

Capstone Working Draft

by Amanda Lavallee

FILE	11562_AMANDA_LAVALLEE_CAPSTONE_WORKING_DRAFT_1650698_1005206891.DOCX (33.12K)		
TIME SUBMITTED	17-NOV-2019 09:53PM (UTC-0500)	WORD COUNT	3269
SUBMISSION ID	1215833801	CHARACTER COUNT	19369

Capstone
Amanda Lavalley
LD850, Granite State College
Prof. Mews
November 17, 2019

Table of Contents

Abstract.....3

Introduction.....4

Literature Review.....6

 Qualities of a Leader.....6

 Organizational Structures and Leadership.....8

 Challenges for Leaders in Military and Private Sector.....9

 Leadership Styles with a History of Success.....10

Framework for Analysis.....12

Methods.....13

Discussion and Analysis.....TBD

Conclusions and Recommendations.....TBD

References.....14

Abstract

The US military is a large organization with a defined hierarchical structure that emulates many other large organizations in the private sector. Having the ability to identify successful military leaders and leverage their formal training and experience could prove to be extremely beneficial to other organizations. The purpose of this paper is to review the leadership attributes that are often prevalent in military leaders and are sought after by organizations in the private sector. With a large number of military members transitioning into the private sector, there is an abundant of talent that is not being fully utilized. Through research and review of existing academic resources, I have identified some of the leadership qualities that may be indicators of a military leaders ability to take on leadership roles in other organizations.

Introduction

The purpose of this research paper is to show a correlation between attributes of military leaders and their ability to take on leadership roles in a private sector organization. The research conducted consist of a comprehensive summary of various leadership traits that are considered common amongst leaders, regardless of organization. It reviews competencies that are associated with a highly discipline organization such as the military and how those same competencies can be leveraged in other organizations.

The research conducted of numerous academic sources helped to define what a leader is and how organizations can identify attributes that military leaders possess that indicate the probability of success as a leader in other roles. Understanding that leadership is a dynamic skill and leaders must be able to utilize their skills and adapt to a variety of different teams is essential. Military leaders have experience operating under duress and being challenged with making sound decisions with little time to contemplate all possible options.

Early in the research process, articles defining military leadership were reviewed to identify reoccurring characteristics of military leaders. Additional research was conducted to identify characteristics that organizations in the private sector felt were critical to successful leadership. With a large number of individuals serving in the military, this provides a large pool of viable candidates with prior leadership experience. If private sector organizations are able to leverage the formal training of leaders transitioning out of military roles, this could increase the chance of them finding a candidate that can quickly assimilate into the organization.

Having taken this journey myself, trying to leverage my experience from the military in a way that it would be immediately useful for my civilian employer. I feel this presented a lost

opportunity for others who may have the same level of experience to offer. Concepts such as transformational leadership and servant leaders are finding their way into the military. With a long history of a rigid leadership structure, the benefits of having more versatility in leadership styles is quickly being recognized by military leaders. This same versatility can be applied to those successful leaders in other organizations, preferably as turnkey leaders.

The military has a well-defined chain of command, where the roles are clearly defined for leaders. With the increase in research on engaged leaders, such as servant leaders, the military may find it beneficial to support a shift in the culture. With a large number of the military serving on a part time basis in the National Guard, the ability of their soldiers to maintain the balance will prove to be beneficial to both the military and their civilian employer. “Our strength lies in our ability to leverage military and civilian-acquired skills”(Lango, 2016) With only about 1 in 5 military members serving the full 20 years to retire, that leaves a lot of trained personnel who will need to find work in the private sector.

This research paper is intended to shed more light of the attributes such as integrity, discipline and adaptability that military leaders often possess as a result of their rigorous training. With large organizations such as Fortune 500 companies, the realization that these leaders have already been conditioned to lead teams to success is becoming more apparent. “The United States Armed Forces produce some of the best leaders in the world – selfless, intelligent, decisive and dedicated. These virtues are absolutely critical in the military, but the business world values them highly as well. So highly that some Fortune 500 companies now seek out retiring officers to recruit into their own management training programs.”(“How Military Leadership”, 2019)

Literature Review

Qualities of a Leader

There is no singular definition for what characterizes a good leader. The variables that can factor into success includes not only the leader, but the team and resources available to meet the objective. A leader's ability to see the big picture and assess the resources available for any given situation may set the ground work for a successful mission. The military organization has yielded a number of successful and influential leaders over the years. Individuals who have been able to make solid decisions under extreme duress. A leader needs to be able to make those decisions even when they only have access to limited information. Rarely do activities follow the initial plan, but rather the leader needs to remain equally dynamic and adjust course as new information is presented.

Due to the variety of situations presented in military operations, the military is a viable source for such leadership characteristics. With some of the best leaders in the world being the product of the United States Armed Forces, it is no surprise that they are viewed as disband candidates for Fortune 500 Companies. They often possess virtues that are collectively viewed as indicators of successful leadership. Those virtues include selfless, intelligent, decisive and dedicated. These characteristics can be valuable to a leader in any role, not just the military. It comes as no surprise that large private sector organizations are looking to recruit these transitioning military leaders into other leadership roles. (How Military Leadership", 2019) The skills acquired through the rigorous exercises in the military often align with those that are proven to be effective in other organizational structure. Having the ability to exercise both tactically and technically can be beneficial in the private sector. These attributes are often taught and emphasized in field exercising in the military. Other attributes such as empathy, adaptation

conflict management and providing subordinates with a professional leader can be key to maintaining organizational cohesion and leadership efficiency. (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019)

As leaders, the ability to make ethical and moral decisions is also essential. Members of the military have been trained on making cognizant decisions that are based on the moral principles and values. These values are the core military standards and the ability of the leader to display these characteristics is evaluated each year during the annual performance review. Additional personality traits such as self-confidence, dignity, emotional stability, adaptability, generate trust and respect from subordinates, but also efficiency in solving difficult situations.“ (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019)

To lead by example is a standard in the military. There is a great deal of emphasis on a leader's ability to shape and influence their team. Military leaders sculpt the next generation of leaders through example and strength of character. They are to set an example that can be emulated by their subordinates to ensure continuity exists as leaders transition into new roles. These traits can transcend into other roles and new environments. (Belton, 2014)

Although leaders who have been formally trained in the civilian sector possess many valuable traits, there are some traits that are not often as pronounced with leadership that has not served in any military role. The cohesion of people who have been in the thick of it while conducting some very physically and mentally challenging events build an unbreakable bond. There is a high level of cohesion, having been through these challenges and overcome them as a group is unrivaled. These attributes of loyalty and discipline can transcend through multiple echelons of leadership. It prepares young people to not only wage war, but to be good citizens with respect for the law and each other. (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019)

Trust, loyalty and respect are noted through all ranks within the military, not just in leadership. These are earned and good leaders should seek to understand how best to develop these types of relationships with those they lead and those they follow. “To achieve such inspiration, good officers and NCOs seek to establish a bond of certainty and trust with those they lead. They demonstrate a commitment to duty and service, and a willingness to share the risks and sacrifices made by the men and women under their command” (“How Military Leadership”, 2019)

Organizational Structures and Leadership

Organizations may vary greatly in the products they produce, but they all require solid leadership to be successful. “I believe there are certain aspects to leadership that are common to all types of work environments and cultures; identifying a vision and being able to clearly communicate that vision across the organization is one of the most important aspects of leadership”(Belton, 2014). The need for these solid leaders are prevalent at all levels of the organization and the military structure provides many of those attributes sought out by those in the private sector. Whether it is a military organization or one in the private sector, the need for solid leadership is necessary to transform the organizational culture. The culture needs to be one that is efficient and effective at all hierarchical levels in order to meet their objectives. (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019)

A number of organizations in the private sector emulate the military organizational structure. Organizations that consist of systems of social relations with common values and working processes. These organizations operate as a function of the societies in which they are embedded. (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019) The standards by which the military operates include a high standard of discipline, this helps maintain structure and order when faced with

challenges. There is also a professional ethos of loyalty and self-sacrifice, this helps with team cohesion. Despite the rigid guidelines for maintaining uniformity, there resides shared rituals of drill and ceremony to promote etiquette and respect for senior leadership. (Van Wagner, 2015).

Defining goals and setting objectives are critical skills for an organizations leadership team. The leadership team needs to set and define both long-term and short-term goals. They need to define standards, priorities and expectations in order to ensure their teams can operate autonomously. It is not practical or efficient for leaders to be too immersed in the day-to-day operations of their team. “In the military field, leadership is of particular importance by training staff and conducting activities that are being developed in terms of future activity conditions and that can provide unpredictable elements that are different from organizational anticipations” (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019) Leaders need to empower their subordinates and prepare them for the ability to make solid decisions without direct supervision. It would be impractical to think we could plan or anticipate all possible scenarios. Military leaders have operated in an environment rich in rehearsals and contingency plans. Having this experience can help them transform a civilian company and prepare them for other foreseeable outcomes to any given challenge. (How Military Leadership”, 2019)

Challenges for Leaders in Military and Private Sector

Despite the difference in organizational structure between the military and civilian sectors, they share in their challenges. “The results reveal that leaders in both the military and government civilian sectors cite the same top three challenges, organizational operations/performance, managing/motivating subordinates and personal leadership.” (Ferguson, Rybacki, Butts & Carrigan, n.d.) Military leaders who have worked in both roles can offer a unique perspective and skill set that is invaluable. There are those leaders who straddle the

fence and hold a leadership role in both military and civilian sectors simultaneously. Having the ability to leverage civilian skills in a military role or military skills in a civilian role enable leaders to have alternate views of organizational challenges. Lango, 2016). Having access to both repositories of mentors, they provide a more comprehensive set of skills to both roles.

Leaders who have only held roles in the private sector may not always have the confidence to push back when they are over tasked or given objectives outside of their comfort zone. “Civil servants feel they “Can’t Say No” twice as often as military leaders. Some leaders are still learning “what to delegate and what is [theirs] to do.” (Ferguson, Rybacki, Butts & Carrigan, n.d.) With leaders holding onto too much of the responsibility, they are unable to be as effective in reaching their objectives, this is true in both the military and private sectors. Often times, leaders are conflicted when presented with too much work for them to handle on their own and must delegate. Being able to delegate effectively can help leaders build confidence in their team and help their team meet their overall objectives efficiently. The ability to be decisive and to effectively delegate responsibility is essential in any organization. (Belton, 2014)

Leadership Styles with a History of Success

In recent studies, it is indicated that there is a need for military leaders to have charismatic effects on subordinates. They must also be able to control the situations with classical transactional means. Having the ability to do both with provide that leader with a more comprehensive leadership style. The traits that charismatic leaders possess include “self-confidence and confidence in their capacities, in the fairness and high morality of their beliefs and actions.” (Stanciulescu & Beldiman, 2019) Leaders who have confidence tend to instill confidence in their teams. If their teams are also confident in the decisions and actions they set out to accomplish, they will be more prone to success. By sharing the teams success with all

members, they build cohesion and create followers who will work to remain a viable member of that team. The team builds trust and commitment that is more difficult to disrupt, even during challenging times. “To achieve such inspiration, good officers and NCOs seek to establish a bond of certainty and trust with those they lead. They demonstrate a commitment to duty and service, and a willingness to share the risks and sacrifices made by the men and women under their command” (“How Military Leadership”, 2019)

Those leaders who have learned many of the skills in a military organization can help to improve how they handle professional development. They have worked through the process of giving and receiving constructive criticism to continually improve their own performance. They have a tendency to provide personal involvement as needed to ensure their subordinates have an increased probability of success. They value the mentor-mentee relationship and foster an organizational environment that supports developing these kinds of connections.

Although the structure of the military has a well-defined hierarchy, with defined customs and courtesy that coincide with rank. It is moving toward supporting non-traditional styles of leadership, including servant leadership approaches. The importance of the free flow of information up and down the chain of command and engagement at all levels is becoming more accepted.

Frame Work for Analysis

This paper outlines the correlation of attributes that leaders in both roles possess and the similarity in the challenges both organizations must overcome. The research conducted reflects the core attributes that leaders need to be successful in either a military or a civilian organization are of the same nature. The application may vary depending on the application, but the general basis can be leveraged. An effective leader needs to be able to apply these competencies in a multitude of situations. The organization sets the objectives and the leader must assess their teams contributions, define the goals and maintain confidence in their ability to reach the objectives.

There is not a great deal of quantitative data to support the qualitative information acquired during the literature review. With more time, I would propose developing a questionnaire to be distributed to both military and civilian leaders. To truly get solid data, the survey would need to span multiple branches and ranks. There are a large number of organizations that employ individuals that would satisfy this span. With more time, I believe it would be beneficial to conduct this quantitative piece to determine if it would support the qualitative data found through the literature review.

Methods

The methods applied for this research paper rely solely on reviewing existing scholarly articles and books that focused on general leadership, military leadership and organizational structure. I found there were numerous resources available with which to draw data from, the majority within the last five years. With the importance of leadership dynamics, reviewing current research seemed appropriate as the manner in which organizations conduct business is continually advancing and so must the leaders who run them.

Although many of the papers reviewed discussed leadership in either a military role or a private sector role, a correlation can be drawn between the two roles given the overlap of desired attributes. Military and civilian leadership face the same changing societal challenges and must remain cognizant of how their style is perceived by the general public. Reviewing current research ensures the information collected will reflect the same challenges that we are currently facing. These challenges include the increase use of social media, the real time reporting of news, the speed at which information is shared and the increased awareness of social acceptability.

References:

Abdul-Alim, J., Pennamon, T., & Savage, G. (2017). Military Leaders in Higher Education. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, (19), 14. 4

Albright, D. L., McCormick, W. H., Carroll, T. D., Currier, J. M., Thomas, K. H., Hamner, K., Deiss, J. (2018). Barriers and Resources for Veterans' Post-Military Transitioning in South Alabama: A qualitative Analysis. *Traumatology*, 24(3), 236–245.

Asencio, H., Byrne, T., & Mujkic, E. (2017). Ethics Training for U.S. Military Leaders: Challenging the Conventional Approach. *Public Integrity*, 19(5), 415–428.

Belton, M. (2014). Reserve Perspective: How Leadership Translates Between Civilian and Navy Roles. *Navy Supply Corps Newsletter*, p. 16.

Ferguson, J., Rybacki, M., Butts, D., Carrigan, K. (n.d) Comparing Leadership Challenges; Military vs Civil Service, Center for Creative Leadership, White Paper, part 1 of a 3-part series.

Johnson, T. (2015). Service after Serving: Does Veterans' Preference Diminish the Quality of the US Federal Service? *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*, 25(3), 669–696.

Johnson, T., & Walker, R. W. (2018). The Career Advancement of Military Veterans in Recent Cohorts of the U.S. Executive Branch. *Public Personnel Management*, 47(4), 382–397.

Lango Deen. (2016). One on One: The Pentagon's National Guard Leader: Promoting Partnerships with Industry. *US Black Engineer and Information Technology*, 40(4), 10.

Stanciulescu, R., Beldiman, E. (2019). The Issue of Leadership Styles in the Military Organization. *Revista Academiei Fortelor Terestre*, 24(1), 54–60.

Van Wagner, C. (Jan 26, 2015) Military vs Civilian Culture, Penn State University

Willink, J. Babin, L. (Nov. 201) *Extreme Ownership*, St .Martins Press, New York, NY.

Willink, J. Babin, L. (Sept. 2018) *The Dichotomy of Leadership*, St .Martins Press, New York, NY.

Whitmore, J. (2017). *Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Zenger, J. & Folkman, J. (2009). *The Extraordinary Leader: Turning Good Managers into Great Leaders*. United States: McGraw Hill.

N.A. (September 16, 2019) *How Military Leadership Experience Can Benefit Any Organization*, University of Notre Dame

