

# Leadership challenge

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



After reviewing a number of reports and assessment of the performances of the battalion in their last deployment in Iraq and in the post war phase too along with having conversations with the staffs and commanders of the battalion, a number of leadership challenges has been identified.

These are as follows:

Dissatisfaction among the staffs regarding the increasing workload:

One of the major challenge to the leadership of the 56th HBCT leadership has been the workload that the leaders assign to the staffs. Even after the Iraq war, The workload has been so stressful that the officer, Major Foldberg, who is least likely about complaining regarding workload has opened his mouth regarding his workload that deprived him of meeting his family during a well deserved break after returning from Iraq.

Looking at the pressure of the training programs after returning from Iraq, the officer has even considered the situation to be worse than their deployment in Iraq. This example only shows how dissatisfaction is generating among the soldiers regarding their job.

Lack of credibility of the training programs:

Another leadership challenge facing the 56th HBCT has been the complex and not-so-efficient training programs. In the newly structured BCT the commander as well as the staffs have to be trained not only to attain and maintain proficiency in traditional infantry and armor skills but also at planning and executing individual as well as collective skills in the areas beyond their expertise.

The situation is so bad that, the soldiers even got to be trained for wrong mission essential tasks during their training session before their deployment in Iraq. As a result, the HBCT staffs struggled badly in capitalizing on opportunities and anticipating potential threats.

Lack of trust of the staffs on the efficiency of the higher authority:

It's a highly serious thing to worry if staffs show lack of confidence on their leaders' efficiency. In a private conversation CSM Howell expressed his worry about his senior NCOs. According to him, although his seniors are competent, their work does not seem to bear any results. It only reflects lack of trust of staffs on their leaders.

Unwillingness of the leaders in involving subordinates in the decision making process:

Another major problem regarding the leadership in the 56th HBCT is that the leaders of this battalion have grown a tendency to ignore the subordinates' importance in the decision making process. A 360 degree assessment of commander and staff of the 56th HBCT by Center for Army Leadership also revealed that commanders have lack of willingness to include their subordinates in the decision making program and they also fell short of expectations regarding developing the skills of their staffs, providing adequate coaching and counseling.

Incompatible communication system:

The leadership of the 56th HBCT has also been facing the problem of building efficient communication system at the time of wars. For example, at

the time of Iraq war inefficient communication system created operational and personal frictions in the 56th HBCT.

Absence of clear definitions of the leaders roles:

Unless leadership is properly defined, it creates confusion among staffs which in turn has a potential to weaken command structure. The 56th HBCT also suffers from this problem. For example, the role of the DOC was not defined clearly at the time of the Iraq war. He performed multiple tasks beyond his area of operation.

Action plan:

In order to achieve the goal of making the 56th HBCT the best battalion in the Army, the following action steps should be taken:

Reduction of workload:

One of the major responsibility at the hand of the leaders is to provide job satisfaction to the staffs, otherwise they would loose interest in enhancing their performances. In the 56th HBCT while staffs express their dissatisfaction regarding their workload, the leaders are not paying much attention to what the staffs are soughting for.

While staffs are demanding longer breaks from their works, they are only receiving rude behavior from their seniors. Being the Brigade Executive Officer, my first action step would be to make the leaders realize the burden of work that the staffs are handling and their dissatisfaction. Actions should be taken to reduce the workload by some extent. The leaders should sanction the well deserved breaks of the staffs so that they can meet their

family. It would be able to reduce their stress and they can again join to their duties with a fresh mind. Then they would not be complaining about the workloads.

Development of effective training program:

The training program that the new structure of the battalion has been following, is imposing huge challenge at all levels of leadership as this kind of training programs used to have negative impact on the efficiency of a soldier as the soldier gets little time to concentrate on the areas of his expertise and has to divide their efforts in attaining skills in the areas beyond their expertise.

A training program becomes effective when it can enhance the efficiency of the staffs. Thus, in this case, in order to enhance efficiency of the staffs such a training program would be devised that would help the staffs concentrating on the areas of their expertise only so that at the collective level, efficiency of the whole brigade enhances.

Increasing credibility of the leaders:

Unless leaders are able to show positive outcomes from their actions, they can not gain the confidence of their subordinates. Leaders of the 56th HBCT till now did not pay much attention in this area. Now, they should made aware of the fact that unless they perform well they will lose credibility which will create negative effect on the overall performance of the battalion. I would ask my leaders to pay attention on this issue.

Increasing transparency in the decision making process by involving all the staffs in this process:

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When one realizes that his opinion is also important at the event of performing a job, he tries to give his hundred percent in his performance. The leaders would be made flexible in their mind setting at the time of making a decision. I would ask the leaders to ask the opinion of each staff at the time of taking a decision on a particular issue. In fact, it should be made mandatory for the leaders to involve every staff in the decision making process.

Development of a compatible communication system:

At the presence of incompatible communication system, confusion arises within the team which in turn creates friction. To deal with this problem, it would be made mandatory for the leaders to carry multiple radios and using them in all circumstances no matter what is the operational situation.

Establishment of well-defined leadership: the role of a leader would be made clear to all and a leader would perform only those tasks which his post demands. We do not need multitasking leader as it will only create confusion among the staffs. The pool of tasks should be divided appropriately among the leaders so that one does not need to perform other tasks that are not assigned to him.

Outcome:

The actions steps described above is expected to have positive effect in addressing the challenges facing by the leaders of the 56th HBCT. When workload will be reduced, it can be expected that the workers' dissatisfaction will be reduced which will bear positive impact on their performance. On the other hand, effective training program is also supposed to have positive

effect in enhancing the skill of the staffs as they can now concentrate only on their areas of expertise and can improve in these areas. Increased credibility of the leaders and a healthy relation of the leaders with the subordinates can only do good for the battalion.

Once the staffs are given the power of expressing their opinion in a decision making process, they would also be ready to listen the point of views of their leaders which will ultimately result in a decision acceptable to everybody. Establishment of a well defined leadership and a compatible communication system can also be expected to generate a positive impact on the performance of the staffs as the operational and personal confusions are expected to be reduced which will increase the staffs confidence on leadership and performance.

In order to assess whether the action is successful, an interview at personal levels with the leaders as well as the staffs will be conducted and they will be asked how they are feeling about the new system and whether the leadership is satisfying.