



Leadership and Communications Skills for Effective Teamwork

Wilbur E. Wolf III
(717) 903-0835 (cell)
Wilbur.Wolf@AquilaSOG.com



Agenda

Dates/Times

- ✓ 27 May 2021 – 6:30-8:30PM
- ☐ 5 Jun 2021 – 9:30-11:30AM

Agenda

- ☐ Welcome and Senior Leader Remarks
- ☐ Key Observations and Lessons Learned during C19 VPOD operations
- ☐ Leadership Fundamentals
- ☐ Effective Communications
- ☐ Summary/Key Takeaways
- ☐ AAR/Hot Wash



Introductions – Who We Are

Wilbur E. Wolf III

- ❑ Senior Partner/Co-Owner, Aquila Strategy and Operations Group, LLC
- ❑ Owner, Wolf Creek Associates
 - Consulting
 - Wood Products
- ❑ 25+ years of training, consulting, and business leadership
- ❑ 31.5 years of military leadership experience. Retired, Dec 2016
- ❑ 15 years partnered with DELCO and the MCM (SNS) and MRC/CCDC programs



Introductions to You

Please share the following

- Name
- Occupation and/or Volunteer Position
- BRIEF summary of your background
- Previous Leadership experience or training
- Disaster Situation Service/Leadership Experience?
- Something you are really good at doing!
- Something you are not good at/like to avoid!
- Have you previously done one of more of our Lanes?

We will do this again when we resume in-person training but not really too manageable for the on-line session



Observations from the last 4-5 months???

- ❑ Many of you (most...all?) have been immersed in the C19 VPOD effort for months! I am interested in your observations now and during the discussion for the rest of the session
- ❑ What are some of your key leadership and communications observations from the planning, organizing, and operations in recent months?



Graybeard Observations

- ❑ **Character** – as a leader, your character matters and is on display everywhere and at all times. Understand that you are always being viewed and always being evaluated. Do the right thing...always, in everything that you do. Remember also that your social media and other public displays displays/actions are a very commonly viewed window into your character!
- ❑ **How you treat people** – long after you are gone, people will have forgotten many of the things you did or said...what they will remember is how you treated them...how you made them feel!



Some very simple guidance

- ❑ **Give a @#\$% about your team** - care at least as much about your people as you care about the success of the organization. If you do this...the first will take care of the second!
- ❑ **Stop being a jerk** – maybe it worked in the past, maybe you were “led” that way, but it is just no fun for anyone and it ruins morale and productivity
- ❑ **Cut out the drama** – don’t participate in it and don’t condone it. Cut rumors at the source. If there are issues...track them down and address them head-on.



What your team wants from you

- Character** – Do the right thing...every time...even when it is hard!
- Competence** – be good at your job and if you don't know it...learn it and maybe from some on your team!
- Honesty and candor** – even if the message is not pleasant...they want you to be truthful with your team
- Courage and resiliency** – they will look to you to stand strong when things are tough and to be able to overcome adversity with dignity
- Fairness** – standards apply to everyone...including you
- Listen**...more than you talk! More on this one later!
- Good for the goose...good for the gander!



What your team wants from you

- ❑ **Empathy more than sympathy** – they want you to understand their issues and challenges...and help them fix things...not just feel bad for them
- ❑ **Positive outlook on things** – you don't have to be a cheerleader all the time, but generally looking at things as “glass half full” makes things better
- ❑ **Be emotionally stable/predictable** – if your team hesitates and thinks “did he/she have coffee or get up on the right side of the bed today?” this may apply to you!
- ❑ **Loyalty and trust** – good leaders build loyalty by demonstrating trust...they want to know that you will have their back



Be a “Strength Finder”!

- ❑ Some of the very best teams I have seen have been a collection of “odd fellows”...
 - Unique skills paired with quirks and other oddities ☺
 - The team success was influenced by individual skills, but mainly happened because the LEADER chose to focus on the positive/needed attributes of team members.
- ❑ Be a “Strength Finder”...”Hunt the Good Stuff”!
 - If a team member has 10 attributes...9 of them positive/good and one negative/bad...tendency of leaders is to dwell on the one weakness rather than the strengths! Try to reverse that paradigm!



Diversity and Inclusion

- ❑ **Diversity** – having the right people...with the right knowledge, skills, and experience at the table
- ❑ **Inclusion** – giving them a voice in the conversation and influence on the course of action
- ❑ **Leader Role** – build the right team...and let them know that their input is valued...even if sometimes you decide otherwise



An Idea or Answer that is not you own

Are YOU Man or Woman Enough to Handle it?

- One of the greatest impediments to effective leader decision-making is the limitation of the leader's knowledge, skill, and experience
- As the leader hopefully you are the most (or nearly the most) experienced in the room
- If you think you are also the smartest...you may be delusional...and you have probably not done a good job forming your team
- Are you confident enough to hear and consider ideas other than you own?
- And...does your team believe that?



Perfect – The Enemy of Good Enough

- ❑ Striving for excellence is a good thing...until it isn't!
- ❑ Sometimes perfection is just not the right answer
- ❑ Sometimes the 80% solution is the right Course of Action (COA)...examples: An 80% solution...
 - Executed effectively now is better than waiting until too late to execute the 100% solution
 - Provided by a teammate or stakeholder is often, at least in the long run, better than your mandated 100% solution
- ❑ Sometimes “good enough” is “good enough”
 - Does the 80% solution meet the mission objective(s)?
 - Can I (as the leader) get over that it is not being done exactly the way that I envisioned? 😊



“Tracer Burnout”

- ❑ For some military weapons we use tracers that give a visual indication of where projectiles are going. Often, the tracer or visual signal “burns out” long before the projectile stops. When that happens, we lose fidelity in knowing exactly where we are going and the effect we are having...lack of clarity and situational awareness.
- ❑ Translating to us...Effectively managing yourself and your team during sustained high OPTEMPO (Operations Tempo) missions...like 5 months of VPODs...and 15 months of COVID response!
- ❑ Condition – you (and/or team) are approaching or have reached the point of losing effectiveness and efficiency due to chronic stress and fatigue! This is a critically dangerous situation that requires the utmost focused response!
 - o Leaders – you are worse than no good to the team if you can no make sound decisions and provide clear guidance!



“Tracer Burnout” Con’t

❑ Identification

- o Self-Identification is often not effective – an effective method is to have a trusted “battle buddy” to tell you when you need to hand over the controls and take a knee!
- o Leaders are typically TERRIBLE at this and they often set exactly the wrong example! Very often, leaders do an excellent job of managing this for the team but ignoring it for themselves!

❑ Mitigation

- o Listen to your body!
- o Trust your battle buddy
- o Turn over the controls...really turn them over not just staying in overwatch
- o “Take a knee”, drink water, get some sleep, re-engage when your mind and body are ready!



Delegation

- ❑ Giving a subordinate leader/teammate both the responsibility and authority to get a task done that falls within your sphere of responsibility/oversight!
- ❑ Must be both responsibility and authority
- ❑ You **MUST** be able to step back and let your subordinate leaders/teammates do their job
- ❑ It doesn't mean you don't care or keep track...but standing over their shoulder and micromanaging are not effective things to do!
- ❑ This may be a perfect example of when the 80% solution can be the “right” solution!



Your Conduct as a Leader

- Take ownership
- Always be part of the solution not part of the problem!
- Once your leader has made a decision...embrace it as your own...anything else is a recipe for failure!
- Make no promise you cannot keep!
- Do what you said you would do...Always
- Be on time...you expect it of your team...and they will follow your example
- Be responsible...do your job and do it well...every time
- The first time you fail to enforce a standard...you have just set a new one!



Your Conduct as a Leader

- Be accessible/approachable...if your team cannot talk to you about issues...they will talk about it amongst themselves...and it will likely get worse not better
- Learn everything possible about the members of your team – the more and better you know them the better you will understand how to teach, coach, mentor and how to recognize little issues before become big issues!
- Listen...much more than you talk**



Leader-Team Interactions

- ❑ How you...the leader interact and communicate with the team will greatly impact the success of the mission
 - Treat with respect
 - Assume the best of intentions
 - Value and seek input and feedback
 - Appropriate tone of voice and body language
 - Identify strength and capabilities...and use them
 - Understand limitations...and work around them
 - **Remember “The Golden Rule”**



A difference in Attitude...

The difference between this...



This...



And This...



...can get you different results when used at the right or wrong time and with the right or wrong attitude...



Credit and Blame...

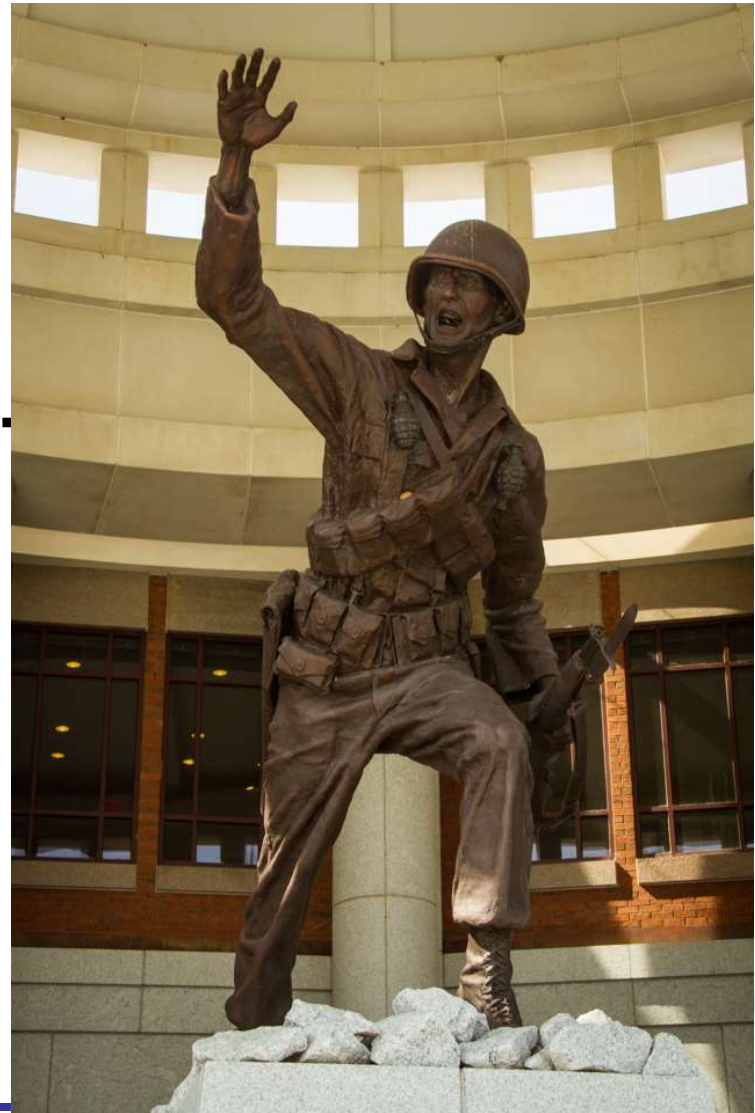
- Push the **credit and rewards** for a “job well done” down in the organization...GIVE credit
- Pull the **blame** for things not going well up to your leadership level...TAKE ownership and responsibility
- This is not to say you shouldn't hold individuals and team accountable but it matters a LOT how and where credit and blame are shown



Leadership Summary

□ Follow-Me!

- o Do as I do...
- o Lead by example...
- o Set the standard...



COMMUNICATIONS

Lack of effective communications is one of the greatest barriers to an efficiently functioning organization



Communications in your Organizations

- One of the most important parts of leadership and teamwork is **communications**
- How well do you communicate here/in your regular job?
- What type of communications challenges do you have?
- What are the impacts of communications challenges?
- What can YOU do to work towards more effective communications?



The Problem With Communication...

Someone famous once said....

“The biggest problem with communications is the illusion that it has happened.”

A.K.A. the picture of “right” in my mind is somehow magically transferred ...to you 😊



The Forensic View of things...

- I thought you were there when we talked about it...
- I thought you heard me...
- I thought I told about that...
- I thought that you understood...
- I thought that you already knew how to do that...
- How the #\$%& could you not know...everybody knows that...

Lost \$, Lost time, Low Quality
Hurt Feelings, Mission Not Completed
Injuries...Death!

Communication Basics

- ❑ Seek to understand; then to be understood
- ❑ Sender, receiver, message
- ❑ Written/visual, oral, and not-verbal
- ❑ How the “receiver” gets the message and what they believe
 - o Words or Non-Verbal...what matters more?
- ❑ Precise wording is still important, but if the other two are out of balance...you will only confuse the receiver



Two Most Powerful Communications Words

- ❑ These two words, when used properly will have a profound impact on not only your communications, but on every aspect of your job and life
- ❑ Any guesses what they are?

Please

Thank you



Communication

- ❑ Some keys to good communications
 - o Listen!!!
 - o Be precise – say exactly what you mean
 - o Choose words carefully
 - o Use an appropriate tone of voice
 - o Use appropriate body language
 - o Adjust your communication style to the style of others
 - o Clear Hand and other signals!!!

Rock Drill



Communicating BAD NEWS

- Leaders.....Your team will NEVER communicate well with you if you bite their head off every time they bring bad, unpleasant or other news that you do now want to hear
- Do you like bad news? Probably not!
- However, you should like GETTING bad news, but...

Don't shoot the messenger!!!

- You want them to bring you bad news...the sooner you know, the sooner you can fix it!



Communications Barriers

- ❑ Some common communications barriers
 - o “Foreign” languages
 - o Hearing deficiencies
 - o Workplace noise
 - o Education levels/Technical Experience
 - o Attitudes
 - o Cultural
- ❑ How do you solve/overcome these barriers?



Active listening Suggestions

- Show **attentiveness** – face the other person
- Show **interest** – maintain eye contact (just do not glare or stare)
- Avoid **prejudging** the message based on the person's appearance, position, speech, or accent
- Listen to the **intent**; figure out what is important to the speaker



Active listening Suggestions

- ❑ Avoid tuning out to prepare YOUR response
- ❑ Ask questions to clarify – Who, where, when, how, how many, what standard, etc.
- ❑ Avoid interrupting the speaker
- ❑ Encourage the speaker by smiling or nodding your head
- ❑ Stop....and think before responding –
 - **AVOID FOOT IN MOUTH DISEASE**
- ❑ Avoid trying to have the last word



Confirmation

- ❑ How do you know – if they “GOT IT”?

- ❑ “Is what **you** thought you said...what **they** heard you say?”

- ❑ Seek confirmation
 - o Write it down
 - o Ask for a “brief back”
 - o Ask confirming questions



If God had wanted us to talk more than listen, He would have given us two mouths rather than two ears

Ken Blanchard

Two eyes, two ears, one mouth...look and listen at least twice as much as you talk!!!



After Action Review

- What did you learn?
- What went well?
- What did not go well/what do we need to change?



Aquila SOG

- ❑ Pennsylvania Veteran Owned Small Business
- ❑ Seasoned professionals with many years of challenging leadership, military and business experience
- ❑ Core Services
 - Strategic Plan – Formulation and Implementation
 - Program/Project – Planning and Leadership
 - Project Rescue – Recovery of failing or failed projects and major initiatives
 - Leader and Team Development
 - Facilitation and Negotiation – finding common ground and resolution in the most challenging circumstances!
 - Operational Services and Special Studies – primarily Department of Defense and Government clients
- ❑ Aquila Senior Team
 - Wilbur E. Wolf III – wilbur.wolf@AquilaSOG.com
 - Patrick O. Carpenter – patrick.o.carpenter@AquilaSOG.com
 - **www.aquilaSOG.com**

