MILITARY MANAGEMENT: NEW TREND FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Anthony J Jackson, Prof, Gyeongju University
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By

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Western International University

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With so many veterans returning from war and to jobs they left, be it management, senior management positions or business owners the military touts the veteran’s ability to lead a organization. Jack Yoest writing for Small Business Trends indicates that some small business owners have a desire to run a company like a military unit. The business owner understands, almost instinctively, that there are unique management strategies that military organizations employ to accomplish difficult missions. And perhaps die in the attempt. To sacrifice the last full measure would be, to say the least, a motivated employee.

Mr. Yoest list three qualities that seasoned business leaders would look for in a military person or concept.

1. Persuasion, the ability to influence a point of view and enlist a following. Not blind obedience
2. Discipline, “the prompt obedience to orders”. Compliance is necessary for a team to function.
3. Field Expedient Methodology, using simple tasks and jobs to mold organizations. Flexibility and Innovation.

Former Pawan Hans Helicopter chairman and managing director A. Natarajan says” If you go back in history, all management techniques have been drawn from the Army. It is about motivating men to deliver in the face of even death.

Bhaskar Ghose, managing director of IndusInd Bank states that “command and discipline is the best thing that corporations can learn from the military”.

But not everyone agrees that military management qualities and are best for civilian organizations and businesses. Zoli Erdos Editor-in-Chief, Program Chair, SVASE (Silicon Valley Association of Startup Entrepreneurs) believes that small businesses are
better off with a team of partners and collaborators than a military organization. According to him not just for the small ones but also for large organizations that is why so many military commanders flock to the Fortune 1000 companies. Mr. Erdos had the misfortune of working for a Navy Captain turned Corporate VP who he said resorted to shuffling around his management team every six months and was a master of alienating customers.

Is a military type system right for small business and corporations? I think the answer lies in the company goals and organization culture. In large organizations the impact of strict controls may not have an adverse effect on the total organization because of other internal and external variables. But with a small company the effect would be felt from the top down. Small companies operate under fragile conditions with the owner or boss in close proximity to everything and with more direct controls. More strict requirements would lead to diminished morale, loss of productivity, absenteeism and a high turnover rate.

According to P. Keskonis and KM Siddiqi who did a study concerning the factors that affect small business failure said “As we enter the twenty-first century, employee morale as it pertains to profits and lost production appears to be a major concern.

Managements of small business contracting firms need to recognize employee morale as a critical issue for profitability. Since morale affects profit and productivity, it is extremely important to understand the factors that influence morale and the rationale behind these factors Keskonis said.

REFERENCES

P Keskonis, P., Siddiqi, K.M. Empowering Workforce to Achieve Their Maximum Potential Southern Polytechnic State University, Marietta Georgia
