

The Company Leader

Leadership Lessons from the Tactical Level of War



A Deeper Look at Leader Attributes and Competencies

The Army Leader Requirements Model, outlined in the Army Doctrine Hierarchy (FM, ADP, ADRP) 6-22, is composed of **attributes** and **competencies** expected of Army Leaders. This comprises what an Army Leader is (attributes) and what he or she does (competencies). If you have not heard of the Army Leader Requirements Model you have surely seen it – on every NCOER and OER. These are the areas where you are being evaluated: Character, Presence, Intellect, Leads, Develops, Achieves.

These six words are packed with meaning and expectation. The final pages of the OER Support Form defines them for the Army. While these are effective and canonical definitions, there was just more I expected. As a rater and senior rater, I provided the thoughts below to my team as more clear and concise guidance regarding each. The below comments are not to replace the Army’s definition, nor are they all encompassing. They are additive and are there to drive a conversation in counseling.

There are also “Easter egg” readings I provided my team before the counseling and placed in specific areas of this document to trigger conversation.

Character

“Be your character what it will, it will be known, and nobody will take it upon your word.” –Lord Chesterfield

1. Character is doing the right thing when no one is watching. Every day, through your words and actions, you are building a personal brand. Your reputation, tied to your integrity, will either carry or hinder you throughout your career. Be intentional about who you are and what you stand for.
2. Uphold the standards; sometimes you will have to make unpopular decisions (Read “[Stay at 17 Inches](#)”).
3. Listen to your Team, but also understand that while you can delegate authority, you cannot abdicate responsibility.

4. Your character will be the foundation of who you are and what you achieve in this profession and this life; be intentional about it.
5. Humility is the most difficult and perhaps one of the most critical aspects of leadership. Never forget who you are, and keep it in perspective. (Read “[The Bathsheba Syndrome](#)”).

Presence

“Be where your feet are.” –Kevin Elko, PhD

1. Be competent, organized, dependable, motivated, and display initiative. You are setting the example and representing leadership in your organization – and the United States Army – to everyone you encounter. This is especially true with the Soldiers you directly lead.
2. Demonstrate humility; humble yourself before your Soldiers, your peers, and your superiors. When we lack humility, and begin to think we are beyond fault or error, we are headed for dangerous waters. Either humble yourself, or you will be humbled – the former hurts a lot less. (Read “[Fall of the Warrior King](#)”)
3. Fitness: You must be physically (PT, gym, athletics), mentally (family, friends, reading) and spiritually (church, meditation, recreation) fit, and you should inspire your Soldiers to be as well. Holistic fitness is a foundational aspect of our leadership, our unit, and our profession. There is a lot more to talk about here, but as a baseline – ensure you are deliberate and comprehensive in building your unit fitness plan and managing your own fitness.
4. Exude the Army Values. ***Someone is always watching*** (Read “[Officer Expectations](#)”).
5. When briefing, rehearse, stand, and be confident. Prepare so you don’t need to act like you know what you’re talking about – but rather DO know what you are talking about.



Intellect

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” –Nelson Mandela

1. The Army makes a publication for everything you need to do; use them. Ranges and training prepares Soldiers’ proficiency and TTPs. You will plan, run, and resource training. Adhere to the 8-step model and review ADRP 7-0. Make it hard, realistic, rewarding, practical, and safe.
 - <https://atn.army.mil/>
 - <https://strykernet.army.mil/default.aspx>
 - <http://www.adtdl.army.mil/>
 - <http://www.apd.army.mil/>
 - <https://fmsweb.army.mil/protected/WebTAADS/tools.asp>
2. While it is critical to master what the Army tells you to do, we are also charged to innovate. Do not be afraid to try something new, make mistakes, learn, and find a new path.
3. Don’t submit garbage products. Proofread, spellcheck, and bounce your products off of someone before submitting them. ***Your products represent you***

4. With education, there is no limit to what you can achieve. Education is the great equalizer; seek out wisdom. Read, broaden, think, discuss, write, and add to the canon of the Profession of Arms.

Leads

“Regard your Soldiers as your children and they will follow you into the deepest valleys. Look on them as your own beloved sons and they will stand by you even unto death.” – Sun Tzu

1. Leadership is both an art and a science. No one is born a leader. You are born with affinities and attributes that are then developed. Develop yourself as a leader and never stop developing.
2. Prepare and review a Leader’s Book (MAL, Roster/Admin Data, Sub HR, Tools, MFR Example, AGAR Example, OER SF, Counseling, NCOER, etc.) Leading is not all about numbers, but leaders know the numbers. They know the data and they know their people.



3. Communicate up, down, and laterally. 90% of the problems we face at the tactical and organizational levels of the Army can be attributed to a failure of communication somewhere along the lines.
4. Give to CFC or other organizations/causes (as well as AER). We cannot and will not order anyone to give to these organization. But, part of leading is giving and being generous. If you support these organizations and explain their importance, your unit will support them too.

Develops

“The one quality that can be developed by studious reflection and practice is the leadership of men.”- General Dwight D. Eisenhower

1. You are part of a Team, and you should instill this mindset in your organization. You’re part of the Battalion Team, Company Team, Officer/Enlisted Team, the Army Team, etc. Develop your team, and be involved in the development of the larger team.
2. There is no “us versus them” mentality when dealing with elements outside of your control. You won’t disparage S6 when your account activation is slow. You won’t disparage the mechanics when your vehicles have faults. You will be a supportive member of everyone who asks of you.
3. Use the pronouns we, us, and our ... instead of me, my, and mine. Inclusive language inspires and inclusive culture. We care about who you are as an individual, as you should about those you lead, but you are part of something bigger now. As Coach Lou Holtz used to say to players as they came to the University of Notre Dame, “You didn’t come here for us to be like you. You came here to be like us.” We have a culture and a standard – understand it, live it, and instill it into your part of our team.
4. Cross-train and develop your Soldiers and subordinate leaders. You must prepare your subordinates to function two levels above their current duty position (Read “[Who’s Got the Monkey](#)”).

5. Get into your Soldiers' business, and hold leaders accountable to know what their Soldiers are doing. Soldiers won't always do what you EXPECT, but they will accomplish what you INSPECT. This may seem like micromanaging, but it is the only way to get ahead of identifying high-risk Soldiers. Getting to know your men is one of the ways you care for them.
6. Your success will be determined by your subordinates' achievements/success. If you ensure they are successful, you will be as well.
7. You will have additional duties that you will have never dreamt pertained to your job and duty position. They probably don't, but they need to be done to make this Company and Battalion successful. Do them, and do them well. We are deliberate in how we assign these and match them with areas where we believe you may benefit from such experiential development.
8. Take and review notes. Always have something on and with which to write.
9. Be ready to assume more responsibility. Learn all you can in your current job, because you will only have it once. Your next position will have different challenges, so don't waste this opportunity.
10. Build relationships within the organization and outside of it. They will benefit you, and this unit. Your reputation – brand – is the most important thing you have. It is a combination of your character, your competence, and your attitude. The longer you stay in the Army, the smaller it gets. If things get testy, be a gentleman/lady and walk away respectfully – you don't have the right to burn bridges.



Achieves

“You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do.” –Henry Ford

1. It is fitting the first attribute the Army lists is Character. It is the most important attribute. Character is greater than Competence. But, notice, that doesn't say it is greater than Incompetence. It is also fitting that the Army saves Achieves for last; it is the bottom line.
2. Technical and tactical knowledge is gained from schools, training and self-study. Self-study being the most important, but most neglected. Study the manuals, ask your peers, observe and ask questions of other leaders in the unit. There is an abundance of information available to you as a leader; FMs, TMs, and Smart Books. You are not expected to know every question, but you need to know when and where to look for them.
3. Take initiative! Do not stop at the first sign of adversity. (Read “[A Message to Garcia](#)”)
4. Cooperate and collaborate.

5. Everything you do is to ready your unit to deploy, fight, and win. Gone are the days of having a LAD and knowing when/where we will deploy. We must be ready to fight – and win – our nation’s wars. This includes the readiness of equipment and people.
6. Maintenance and accountability prepares our equipment. You should know your equipment and shortages better than anyone. Sub-hand receipt every piece of equipment down to the end user, and conduct inventories to hold them accountable. Accountability won’t make you the best leader, but a lack thereof will hold you back. Come up on the net when something is lost – bad news does not get better with age. Have a dialogue with the Executive Officer and Supply Sergeant weekly about the status of your equipment and shortages. Maintain your Hand Receipt, shortages, sub-HRs, change documents within a notebook that is readily available. The American tax-payer has entrusted you with millions of dollars-worth of equipment. Do not let them down with the loss of the slightest piece of equipment. ***He who is faithful in little will be faithful in much***

In closing, if you live out the Ranger Creed and act with character, pride, and perseverance, then you will more than succeed.



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