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# AJ's 5 Goals for Organizational Leaders

by AJ Powell | 1 Comment | 8 min read



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As a professional soldier, I have had several primary jobs over the years, filled with increasing levels of responsibility with each position. During my 12 year career in the United States Armed Services I had some amazing opportunities to experience leadership at all levels. As I gained seniority, experience and expertise in my fields, I found that I spent more and more of my time teaching, coaching, guiding, and mentoring others towards being better and more competent – both tactically and technically. The development of myself – both as an individual and as a soldier – increased my leadership potential and capacity, allowing me greater influence across an organization. What I found was that, we – as leaders – are often driven by our organizations, by their collective success, and by our need to raise each other up to greater heights, and that these things work to feed a continuous cycle of positive development, improvement, and generate a culture of success.



As leaders, we must be highly self-motivated, always willing to learn, to grow, and to lead by example. We must remain driven to success, driven to achieve. In my experience, I have learned that all organizations are only as good as the individuals that make them up, no matter how big or how small, no matter whether they were well-established and successful, or just starting out. Having served in quite a few different organizations throughout my career, experiencing the different cultures and aspects that make them successful, it didn't take long before I realized that the keys to success within an organization can be boiled down to a few very simple goals. Five goals for which to move an organization forward, five simple key ideas that can mean the difference between a successful organization, or an organization of failure. These Five Goals for Organizational Leaders are often pushed aside by personal ambition and toxic leadership, leaving the organization to crumble from the inside out. But if thought about carefully, they can become the Organizational Leadership "Key's to Success", and it starts by placing the individual first.

## AJ's 5 Goals for Organizational Leaders



## 1: Take Care of Each Other:

Goals should start here. We, the People of the Organization, must come first. Individuals make the organization, you cannot have it without them. This means that in order to improve teamwork, improve the quality of work, and overall improve the organization, we must take care of each other first. And this does not simply mean the worker only, but families as well. Too often are families left out of the organizations umbrella, too often left out of the scope. But families have a tremendous impact on the abilities, capabilities, and well-being of employees. Everyone is important to the team, and all have an equal right to feel, know, and understand their importance. Do you want to create a powerful, capable, high-performance organization? Start with taking care of individuals, teach them to care for each other, and teamwork will improve, motivation will improve, satisfaction will improve, and success will follow.



## 2: Breed a Culture of Success:

Organizations are a society, a culture contained in a world all their own, and they have cultural dynamics all their own as well. If you want a successful team, the culture must be motivated to success. They must breath, eat, sleep, think, feel, hear, smell and speak success. Now this does not always mean that life can be without failures. Yet even in failure there are lessons that can be learned, a new perspective to be gained, and a new path to follow. We must be driven to seek accomplishment in all things we do, even, and especially, the little things. How do we do this? We set large goals, reverse plan, then make smaller ones to reach the large ones. We rise each day with a purpose to reach them, hit the ground running as hard as we can, and check them off when we complete them. We see our progress, and soon realize our accomplishments. We recognize those achievements, and share in that with everyone in the organization, giving real credit where it is due. In the end, we can look back at all we accomplished together, and forward to all that we will accomplish tomorrow. This creates motivation to seek new goals, and with each person's goals, the organization grows.



### 3: Promote Lifelong Education:

Education is a lifelong process, no one knows everything, and those who stagnate in their pursuit to learn, cease to grow as a person. Organizations are the people that make them, and that means that in order for them to grow, the people must grow. As such, it must always be stressed that self-improvement should be a priority. However, this is not just an individual task, but one that the organization itself can also participate in. Leading training groups, conducting career advancement classes, sponsoring leadership courses, and rewarding academic accomplishment are all things the organization can do to foster and promote lifelong educational pursuit. As individuals learn and grow more in their personal lives, their professional lives will bring increased capabilities to the dynamics of the organization. The results will increase the caliber of team members, foster creativity and increase capabilities.



#### 4: Train Like We Fight:

Get serious about training, stop watering it down. We have a job to do, a mission to accomplish, and training can make or break our chances of coming out on top. Watered down training breeds watered down capabilities, and when the going gets tough, those bad habits developed from weak training will become painfully obvious in our struggle to face the challenges ahead. Do you want to win? Do you strive for success? Do you want to be the best? Then get serious about training, train like you fight. Of course keep it safe, but be as realistic as possible. Know your limitations, then set goals to move past them. If practice makes perfect, then let's set the bar high from the start, just barely out of reach. When we start to reach it, once we have had a taste of it, move it a bit higher and watch the growth continue. Training like you fight instills successful habits, teaches people the value of self-evaluation, how to find bad habits, and remove them as lessons learned. Going into the fight with well-honed skills developed through real training can mean the difference between winning the engagement, or a humiliating defeat.



## 5: Understand our Purpose:

Who are we? What do we do? Why do we do it? How do we do it? It is essential for all team members to understand who we are and what we do, but sometimes our purpose can become unclear. With all dynamic organizations, our operations move quickly, and our attention is constantly shifting. Because of this, sometimes we forget our purpose. When this happens, we become complacent, and in some professions, loss of life can happen because of it. It is imperative during these times that we are reminded of the big picture. We must be reminded of who we are, what we do, and why we do it. We must stress the importance of our jobs, and exactly how they relate to the big picture. And above all, we must realize each person's contributions to the collective effort. In short, we must have a crystal clear sense of purpose. This also reassures individuals of their importance to the organization, as well as shows just how they are a part of its success. When individuals understand their importance to the big picture, they gain a stronger sense of self-worth. This clear sense of purpose drives morale and increases motivation within the organization. These things make a world of difference within the effectiveness of organizations as a whole. After all, an organization with little to no direction and fuzzy goals is doomed to failure.



Take care of each other, breed a culture of success, promote lifelong education, train like we fight, and understand our purpose. Just five simple goals, five simple ideas that connect organizations to success. It may seem like a lot when thought of initially, and truthfully, there is no set in stone method for each leader to establish how to go about accomplishing them. Some may be able to clearly understand the right path from the start, while others may require time and careful contemplation. However, one thing is for certain, all successful organizations have these five simple things in common...

...and it's up to YOU, the leader, to make it happen.

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## About the author



### AJ Powell

AJ is a retired U.S. Army NCO who served in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army. He is a combat veteran, and has participated in contingency operations around the world. AJ is the Owner of Veteran Leadership Solutions, the Founder and Editor in Chief of The Warfighter Journal, and is a published Sociological Analyst, Researcher, Guest Lecturer, and Public Speaker. He is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a focus on Sociology and a science degree in Organizational Leadership, and is published in the field of sociology. AJ is an inductive analyst; public figure; researcher/writer; aviator; a certified advanced operational diver; professional instructor, trainer, mentor, and adviser; snowboarder; motorcycle rider; world traveler; he enjoys long distance endurance events, and much more.

