tells him that the information he shared during the company meeting has led junior leaders and Soldiers to assign blame and point fingers at one another.

After doing some brainstorming, CPT Murphy decides he wants to implement some different strategies to improve the *communication* and *team cohesion* in Echo Company. He uses an Effort vs. Impact Matrix to prioritize them. CPT Murphy places the strategies he chose into the following categories:

Implement Now:

- Build trust among Soldiers by being more transparent and encouraging more open communication
- Harness conflict by encouraging Soldiers to discuss problems and brainstorm solutions

Long-Term Investment:

- Provide better top-down communication by being clearer about expectations
- Act on information received

For Future Consideration:

- Create a culture of shared knowledge by encouraging Soldiers to share best practices at company meetings

After prioritizing strategies, CPT Murphy develops a plan.

Reflection Questions:

How did CPT Murphy collect feedback on what was causing the issue? How else could CPT Murphy have collected feedback anonymously?
What could CPT Murphy have done differently when sharing feedback with his company?
Are there any other strategies CPT Murphy could have chosen to improve team cohesion?
Why would CPT Murphy consider harnessing conflict a strategy that should be implemented now?

RESOURCES

Leaders can review the resources below to learn more about how to develop a plan to build and maintain a positive climate in their organization.

Articles:

- Journal of Business Ethics. Leaders, Values, and Organizational Climate: Examining Leadership Strategies for Establishing an Organizational Climate Regarding Ethics. Michael Grojean, Christian Resick, Marcus Dickson, and Brent Smith (2004).

Websites and Army Resources:

- ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (2019).

- FM 6-22, *Leader Development* (2015).

- TC 6-22.6, *Employee Engagement* (2017).

Chapter 6: Implementing the Plan for Change

After developing a plan, leaders can begin implementing the change. Implementing change doesn't have to be a long, formal process and even small changes can have a positive impact on the organization's climate. Leaders can start by making small, incremental changes, then see what impact changes have on the climate and adjust as needed.

PROCESS FOR LEADING CHANGE

One proven model that leaders can use to implement change is the Kotter Model, illustrated in figure 14. The Kotter Model focuses less on the change itself and more on the people behind the change.

Figure 14: The Kotter Model

In the first phase, leaders focus on unfreezing the organization's existing climate by creating awareness about the change. As part of creating this awareness, leaders should create urgency or motivation to change, form a coalition of change supporters, create a vision for change, and communicate the vision. Once the existing climate is unfrozen, leaders can begin making the change happen. During this second phase, leaders remove obstacles, create short-term wins, and build on change. In the last phase, leaders refreeze or institutionalize the change by taking actions to reinforce the change and make it stick.

When implementing change, each step can be taken in part or in whole, depending on the leader's needs. A more detailed description of each step in the Kotter Model follows.

Step 1: Create Urgency or Motivation to Change

The changes leaders implement will be more successful if members are motivated to actively participate in the change process. While they can't force members to accept change, leaders can influence them by helping them see the need for change and the importance of acting on it quickly. Leaders should determine the best influence technique to foster commitment based on the situation and the individuals involved. Some ways that leaders can create an urgency or motivation to change are:

- **Use effective communication.** Communication helps organizational members understand the change, including the reason, benefits, impact to them, and their role. Leaders can engage organizational members to make change successful by presenting it as an opportunity to have an important role in shaping the future of the organization and making it an even better place to work. Such communications help empower organizational members to commit and engage in the desired change.

- **Involve organizational members.** Organizational members are more likely to support changes when they're involved in the solution. Because members may have valuable insights, leaders should involve them in discussions about the changes they plan to implement as appropriate.

- **Help organizational members see the need for change.** Leaders should explain the need for change and the importance of acting immediately. By generating conversation about the change and what direction the organization could go, leaders can engage members in change initiatives.

- **Provide purpose.** Establishing and imparting a clear intent and purpose can serve as a catalyst for promoting change and providing a distinct path forward. Often, with a firm sense of purpose, the result is easier to reach. Developing clear intent and purpose can provide substantial benefits by clarifying required actions and resources as well as aligning the efforts of the team.

Step 2: Form a Coalition for Change

It's very difficult to lead the change process alone. Therefore, leaders should build a coalition for change. This network of members supports the change and can help communicate the leader's intent, serve as action agents, and help champion support for the change across the organization.

Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

Leaders can create a vision for change by explaining how the future will be different from the past. They should also explain how the changes they're implementing link directly to the vision. It's especially important that leaders include 'what's in it for me' in any messaging so that members understand how the change will help them.

Step 4: Communicate the Vision

Creating a vision for change isn't enough to generate members' support for it. It must be communicated throughout the organization. In fact, leaders should communicate their messaging continuously to counteract any competing messages that may be spread by individuals who disagree with the change. Leaders can also leverage the network of support they've built up to help reinforce their messaging.

While leaders can't force members to change, they can influence them. Some methods leaders can use to gain members' buy-in and commitment to change include:

- **Consider members' perspectives.** Each person looks at change from their own perspective. The better leaders understand their perspective, the easier it will be to influence them to change.

- **Use storytelling.** Stories can bring together information, setting, actions, emotions, and other factors that involve many parts of the brain. That's why stories are so memorable and persuasive. Storytelling can be used to tell members about the change in the form of a story rather than a list of bullet points. The story should include the current situation, why the change needs to be made, the desired outcome, and the process to get there. This will give members a holistic understanding of the change being made and ideally gain their support in the process.

- **Ask leading questions.** A leading question is posed with the intent of soliciting a specific conclusion or action. For example, when a salesperson asks, "Do you have any more questions about the product before we begin the paperwork?", what they're really saying is, "Let's go ahead and sign the contract." Leaders can use leading questions similarly to point members toward the change they'd like to make. In effect, their answers will convince themselves to go along, or even help, with the change initiative. For example, a CPT that's trying to improve team cohesion by harnessing conflict could ask a Soldier "Can you meet with the Soldier you had the argument with and come up with a solution to end the conflict between you?"

Step 5: Remove Obstacles

The first four steps are essential in building the strength of the change initiative, but leaders should also look out for what is likely to reduce its chances for success. Whether it is individuals, traditions, or physical obstacles, it's likely that there will be some barriers blocking the leader's attempts to implement change. Leaders should try to identify these potential obstacles as early as possible and use available resources to remove them.

Step 6: Create Short-Term Wins

It can take time before you start to see the results of change. This can cause some members' support to decline if they think their efforts are being wasted. Generating short-term wins can help keep members engaged and maintain momentum.

To create short-term wins, it's recommended that leaders set interim milestones or targets that can be achieved at regular intervals and celebrate the organization's achievements as they meet them. These small achievements help members see that change is possible and visualize the impact that change will have in the future.

If an organization tends to be risk averse, these incremental changes can often be more palatable. There is also less risk and upheaval involved so members feel more comfortable with change.

Step 7: Build on the Change

Change can fail as members become complacent. Therefore, it's important for leaders to continue the momentum of the initial successes and keep pushing forward. This means that leaders should keep reinforcing and maintaining the practices, policies, systems, and environment needed to make the change vision become permanent. If the momentum isn't maintained, there may be setbacks, stalemates, and other resistors that would minimize the effectiveness of the change initiatives.

Step 8: Make it Stick

In order for the change to stick, it must become anchored in the organization's behavior. This requires leaders to continually articulate the connections between change and the organization's success. To make changes stick, leaders should—

- Achieve tangible results in a timely manner.
- Tie results to new behaviors.
- Reinforce the new climate through training and coaching.
- Acknowledge members who act in accordance with the new norms.
- Not give up until the desired behavior and results are achieved.

CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE

Review the following case study and answer the reflection questions. Answers can be found in Appendix A.

After taking command of Foxtrot Company, CPT Hart realized that many NCOs were too strict with enforcing standards, had a "no defects" mentality for Soldier performance, and were quick to reprimand Soldiers for mistakes. While the company was performing at a positive level, subordinate leaders and Soldiers were on edge, were reluctant to talk with senior leaders in the company, and morale seemed questionable. Others indicators showed something was wrong. The same group of Soldiers was frequently berated for making mistakes. Additionally, several Soldiers requested transfers to other units, and nobody was begging to get in to Foxtrot Company. Soldiers in other companies in the battalion often referred to the "hard knocks" conditions of Foxtrot Company.

To improve the climate in Foxtrot Company, CPT Hart decided change was needed. He wanted officers and NCOs to engage more positively with their subordinates and focus on providing coaching and constructive feedback. CPT Hart wanted to foster a climate of development that allowed learning from honest mistakes. To achieve these goals, CPT Hart asked subordinate leaders to find opportunities to be present when their Soldiers were training or performing assigned duties to observe them, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate learning from mistakes. To implement change, CPT Hart met with subordinate leaders to discuss why he felt the change was needed and explain his expectations to implement this change. Involving his subordinate leaders motivated them to communicate the change benefits throughout the company. CPT Hart took time during a unit meeting to convey to Soldiers what they should expect: greater presence by their leaders when working, more frequent feedback on how they're doing in their jobs, more opportunities to ask questions and learn from experienced leaders in the company, and greater latitude to learn from honest mistakes.

To ensure the change was effective, CPT Hart met with subordinate leaders to discuss concerns and received candid feedback. Several were skeptical that anything could change since the company had operated this way for quite some time. CPT Hart learned the previous command team had a no-nonsense attitude about training and Soldier performance and expected exceptional performance at all levels. As a result, Soldiers were frequently called out in front of peers when they made a mistake and NCOs were sometimes admonished in public. To relieve these concerns, CPT Hart reiterated his commitment to this change to better develop Soldiers and inspire them to succeed. He advocated that improvements to coaching, feedback, and learning from honest mistakes would have positive long-term impacts on the company, and he further explained his expectations.

CPT Hart knew that lasting change wouldn't happen overnight. He waited a few weeks and approached Soldiers to ask about recent interactions they had with their NCOs and the feedback they received. CPT Hart continued to assess the climate by talking to Soldiers, getting feedback from his subordinate leaders, and looking for other indicators of positive change in unit interactions. He shared his assessment results with the company at appropriate opportunities, recognized individuals for their successes, and encouraged everyone to stay the course. To build on the momentum, CPT Hart added his priorities for coaching, constructive feedback, and learning opportunities into company policies.

Reflection Questions:

How did CPT Hart motivate his subordinate leaders to change
How did CPT Hart avoid barriers to implementing the change?
How did CPT Hart embed change in Foxtrot Company? Was there anything else he could have done to embed the change?

RESOURCES

Leaders can review the resources below to learn more about how to implement change to improve climate in their organization.

Articles:

- [Science Says This Is the Best Way to Motivate Other People to Change Their Behavior.](#) Amy Morin (2018).

Books:

- *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide.* Edgar Schein (1999).

- *Leading Change.* John Kotter (1996).

- *The Survey Results Action Guide* [U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board.](#).

Websites and Army Resources:

- Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence Common Curriculum Development Division. Mid-Grade Learning Continuum (MILC) for Captains Career Courses Common Core. Lesson L170 Lead in Organizations (2016).

- Army Leader Development Quick Reference Guide. Using Influence to Foster Leader Development.

Appendix A: Case Study Answer Keys

CASE STUDY ANSWER KEY: CLIMATE AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS

One battalion has two companies with very different climates. CPT Jones commands Alpha Company, and the Soldiers benefit greatly from her leadership. Since assuming command, her focus has been on team building across the company and empowering Soldiers to think outside the box when performing their duties. CPT Jones is deliberate in communicating her vision to the company and listens actively when Soldiers share information with her. As a result, Alpha Company has strong team cohesion, and Soldiers share similar goals and values. Members of Alpha Company work well together to solve challenges and are able to adapt and change course when conditions change. Due to CPT Jones' efforts, Alpha Company has a positive climate. This positive climate influences everything Alpha Company does and increases the likelihood that they'll achieve mission success.

CPT Jensen commands Bravo Company. While he tries to motivate and engage his Soldiers, Bravo Company lacks cohesion and doesn't seem to have strong bonds of trust. CPT Jensen has noticed that Bravo Company Soldiers don't communicate well with one another and sometimes are disrespectful to those of a higher rank or level of authority. Morale in the company tends to be moderate at best, and the number of discipline problems has increased. Furthermore, when Bravo Company faces unexpected changes to a task or mission, the company's platoons and squads aren't able to adapt quickly. The company doesn't operate as a cohesive team, and conflicts between individuals or squads often go unresolved for long periods. Many Soldiers aren't proficient in their jobs, which has caused their teams to struggle.

During a recent training rotation, Bravo Company didn't perform well. There was poor communication between the company command team and platoons and, to make matters worse, the most proficient Solders were pulled away for an additional tasking. As a result, there was a lack of coordination of platoons' activities, which led to missed opportunities tor platoons to support on another. At the end of the training rotation, the company received a poor evaluation.

Reflection Questions:

What did CPT Jones do to create a positive climate in Alpha Company?
To create a positive climate in Alpha Company, CPT Jones focused on team building and empowering Soldiers as a means to influence and engage them. She also communicated her vision and actively listened to Soldiers when they shared information.

How did a positive climate affect Alpha Company?
Having a positive climate helped Soldiers in Alpha Company work together as a team and adapt when conditions changed.

How did a negative climate affect Bravo Company?
As a result of the negative climate in Bravo Company, the team struggled, platoon activities weren't well coordinated, and the company was evaluated poorly at a recent training rotation.

CASE STUDY ANSWER KEY: A LEADER'S IMPACT ON CLIMATE

CPT Hernandez, a company commander, noticed that his unit's Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) scores were lower than he'd like. Many Soldiers and their leaders seemed satisfied with ACFT scores that were meeting or barely above the minimum standard. To motivate his unit and improve ACFT scores, CPT Hernandez set up a competition that used a scoreboard with various fitness metrics. CPT Hernandez regularly updated the scoreboard so Soldiers could see how they and their squad ranked compared with other unit members.

After a few months, CPT Hernandez noticed that his Soldiers weren't interacting with one another in the same way and both unit morale and enthusiasm to do PT seemed to be declining. Upon reflection, CPT Hernandez realized that the competitive environment he had fostered may have had the opposite effect from what he had intended.

To improve the unit's climate, CPT Hernandez got rid of the unit scoreboard and began to focus Soldiers' attention on a new motto he wanted them to embrace, "If one fails, we all fail." CPT Hernandez's new strategy was to get Soldiers to view success in terms of incremental improvements made across the unit rather than in terms of who was the absolute best. This strategy began working, and he saw an increase in helping behaviors and positive interactions between unit members. After a few months, CPT Hernandez noticed that his unit's focus on teamwork had increased camaraderie and morale, and by the next ACFT, the unit's scores improved.

Reflection questions:

Why do leaders and commanders have more responsibility for climate than organizational members?
Leaders and commanders have more of a responsibility for climate because they're the ones who set the tone for the rest of the organization—through the actions they encourage, reward, and demonstrate. They, therefore, have the power to influence their organization's climate for the better or worse. Army doctrine and policy also require this of leaders (ADP 6-22; AR 600-100) and commanders (AR 600-20).

How did CPT Hernandez's strategy have a negative impact on his unit's climate at first?
CPT Hernandez's initial strategy of fostering competition between individual Soldiers and squads unintentionally had a negative impact on the unit's climate by affecting how Soldiers interacted with one another, reducing morale, and decreasing enthusiasm to do PT.

How did CPT Hernandez improve his unit's climate?
To improve the unit's climate, CPT Hernandez changed his focus to how the unit performed overall as a team. He removed the unit scoreboard and created a new motto: "If one fails, we all fail." As a result, teamwork improved, and morale increased.

CASE STUDY ANSWER KEY: PREPARING TO BUILD A POSITIVE CLIMATE

Morale in Echo Company has declined over the past two months. The company commander, CPT Murphy, has his suspicions about why this has occurred, but he decides to investigate further by collecting anonymous feedback through a command climate survey. Upon receiving the results of the survey, CPT Murphy organizes the feedback into three categories: Strengths, Average, and Needs Improvement. His analysis was based not only on the survey responses but also on the trends he has seen through his own observations. CPT Murphy determines that two areas for improvement for Echo Company are the *team cohesion* and *communication* climate factors.

After thinking about these climate factors further, CPT Murphy identifies a connection with recent problems in Echo Company's squads and platoons. There have been discipline problems, two new NCOs haven't integrated well into the unit, and newly assigned Soldiers seem to lack basic proficiency in their assigned duties. During a training exercise just the other day, the company didn't perform well. There were heated disagreements between leaders and there was a general lack of cooperation between squads and platoons. While CPT Murphy hoped these issues would resolve themselves, it appears things are getting worse.

To be transparent, CPT Murphy shares the survey results with the entire company during a companywide standup meeting. During the meeting, he explains that he expects members to work together and that he is committed to improving cohesion and communication. Following the meeting, CPT Murphy is surprised to hear from one of his subordinate leaders that the conflict between platoons has increased. This subordinate leader also tells him that the information he shared during the company meeting has led junior leaders and Soldiers to assign blame and point fingers at one another.

After doing some brainstorming, CPT Murphy decides he wants to implement some different strategies to improve the *communication* and *team cohesion* in Echo Company. He uses an Effort vs. Impact Matrix to prioritize them. CPT Murphy places the strategies he chose into the following categories:

Implement Now:

- Build trust among Soldiers by being more transparent and encouraging more open communication
- Harness conflict by encouraging Soldiers to discuss problems and brainstorm solutions

Long-Term Investment:

- Provide better top-down communication by being clearer about expectations
- Act on information received

For Future Consideration:

- Create a culture of shared knowledge by encouraging Soldiers to share best practices at company meetings

After prioritizing strategies, CPT Murphy develops a plan.

Reflection Questions:

How did CPT Murphy collect feedback on what was causing the issue? How else could CPT Murphy have collected feedback anonymously?
CPT Murphy collected feedback by conducting a command climate survey. Other ways that CPT Murphy could have collected feedback anonymously are by using a comment box or conducting battlefield circulation to observe what is happening in the company. Using several different methods to gather insights can produce better feedback.

What could CPT Murphy have done differently when sharing feedback with his company?
Instead of sharing the details of his findings with the entire company, CPT Murphy could have shared feedback with just his subordinate leaders, especially since the feedback could lead to

additional conflict.

Are there any other strategies CPT Murphy could have chosen to improve team cohesion?
Another strategy CPT Murphy could have selected to improve team cohesion is provide a foundation for good relationships among Soldiers. For example, CPT Murphy could schedule regular company gatherings where Soldiers can socialize outside of work.

Why would CPT Murphy consider harnessing conflict a strategy that should be implemented now?
Harnessing conflict is an "implement now" strategy because it has a high impact and low effort. It's a high impact strategy because helping Soldiers manage conflicts could help reduce the rift between new recruits and more experienced Soldiers. It's low effort because it's something that CPT Murphy can start working on now with Soldiers.

CASE STUDY ANSWER KEY: IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE

After taking command of Foxtrot Company, CPT Hart realized that many NCOs were too strict with enforcing standards, had a "no defects" mentality for Soldier performance, and were quick to reprimand Soldiers for mistakes. While the company was performing at a positive level, subordinate leaders and Soldiers were on edge, were reluctant to talk with senior leaders in the company, and morale seemed questionable. Others indicators showed something was wrong. The same group of Soldiers was frequently berated for making mistakes. Additionally, several Soldiers requested transfers to other units, and nobody was begging to get in to Foxtrot Company. Soldiers in other companies in the battalion often referred to the "hard knocks" conditions of Foxtrot Company.

To improve the climate in Foxtrot Company, CPT Hart decided change was needed. He wanted officers and NCOs to engage more positively with their subordinates and focus on providing coaching and constructive feedback. CPT Hart wanted to foster a climate of development that allowed learning from honest mistakes. To achieve these goals, CPT Hart asked subordinate leaders to find opportunities to be present when their Soldiers were training or performing assigned duties to observe them, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate learning from mistakes. To implement change, CPT Hart met with subordinate leaders to discuss why he felt the change was needed and explain his expectations to implement this change. Involving his subordinate leaders motivated them to communicate the change benefits throughout the company. CPT Hart took time during a unit meeting to convey to Soldiers what they should expect: greater presence by their leaders when working, more frequent feedback on how they're doing in their jobs, more opportunities to ask questions and learn from experienced leaders in the company, and greater latitude to learn from honest mistakes.

To ensure the change was effective, CPT Hart met with subordinate leaders to discuss concerns and received candid feedback. Several were skeptical that anything could change since the company had operated this way for quite some time. CPT Hart learned the previous command team had a no-nonsense attitude about training and Soldier performance and expected exceptional performance at all levels. As a result, Soldiers were frequently called out in front of peers when they made a mistake and NCOs were sometimes admonished in public. To relieve these concerns, CPT Hart reiterated his commitment to this change to better develop Soldiers and inspire them to succeed. He advocated that improvements to coaching, feedback, and learning from honest mistakes would have positive long-term impacts on the company, and he further explained his expectations.

CPT Hart knew that lasting change wouldn't happen overnight. He waited a few weeks and approached Soldiers to ask about recent interactions they had with their NCOs and the feedback they received. CPT Hart continued to assess the climate by talking to Soldiers, getting feedback from his subordinate leaders, and looking for other indicators of positive change in unit interactions. He shared his assessment results with the company at appropriate opportunities, recognized individuals for their successes, and encouraged everyone to stay the course. To build on the momentum, CPT Hart added his priorities for coaching, constructive feedback, and learning opportunities into company policies.

Reflection Questions:

How did CPT Hart motivate his subordinate leaders to change?
CPT Hart met with his subordinate leaders to explain the importance of the change and help them understand their role in the change.

How did CPT Hart avoid barriers to implementing the change?
CPT Hart met with his subordinate leaders to discuss issues they anticipated. After learning about their concern, CPT Hart explained how he was committed to the change and what his expectations were.

How did CPT Hart embed change in Foxtrot Company? Was there anything else he could have done to embed the change?
CPT Hart incorporated the change in company policies and recognized individuals for their successes. He could embed change by reinforcing the change in training and coaching.

Appendix B: Table of Climate Factors

Factor	Description	Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators	Potential Strategies
Leadership	Leaders maintain manageable workloads for subordinates during periods of high operational tempo (OPTEMPO), provide members with necessary resources within their control, and are available to members. Leaders also set the example for their subordinates, doing the right thing the right way, and addressing and eliminating the use of counterproductive leadership behaviors.	• Members take prudent risks and exercise disciplined initiative. • Members are engaged in tasks. • Members volunteer for challenging assignments. • Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. • Leaders are available to meet with members. • Leaders serve as a role model for members. • Members have the resources to complete tasks.	• Counterproductive leadership behaviors are observed. • Accidents occur at a high rate. • Members lack enthusiasm when completing tasks. • Members struggle to manage their workloads. • Members perceive that leaders aren't being authentic.	• Be authentic and lead by example. • Serve as a change agent. • Build your self-awareness. • Establish clear goals and objectives. • Consider the impact of previous commanders.
Communication	Information flows both up and down the chain of command and there is a clear messaging of objectives and expectations, commander's intent, and purpose. Honest and candid communication is also encouraged.	• Members raise issues with their leaders. • Leaders seek advice and help from members. • Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. • Leaders inform members about issues affecting their organization.	• Conflict between members is common. • Members often don't meet expectations. • Members perceive that leaders don't act on information they receive. • Leaders rarely provide feedback.	• Encourage open and candid communication. • Increase the quality and frequency of feedback. • Facilitate bottom-up communication. • Act on information and feedback received.
Respect/Values	All members are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender. Hazing, bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment/assault, and disrespectful behavior of any kind aren't tolerated.	• Diversity and inclusiveness are supported and celebrated. • Prohibited practices are prevented and stopped. • Leaders treat members respectfully. • Members perceive that leaders model Army values.	• Hazing, bullying, and discrimination are observed. • Diversity and cultural differences are misunderstood or feared. • Members experience sexual harassment and/or sexual assault.	• Set the example by modeling Army values. • Treat members of the organization with dignity and respect. • Immediately address issues of harassment and other prohibited practices.

Factor	Description	Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators	Potential Strategies
Team Cohesion	Organizational members work well together, collaborate, and look out for one another. Organizational members also tend to be more reliable, feel included, are proud to be in the unit, and contribute.	• Members exhibit a willingness to work together toward shared goals. • Members overcome challenges together and adapt to changing conditions. • Members regularly share best practices, lessons learned, and guidance with one another. • Individual members and the overall organization perform at high levels. • Members socialize and have good relationships.	• Conflict between members is common. • Members feel excluded and that they don't belong. • Members don't help when other members struggle. • Members lack trust in one another.	• Provide a foundation for good relationships among organizational members. • Build trust among team members. • Create a culture of shared knowledge. • Effectively harness conflict. • Celebrate team accomplishments.
Growth/ Development	Organizational members have the resources to improve their skills and abilities and can grow personally and professionally. Members are allowed to make honest mistakes and receive coaching and mentoring to learn from their mistakes.	• Members regularly participate in formal and informal development activities. • Members have individual development plans (IDPs) and their IDP goals align to mission achievement. • Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities. • Leaders delegate tasks appropriately. • Leaders give members challenging or stretch assignments as opportunities to grow. • Members take disciplined initiative.	• Members don't receive adequate opportunities to learn desired skills. • Members don't seek out career development opportunities. • Members don't have clear career paths, developmental goals, or awareness of the competencies they need to develop. • Organization and member performance don't meet expectations. • Members avoid taking risks. • Leaders don't discuss career development goals with subordinates. • Leaders don't offer coaching and mentoring opportunities.	• Support formal and informal learning opportunities. • Empower subordinates through delegation. • Use effective coaching, mentoring, and guided discovery learning. • Encourage organizational members to learn about career programs to support their development. • Discuss career development goals with each subordinate regularly.

Factor	Description	Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators	Potential Strategies
Innovation/ Adaptability	Leaders foster innovation and adaptability by valuing and encouraging creative and diverse ideas. Organizational members are encouraged to solve problems, remain flexible, and embrace new challenges.	• Members share new ideas. • Members use creative problem solving. • Members take prudent risks and disciplined initiative. • Members view challenges as opportunities. • Leaders encourage open communication. • Leaders recognize members for sharing creative ideas. • Members question traditional assumptions.	• Members struggle to adapt to changing environments. • Members don't take risks. • Members focus solely on getting work done and don't allocate time to develop ideas for improvement.	• Encourage open communication and expression of diverse viewpoints. • Reinforce creative ideas. • Allow flexibility in how goals are met. • Question assumptions. • Play devil's advocate.
Empowerment	Organizational members are trusted and supported to do their jobs. Tasks are delegated appropriately, and members are encouraged to exercise disciplined initiative within the commander's intent.	• Members know what is expected of them and have the authority to carry out their work. • Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities. • Members are allowed take prudent risks and exercise disciplined initiative to accomplish tasks. • Leaders delegate tasks appropriately. • Members are allowed to solve their own problems. • Leaders provide members constructive feedback.	• Leaders micromanage their members. • Assignments are unclear and ambiguous. • Decisions are second-guessed and sometimes reversed. • Members lack trust in one another and leadership.	• Delegate authority when appropriate. • Encourage members to solve their own problems. • Trust organizational members. • Involve organizational members in goal setting and planning activities. • Provide constructive feedback.
Recognition	Members are valued for their skills and recognized for accomplishing tasks, doing the right thing, and doing work that exceeds expectations.	• Members are motivated to improve their performance. • Members understand how their performance affects the overall success of the organization. • Members feel that they are a valued part of the team. • Leaders recognize their members' achievements. • Healthy competition is observable.	• Members struggle to understand performance expectations. • Members fail to take initiative. • Members lack job satisfaction.	• Acknowledge organizational members' achievements. • Use healthy competition. • Leverage multiple resources.

Factor	Description	Strength Indicators	Areas of Improvement Indicators	Potential Strategies
Order/ Discipline	All members are held accountable to the same Army standards. Discipline is enforced consistently and fairly, and order is maintained.	• Members understand the expectations they are held to. • Standards are enforced consistently. • Organizational events have high attendance. • Members pay attention to details. • Workspaces are clean and organized.	• Disciplinary issues are common. • Leaders don't maintain order. • Members are often late or absent from scheduled events.	• Demonstrate self-discipline. • Consistently enforce standards. • Hold organizational members accountable. • Set clear expectations.
Fairness	Organizational members' work assignments, opportunities, and advancement are based on their performance and abilities, not unrelated factors.	• Guidelines, requirements, and policies are applied equally to all team members. • Members have equal opportunities to expand their skillsets. • Assignments are based on members' skills and abilities. • Evaluations are objective and accurate.	• Leaders receive a high number of complaints. • A perception of favoritism exists. • Members lack job satisfaction.	• Demonstrate consistency, transparency, and openness. • Provide equal opportunities. • Encourage and support diversity and inclusiveness. • Be fair. • Remain objective and accurate when completing evaluations. • Prepare members for career advancement.