

## Powerful Leadership Lessons From The US Military

By Richard Feloni; November 14, 2014

Military officers spend their time in service leading men and women in high-stress, high-stakes situations, and they earn their titles after rigorous, specialized training. Some takeaways you and your organization could benefit from when hiring military leaders:

**Confidence** - You can only become a military officer if you are incredibly sure of yourself, says Jennifer Baker, who served as staff sergeant in the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division.

**Dedication** - "When faced with problems, you must be persistent until a solution is created; you cannot quit when the answer isn't obvious," Baker says. Her time in the Army taught her that a team is as dedicated as its leader, and this requires "getting your hands dirty every once in a while."

**The Ability to Follow** - The military is, of course, regimented, and Baker finds that this dedication to following orders develops better leaders. It's a skill that translates well to the corporate world, keeping managers humble and adverse to micromanaging.

**Ownership** - "When I assume a new position, the leadership skill I focus on most is taking ownership of the responsibilities and mission set before me," says R. Alex Urankar, an active-duty captain in the US Marine Corp. "I approach everything with the mindset that my reputation is attached to the end result."

**Bias for Action** - Urankar tells us that being a Marine has taught him to use a stressful situation as an opportunity to run toward obstacles and overcome them rather than lingering in indecisiveness.

**Compassion** - "Upon entering the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalion Head Quarters aboard Camp Pendleton, the words, 'Have compassion, for everyone is facing their own internal struggle' are featured on the wall," Urankar says. "A great leader recognizes that the needs of their people are just as important to mission success as accomplishing tasks," he says. "This means having genuine compassion for your team."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/leadership-lessons-from-the-military-2014-11>

## The military is a 'leadership accelerator' businesses can benefit from

Rebecca Walberg; October 21, 2014

It is routine for military members to have responsibility for safety, training and morale of many other people by their early 20s, but another crucial factor is the pressure under which they must lead. Decision cycles move rapidly, and it is often impossible to push back deadlines, even when difficulties arise. And despite the degree of authority military commanders have in their chain of command, the most effective leaders in the military don't rely on their rank to accomplish their mission, but rather develop their abilities to communicate with their superiors, peers and subordinates, to motivate and guide their teams, and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their colleagues.

While the parallels between the tasks of the military and the corporate world may not be obvious, the qualities of being accountable and dependable, and leading by example and by putting the team's welfare and performance first, all of which are inculcated in the military, are vital traits in any workplace.

<http://business.financialpost.com/executive/leadership/the-military-is-a-leadership-accelerator-businesses-can-benefit-from>

# Creative Leadership Lessons In An Era of VUCA And COIN

By David Slocum; October 8, 2013

Of course, thinking historically, military leadership is among the most ancient of leadership forms. That long view, combined with the diverse military activities across so many different societies today, means that references to “military leadership” can point to a wide range of practices. The military itself, long committed to leadership training and practice, has increasingly engaged in reflection and research on the topic.

- **VUCA: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, or Ambiguity:** This acronym emerged in the 1990s to describe the capability to engage situations marked by change and challenges. For leaders in the military and beyond, the doctrine underscores the importance of strategic decision-making, readiness planning, risk management, and situational problem-solving.
- **Be-Know-Do:** Growing out of intensive analysis by the military of its leadership thinking, in part conducted with business management researchers, the Army Leadership Manual was revised following the end of the Cold War. This shorthand version resonated with other models at the time that sought to combine attention to a leader’s character, competence, and action-taking.
- **COIN:** Over the last two decades, and notably after Sept. 11, the U.S. military developed a Counter-insurgency doctrine. As Fred Kaplan recounts in his exceptional historical account, *The Insurgents*, the evolution of COIN represented a paradigm shift in strategic thinking that was equally a story of leadership struggling to effect change in a sprawling and tradition-bound organization, and the challenge of ceding control and allowing for more adaptable and situational leadership.

The emphases in these compelling models on self-awareness, adaptability, situational awareness, and engaging complexity show their importance to non-military leaders. Some lessons to take from the military leadership:

1. **Appreciating and Engaging Diversity:** To solve the most complex problems, leaders need to engage multiple, diverse perspectives. The assumption here, essential to the successful operation of learning organizations, is that we have the most to learn from those who are least like us.
2. **Decision-making:** As a basis for fostering collaboration and creative excellence, leaders should be deliberate about making value-based, and well-communicated decisions.
3. **Practicing Discipline:** This is not restrictive and rule-based authority. It’s personal, team and organizational discipline, ranging from personal routines, sleep habits and consistency of interactions with subordinates.
4. **Role modeling behavior and integrity:** The expectation that military leaders need, through their integrity and actions, to serve as role models to their subordinates is fundamental. Particularly in creative organizations where successful creatives have been promoted into leadership positions, such role modeling can be extremely inspiring and powerful.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2013/10/08/six-creative-leadership-lessons-from-the-military-in-an-era-of-vuca-and-coin/>