

Annex B – RESULTS FROM SMEs FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AT NATO ALLIED COMMAND TRANSFORMATION, NORFOLK, VA, USA DURING THE HFM RTG-163 MEETING, 7-9 JUNE 2009

The questions are in bold and the SME responses can be found below.

1) How do SME (operational level) define “Organisational Effectiveness?”

- Ability of the organization to assimilate disparate inputs whatever the source and whatever the input, chew through that, and translate to use available tools from the whole realm, lethal or non, and address mission using resources effectively:
 - Data fusion is one aspect – but you need to be able to do something with it – must be actionable.
 - Must be able to make a decision quickly.
 - Must relate to some desired effect.
- Provide orientation for the commander; job of HQ is to procure for the commander but can be commander at any level or geo political.
- Ability to learn from mistakes and quickly adjust to the situation:
 - Adaptability to change.
- Ability to turn emergency situations to be ordinary.
- Common formats/capabilities/standardization:
 - Help people pick up the lingo.
- Ability to spare people’s time (decision makers as well as soldiers):
 - Biggest thing is reducing the time it takes to produce information for sharing with others.
- Open minded to people you work with.
- Ability to go beyond task description:
 - Take initiative.
- Good leadership is critical to organisational effectiveness:
 - Good leadership – won’t solve all problems, but need leader to be strong and be able to listen to people.
 - Can make the best of a bad situation.
 - Not completely leader-centred.

2) What do you believe are the top three things that disrupt organisational effectiveness that you’d like to see us address?

- Bad leadership:
 - Micromanagement.
- Business processes.
- Lack of communication/poor information sharing:
 - People not wanting to share information.
 - Lack of social networking opportunities.

- Lack of info sharing systems.
- Lack of understanding of team members' information needs.
- Conflict of interest – organisational and personal.
- Lack of standardized processes.
- Lack of priorities.
- Lack of resources – time and/or money.
- Conflict.
- Different tour length:
 - Turnover, no handover.
- Leader committed to Nation, not the mission.
- Lack of willingness to make decisions.
- Different IT systems.
- Different service cultures.
- Different national cultures.
- Cliques.
- Time wasters.

3) From your experience what makes an effective multi-national HQ?

- Someone who can make a decision needs to be able to prioritize conflicting items:
 - Same in both static HQ and operational; level of intensity may be different.
- Information sharing – ranges from people not wanting to share to technical lack of common system; the more understanding of where info comes from the better.
- Cultural education.
- Preparation of staff:
 - Good to know people before you get there – clarify roles, expertise.
- An unreserved commitment from the senior officer that the HQ will be effective; the leader is not there to serve Nation but to make HQ work:
 - Effective mentoring program – handover procedure so you don't start from scratch every time; learn from mistakes.
- Social networking is very important – green beads café:
 - Ad hoc meetings in open environment in multicultural settings.
 - Create opportunity for people to talk to each other informally.
 - Officer's club – opportunity or environment for social networking.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for transition:
 - Avoid gaps of transition.
 - Different rotation cycles hurt org effectiveness.

4) How do you know if you are doing a good job (e.g. How many people were not involved in violent events?)?

- Informal feedback:
 - View of leadership from other HQs that you interact with.
 - Commanders' opinion is very useful.
- Have you accomplished the deliverables you said you would?
- Being able to see what I do contributes to the goals and mission of the organization – watch out for disconnects or conflicting goals:
 - Most projects here are long-term – won't see results right away.
- 360 degree feedback – good if done right and used as one of multiple assessment methods – we need an organisational 360 degree feedback system.

5) What are proxy measures of organisational/mission success? Largely similar to #1 and this was done mostly ad hoc following the interviews.

- Timeliness of decision making.
- Actionable data.
- Learning organization.
- Openness to culture.
- Adjusting to new situations.
- Make emergency situation into “normal” situation.
- Common language/terminology.
- Common formats/standardization.
- Go beyond task description.
- Adaptability.
- Establishing priorities.
- Leadership.
- Information sharing.
- Open mindedness.
- Do whatever job needs to be done.
- Ability to spare peoples' time.
- Effective turnover/rotations.
- Common doctrine.
- Awareness training.
- Maximizing resources of org.
- Data fusion.

We provided the group with the organisational effectiveness model developed by the group and sought comments on it.

- Confidentiality is key:
 - But ... people will be willing to tell us data.
- Start the assessment early – tell them you are there to help them improve:
 - Sell yourself (what is your intention).
- Context where interview occurs is important – may get different answers depending upon environment – need people to assess for 3 months – be able to get to know people within the HQ.

The group was asked to rank order the importance of the dimensions in the model.

- Organization – #1; Leader = #2; Team = #3; Team Member = #4; Context = #5; Task = #6; Situation = #7:
 - Under organization – rank importance of sub-components as structure, processes, strategy, resources, goal congruence, culture.
 - Organisational culture relevant – could be moved up.
- Should we look at effectiveness from “the outside in” – make recommendations to policy maker or from the “inside out” – recommendations about processes that could be implemented that would help them to optimize resources – have to do it both and keep them in balance but balanced with the freedom of manoeuvre the organization you are examining has – no point in making recommendations that you can’t impact, inside out is more achievable, both could be effective if you take approach of a mentor and be able to share in a non-punitive way how to improve.
- Reading the concept definition misses the relation with people on the ground – that should be the focus – from a business perspective are analyzing Headquarters but people on the ground are critical – people on the ground are doing task provided with and org structure facilitates the action on the ground – HQ ultimately work for the boots on the ground.