

# Working at the “Edge” Translating a Military Concept Into XXX Terms

Draft  
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## Background

- Fundamental to XXX's business transformation initiative is a commitment to moving to be an "Edge" organization
- The primary sources for Edge concepts are:
  - "Power to the Edge" by David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes – a summary paper published by the Department of Defense Command and Control Research Program of the US Military
  - "Power to the Edge: Command ... Control ... in the Information Age" David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes – a book published by the Department of Defense Command and Control Research Program of the US Military ([http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Alberts\\_Power.pdf](http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Alberts_Power.pdf))
- It is important to translate these concepts from a military context to a commercial one in order to realize the true value that they have for the success of XXX's Business Transformation

## Background (2)

# Translating Edge Concepts to a Commercial Context Using “People, Process, Tools”

### WCI’s Framework for Managing Organizational Change

- Successful organization change requires many things. But fundamental to achieve its goals is an ability for the change managers to coordinate and to inter-relate change on the three things that define any organization
  - **People:**
    - the **individuals, and the values, the commitment, and the talent** they bring to carrying out the **work** that allows any organizations to achieve its **strategic long term** (multi-year) and **tactical short term** (this year, this quarter, this month, this week, today) **objectives**
  - **Process:**
    - the **inter-related patterns of sequential activities** that the people in an organization follow in order to do the **work** of an organization
  - **Tools:**
    - the **things** (buildings, vehicles, furniture and associated accessories, tools – production machinery, the computer technology delivery platform – computers, operating systems, and connecting networks, the software – computer business applications and application development tool sets, and the communications devices – phones, cell phones, faxes, audio and videoconferencing facilities) used by the **people** in an organization to do the **processes** they follow to complete the **work** of the organization.

## Using this Background to Understand What an “Edge” Military Organization Looks Like ... ..

- Step One
  - What does “Power to the Edge” Mean In a Military Organization in Fundamental Terms?
- Step Two
  - What Power is in a Military Organization?
- Step Three
  - The Military’s Decision Making Framework: Who makes What kind of Decision in a Military “Edge” Organization?
- Step Four
  - Making The Fundamental Argument For “Edge” Military Organizations: Why this Decision Making Framework Works?
- Step Five
  - The Critical Success Factors For the “Edge” Military Organization

**Step One:**

**What does “Power to the Edge”  
Mean In a Military Organization in Fundamental Terms?**

- Alberts and Hayes describe this in military terms
- Fundamentally, military “edge” organizations shape themselves by following **two core principles**:
  - **Move all decision making required for achieving tactical missions to the people responsible for carrying out that mission – that is, the tactical operational commanders of the teams carrying out these missions**
  - **Give these individuals access to all of the information that they need to make these decisions**

## Step Two: What Power is in a Military Organization?

- **POWER is about the ability to deploy resources** (people's time and tools – both of which cost dollars)
- That is, having **POWER** means “I” have the **authority** to make **decisions** that **commit people and tools** to doing the **activities** needed to achieve a **tactical goal** – a mission in military terms
- By implication then, having **POWER** means that “I” will **generate costs** that will be paid for by the organization That is, I will utilize trained soldiers (salary \$, recruiting \$, training \$, transport \$ ... ..) equipped with appropriate weapon systems (resource \$) to achieve my assigned mission

## Step Three: The Military's Decision Making Framework: Clarifying Who makes What kind of Decision in a Military "Edge" Organization?

	<b>Central Commanders</b> (Chief of Staff in a hierarchy down to Generals and other Battalion Commanders)	<b>Staff Officers</b> (assigned to combat support missions)	<b>Operational Commanders</b> (assigned to combat missions)
<b>People</b>	<b>Who</b> will be deployed <b>where</b> and <b>when</b> (assigned to combat and combat support missions)	<b>Who</b> will be recruited and trained before they are deployed <b>Recommendations</b> on how to acquire, to train and to deploy soldiers	<b>Who</b> will do <b>what when</b> and <b>where</b> in order to achieve an assigned combat mission
<b>Process</b>	<b>What</b> processes will be used to achieve combat and combat support missions <b>What development processes</b> will be used to prepare soldiers for combat and combat support missions	<b>How</b> these processes will be executed (by <b>whom when and where</b> ) during combat support activities <b>Recommendations</b> on combat and combat support processes	<b>Which</b> processes (combat techniques) will be used by <b>whom when</b> on this mission to achieve its objectives
<b>Tools</b>	<b>Which</b> weapons and combat support systems will be made available to soldiers	<b>How</b> combat support tools will be used (by <b>whom when and where</b> ) to achieve combat support missions <b>Recommendations</b> on combat weapons systems and on combat support tools	<b>How</b> will weapons systems be used during the mission

## Step Four: Making The Fundamental Argument For “Edge” Military Organizations: Why this Decision Making Framework Works?

- Operational Commanders are “closest to the action” and therefore are in the best position to make “combat decisions”
  - Weapons systems appropriate to their missions can be made available to them
- In the past, the limitations of information systems meant that information needed by Operational Commanders was often not available to them in “sufficient time” to make effective combat decisions –
  - That lead to centralized command and control structures
  - Which limited the ability of Operational Commanders to make combat mission specific decisions
- Today’s information systems overcomes those limitations
  - Therefore, this information must be supplied to the “close to the action” operational mission commander
- As a result, Operational Commanders’ combat decision making effectiveness will increase
- Therefore, combat mission success will increase
- Modern training techniques (from classroom to role play – that is simulated combat) can be used to prepare operational commanders to make such decisions effectively
  - And to prepare the troops under their command to effectively carry them out



## Step Five: The Critical Success Factors For the “Edge” Military Organization (Requiring Investment Before Combat)

- **Good Processes**
  - For combat
  - For combat support missions
    - including recruiting and **deselecting (washing out)** individuals for operational mission assignment during training
- **Good Information Systems**
  - Capable of remaining robust under combat conditions
- **Good Weapons Systems**
- **Good Training and Professional Development**
  - For Operational Commanders
  - For Operational Troops
  - For Staff Officers and Combat Support Mission Troops

## Building the Equivalent Understanding of What it Means to Operate as an “Edge” Organization at XXX?

- **Step One**
  - Clarify what power is at XXX?
- **Step Two**
  - Clarify the XXX equivalents of the Military’s Combat Missions and Combat Support Missions are?
- **Step Three**
  - Identify the XXX equivalents of the Military’s “Central Commanders”, “Staff Officers” and “Operational Commanders”?
- **Step Four**
  - Build the XXX equivalent to the Military Decision Making Framework
- **Step Five**
  - Clarify the Fundamental Argument for a XXX “Edge” Organization
- **Step Six**
  - Clarify the Critical Success Factors for the XXX “Edge” Organization

## Step One: What is Power At XXX (After Business Transformation)?

- **POWER is about the ability to deploy resources** (people's time and tools – both of which cost dollars)
  - Same as military
- That is, having **POWER** means “I” have the **authority** to make **decisions** that **commit people and tools** to doing the **activities** needed to achieve a **tactical goal**
  - **a goal that is specified on my personal performance contract to be achieved in a defined time frame**
    - By the end of the next 3 months
      - » Today, this week, this month, this quarter
    - By the end of the year
    - By the end of the next 2 years
    - By the end of the next 5 years
    - By the end of the next 10 years
    - By the end of the next 20 years
    - Longer than that
  - In the military, tactical goals are combat and combat support missions, that have a defined time frame
  - At XXX, the personal performance contract's objectives provides the equivalent of “missions”
- By implication then, having **POWER** means that “I” will **generating costs** that will be paid for by XXX
  - That is, I will utilize trained staff (salary \$, recruiting \$, training \$, transport \$ ... ..) equipped with appropriate tools (resource \$) to achieve **my personal performance contract objectives**
    - Very similar to military environment

## Step Two: What are the XXX equivalents of the Military's Combat Missions and Combat Support Missions?

- There is no a single concept in XXX's current culture or business language that works in the way that "mission" does in military culture
  - Combat is a project environment
    - Start this mission – complete the mission – move onto the next mission
    - Because of this, the military organizes combat support work as it was a mission
      - e.g. take on this training assignment, complete it, move onto the next mission
    - The military (internationally) has been organized as a "project" culture for hundreds of years
- XXX (like all businesses) has both projects and "on-going processes"
  - **Defining Characteristics of A Business Project**
    - It has a sunrise (start date) and a sunset (come to an end date)
    - Project Targets or milestones are set within these calendar dates
    - Staff is assigned to it at some point during its life, and will become available for "not this project" work either before the project end or at the project end
      - An example of a current XXX project is Business Transformation
    - The work of the project has to be planned and well communicated so that project staff know how to coordinate their activities effectively
  - **Defining Characteristics of A On-going Business Process**
    - It goes on year after year in some fashion
    - Targets are often defined by a point on the business calendar (e.g. month end, quarter end, year end ... ..)
    - The work handled by staff assigned to a on-going process consists of repetitions of defined sequences of activities (e.g. pay this bill, and then the next one and so on)
    - Much of this on-going process work is automated in computer business applications
      - E.g. financial management / accounting, human resource information systems
    - Coordination of work within an on-going process and across on-going process is handled by defined work flows (which may be built into computer business applications) or may simply be "known" by individuals who are assigned to work on the on-going process

## Step Three: What are the XXX equivalents of the Military's Combat Missions and Combat Support Missions? (2)

- As a result, there is no single unifying concept like mission in XXX (or most other business organizations)
- The best unifying concept is **personal performance objective**
  - These are identified in formal (or informal) personal performance contracts that exist between an individual and the person that individual works for
    - Formal means it is recorded in a personal performance contract that exists in a form that can be shared with other people in the organization,
      - usually in a performance management system, either a automated one or a paper based one
    - Informal means that it is the result of explicit verbal agreement or implicit understanding between an individual and the person that individual works for
  - As part of Business Transformation, XXX will implement a formal performance management process
    - The “detail” involved will vary by “level”
    - The concept of “metrics and dials” is deeply related to the performance management process
- **As a result, the best equivalent at XXX for combat mission and for combat support mission is PERSONAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE**
  - **Specified for project work using the idea of project deliverables**
  - **Specified for on-going process work using the idea of measurable (metrics and dials)**

## Step Three: Identify the XXX equivalents of the Military's “Central Commanders”, “Staff Officers” and “Operational Commanders”?

- **Central Commanders = XXX Senior Executive**
  - Essentially, these are XXX’s senior executive and their direct reports
    - At the highest level, the CEO and the CEO’s direct reports set strategic objectives (multi-year)
    - Operating unit heads are the equivalent of Battalion Commanders
- **Staff Officers = Staff Function Management**
  - The individuals who are responsible for XXX “staff” (as opposed to line or operating) functions
  - There will be a reporting hierarchy in place for these individuals who manage XXX’s staff functions
  - The staff functions are the groups such as accounting, human resources, information technology, corporate communications, marketing, legal, new acquisition integration teams etc ... ..
- **Operational Commanders = Operating Management**
  - These individuals are operationally responsible for delivering services to customers
  - The line or operations units will also have reporting hierarchy in place

**Step Four: XXX's After Transformation  
Decision Making Framework:  
Clarifying Who makes What kind of Decision  
in the future XXX "Edge" Organization?**

	<b>Senior Executive</b> CEO and direct reports	<b>Staff Function Management</b> Staff Functions Heads and their Management Teams	<b>Operating Management</b> Business Unit Heads and their Management Teams, down to CSC Head
<b>People</b>	<p><b>Who</b> will be deployed to the senior staff and operating management roles</p> <p><b>What</b> will the performance / reward culture of the organization</p> <p><b>What</b> will be the "customer facing" culture of the organization</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b> on how to acquire, to train and to deploy staff at all level</p> <p><b>Who</b> will be deployed into direct report roles / positions</p> <p><b>How</b> performance will be rated of direct reports</p>	<p><b>Who</b> will be deployed into direct report roles / positions</p> <p><b>How</b> performance will be evaluated of direct reports</p> <p><b>How</b> customers will be contracted with and serviced given the process and escalation checkpoint frameworks, and their implementation in the tools deployed throughout the organization</p>

**Step Four: XXX's After Transformation  
Decision Making Framework:  
Clarifying Who makes What kind of Decision  
in the future XXX "Edge" Organization? (2)**

Notes on the People Component

1. The word "framework" means general structure and guiding principles; it does not mean detailed specification.
  
2. A culture is described and "lives" in the stories about organizational "hero's" that organization members share with one another in their conversations, and in the conversations that they have with one another about their perceptions of "why" people are hired, fired, promoted and rewarded.

These conversations may or may not line up with "official organizational statements" such as mission and value statements.



**Step Four: XXX's After Transformation  
Decision Making Framework:  
Clarifying Who makes What kind of Decision  
in the future XXX "Edge" Organization? (3)**

	<b>Senior Executive</b> CEO and direct reports	<b>Staff Function Management</b> Staff Functions Heads and their Management Teams	<b>Operating Management</b> Business Unit Heads and their Management Teams, down to CSC Head
<b>Process</b>	<p><b>What</b> process framework will be used to do line and staff activities</p> <p><b>What</b> escalation checkpoint framework will be used for moving issues up the hierarchy</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b> about staff and line process and escalation checkpoint frameworks</p> <p><b>How</b> processes will be implemented in the tools deployed throughout the organization, given the process and escalation checkpoint frameworks in the</p>	<p><b>How</b> processes will be carried out within the structure provided by the process and escalation checkpoint frameworks, and their implementation in the tools deployed throughout the organization</p> <p><b>What</b> "input" is given to the staff management functions about process implementation</p>

**Step Four: XXX's After Transformation  
Decision Making Framework:  
Clarifying Who makes What kind of Decision  
in the future XXX "Edge" Organization? (4)**

	<b>Senior Executive</b> CEO and direct reports	<b>Staff Function Management</b> Staff Functions Heads and their Management Teams	<b>Operating Management</b> Business Unit Heads and their Management Teams, down to CSC Head
<b>Tools</b>	<p><b>What</b> tool framework will be used to make tool acquisition and deployments decisions within the organization</p> <p><b>What</b> tools will be acquired when the decisions are passed to this level by the escalation checkpoints</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b> about tools to be deployed throughout the organization</p> <p><b>What</b> tools will be acquired and assigned to who for use throughout organization, as structured by processes and the escalation checkpoint framework</p>	<p><b>What</b> tools will be acquired and assigned to who, as structured by process framework and the escalation checkpoint framework, and their implementation in the tools deployed throughout the organization</p>

## Step Five: Clarify the Fundamental Argument for a XXX “Edge” Organization

### Why this Decision Making Framework Works?

- It moves “power” to the edge in that it provides standard ways of doing things while letting “local” people make “local” decisions
  - standardization of process frameworks is made concrete and “locally relevant” through computer application tool deployment
  - This allows local individuals to make local customer facing and service decisions that are appropriate to their level of personal performance objective
- It “unburdens” the field in that it provides “tools” that are consistently deployed throughout the organization
  - Enter data once, use where-ever needed
  - Do things the same way in each location (the how) although the decision about what to do in each specific situation is decentralized to the relevant location
- It provides information where and as it is needed
  - Deploying consistent business computer application tools to all locations allows the rapid movement of data
    - Provided
      - The data is appropriately “architected” for rapid sharing **and** for access security

## **Step Six: The Critical Success Factors For the “Edge” XXX Organization (Requiring Investment Before, During and After Business Transformation)**

- **Good Processes**

- Well implemented in workflow management capable computer business applications that are consistently deployed to and available in all XXX locations
- Ability to update and re-deploy based on changing business conditions and on “new best practices” acquired as part of new business acquisitions

- **Good Information Systems**

- Capable of both “sharing” information AND of providing appropriate “data access security” concurrently
- Deployed on a technology delivery platform that achieves outstanding levels of reliability and availability

- **Good Staff Acquisition**

- Few to no “bad hires” or “inappropriate” promotions / reassignments

- **Good Training and Professional Development**

- Delivered just in time “before on the job” usage by trained organization member
- “how to” and “know that” process training delivered “in context” in computer business applications