Chapter 14
Organizing for Innovation in the Armed Forces:
A Logical Thinking Process Approach

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ABSTRACT

Innovation is one of the main factors in driving any organization's effectiveness and sustainable competitiveness. Lack of innovation may affect organizations in several different ways, from lost opportunities for being more efficient, improve processes, and sometimes decrease of staff morale, with negative impact on development of organizational knowledge as well as values and culture. Innovation can also provide new forms of doing things, fuelling internal processes, either operational, logistical, or administrative ones. Highly innovative organizations usually make jobs more fulfilling, and ultimately contribute in making the world a better place. Therefore, driving innovation is crucial, and that needs an appropriate framework in order to promote the desirable involvement from the whole organization. By following a logical thinking process, one ends up at a pragmatic and more deployable model backed by cause and effect logics.

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is one of the key drivers for any organization's effectiveness, improvement, competitiveness, and ultimately long-term sustainability. This applies equally to the Armed Forces, hereafter designated as the military organization, or to corporations at large.

Innovation is a broad concept which can be classified according to distinct reference frames. One can distinguish between different categories, for example product innovation and service innovation, which may have process innovation underneath. One can also distinguish according to the level of impact, for example (2) incremental innovation, the kind of innovation that is close to the concept to continuous improvement; (2) radical and disruptive innovation; or (3) recombination innovation – the kind of innovation that results from recombining existing products, services or processes into something new. The scope of this text is, however, about "organizing for innovation", which relates to organizational change that places the organization optimally to innovate. Corporations and firms have long been pursuing optimal forms of organizing for innovation. Today, military organizations almost everywhere are trying to change their organizational architectures in order to achieve such desirable paradigm, to become more innovative.

With so much at stake, senior military leaders need to place such subject on the top of their agendas to become more innovative. Military leaders across all branches face significant challenges, from constrained budgets to broaden scopes of responsibilities and operating, which demands a more proactive attitude, in a way not dissimilar from the modern corporation that competes in the marketplace (Charan, 2005, Nueno, 2016). This demands military leaders, similarly to corporate leaders, to step into subjects such as strategy development, risk management, and supporting the lower military ranks in a joint effort to improve organizational development - a subject that includes a need to rethink how to organise for innovation (Lorsch, 2012; Hill & Davis, 2017). For example, being diverse is a critical factor in fostering innovation across organizations.

Military leaders shall proactively monitor the diversity barometer score within the organizations they are responsible for. This is especially critical at upper echelons where it is important to prevent higher rank officers to surround themselves with professionals who mirror them. Such is particularly critical during times of tight budgets, when the "fixer" types of leaders may be put in charge (Tomaso, 2005). These "fixers", conversely to "growers", are typically designated to sort out performance problems in face of constrained budgets and the urgent need for corrective actions. However, fixers may be tempted to surround themselves by other "fixers", hence demotivating the raise of new ideas, initiatives and innovation across organizations

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