2019-06

REVITALIZATION OF AIR FORCE SOF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Redaja, Matthew O.

Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

DEFENSE ANALYSIS CAPSTONE REPORT

REVITALIZATION OF AIR FORCE SOF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

by

Matthew O. Redaja

June 2019

Thesis Advisor:	Bradley J. Strawser
Second Reader:	Marco S. DiRenzo

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (*Leave blank*)	2. REPORT DATE June 2019	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Defense Analysis Capstone Report	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE REVITALIZATION OF AIR FORCE SOF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Matthew O. Redaja			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Military retention is a complex problem, particularly when it comes to leadership development. Currently, there are gaps in the Air Force's force development for officers that could be addressed by best practices drawn from business leadership. This capstone explored avenues for revitalizing leadership development for Air Force Special Operations Forces and delivering additional intellectual capital to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School and the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Cochran Group. Based on an analysis of programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, and McDonald's, we offer three recommendations for AFSOC: (1) Refine onboarding programs to focus on dialogue and interaction, and to lay a foundation of learning and ownership of development early in an officer's career; (2) create a consistent focus on individual development through additional customized support and resources to foster an atmosphere of leadership in action; and (3) enhance networking and mentoring programs to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders. The recommendations provide a comprehensive approach that begins when officers enter AFSOC and does not end at a specific time, but rather seeks to empower constant engagement among the Special Operations Forces officer corps.

14. SUBJECT TERMS human capital management, talent management, leadership, development, AFSOC, Air Force, SOF, onboarding programs, feedback, mentoring, networking			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 91
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

i

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REVITALIZATION OF AIR FORCE SOF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Matthew O. Redaja
Major, United States Air Force
BBA, Loyola Marymount University, 2005
MS, University of Arkansas, 2009

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS
(IRREGULAR WARFARE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2019**

Approved by: Bradley J. Strawser
                 Advisor

                 Marco S. DiRenzo
                 Second Reader

                 John J. Arquilla
                 Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

Military retention is a complex problem, particularly when it comes to leadership development. Currently, there are gaps in the Air Force's force development for officers that could be addressed by best practices drawn from business leadership. This capstone explored avenues for revitalizing leadership development for Air Force Special Operations Forces and delivering additional intellectual capital to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School and the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Cochran Group. Based on an analysis of programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, and McDonald's, we offer three recommendations for AFSOC: (1) Refine onboarding programs to focus on dialogue and interaction, and to lay a foundation of learning and ownership of development early in an officer's career; (2) create a consistent focus on individual development through additional customized support and resources to foster an atmosphere of leadership in action; and (3) enhance networking and mentoring programs to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders. The recommendations provide a comprehensive approach that begins when officers enter AFSOC and does not end at a specific time, but rather seeks to empower constant engagement among the Special Operations Forces officer corps.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF TABLES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Airman Comprehensive Assessment
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
CGO	company-grade officer
CoL	continuum of learning
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
DoD	Department of Defense
DT	development team
ExPo	exceptional potential
LAMP	Leaders at McDonald's Program
PME	professional military education
SMSG	Sales, Marketing, and Service Group (Microsoft)
SOF	Special Operation Forces
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFSOS	U.S. Air Force Special Operations School
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Revitalizing officer leadership development for the Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) is critical to squadrons, the U.S. Air Force (USAF), and U.S. Special Operations Command. Doing so aligns with the Special Operations Forces Truth that "Humans are more important than hardware,"[1] for it is the "people, not the equipment, that makes the critical difference."[2] This capstone provides recommendations for revitalizing AFSOF officer leadership development by examining best practices in the civilian business world. It delivers additional intellectual capital to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) and the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Cochran Group in the current development of four courses focusing on leadership in squadrons, and provides an AFSOF development strategy to build joint teams and joint leaders. This research into successful business leadership development programs offers insights that AFSOC can implement to further invest in its leaders.

Currently, deliberate development for Air Force officers does not occur until they meet with a development team, which happens about ten years into an officer's career. The four leadership courses USAFSOS is creating aim to bridge this gap by providing development opportunities earlier in officers' careers. With the challenges of retaining talent in the Department of Defense and Air Force, however, it is imperative to look for innovative ways to develop future leaders. This capstone analyzes four case studies of civilian leadership development—from Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's—and compares them to the processes of the USAF and AFSOF. The conclusions identify three recommendations that can help overcome USAF development gaps and supplement USAFSOS's current leadership course curriculum.

Recommendation #1: *Refine onboarding programs to focus on dialogue and interaction.* Onboarding programs can lay a foundation of learning and help officers feel

---

[1] "SOF Truths," U.S. Army Special Operations Command, accessed April 16, 2019, https://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/SOFTruths.html.

[2] "SOF Truths," U.S. Special Operations Command, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.socom.mil/about/sof-truths.

ownership of their development from early in their careers. The two main objectives of the onboarding program proposed in this capstone are to preempt failures in future roles and to establish an ownership mindset. The suggested initial onboarding session is mandatory and could be implemented at USAFSOS, much like the Introduction to Special Operations Course, which all newly assigned AFSOC personnel must take within six months. Remaining sessions can occur at the wing, group, and squadron levels at various intervals, with a focus on officer professional development and leadership development skills required as officers progress through their time as company and field-grade officers. These sessions should occur in a classroom or briefing-style format and should focus on dialogue and interaction. However, AFSOC should also consider transitioning this in-person onboarding program into a digital delivery method, which will be less time consuming.

Recommendation #2: *Create a consistent focus on individual development through additional customized support and resources to foster leadership in action.* Leadership education and individual feedback are at the core of this second recommendation. Feedback is critical, but how it is given largely determines its impact. Successful development begins with individual assessments and development plans. It is then followed by 360-degree assessments, expert classroom instruction, and one-on-one developmental coaching as needed. Limited individual coaching by a third-party service can foster and accelerate developmental progress. Its personalized service can also alleviate constraints on current manpower and time requirements. Finally, successful development is also supplemented by online resources, expert classroom instruction, and personal interaction to hold officers accountable. AFSOC must consider leveraging technology to increase communication and collaboration in the future.

Recommendation #3: *Enhance networking and mentoring programs to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders.* AFSOC can begin by emphasizing the importance of networking and mentoring and capitalizing on the existing USAF MyVECTOR system. Networking and mentoring are voluntary, but they are essential to developing well-rounded, professional, and competent future leaders who can help Airmen maximize their

full potential.[3] MyVECTOR's 2017 implementation has breathed new life into the USAF's commitment to mentoring. It provides 24/7 capability for mentees to choose mentors from across the global USAF enterprise, to include active duty, reserve, civilian, and retired personnel. AFSOC could also create an online resource of its own to bridge the gap in individual learning resources.

Outside these specific recommendations, AFSOC could also establish recurring leadership conferences or informal gatherings at the squadron and group levels. Bringing individuals together from varying units can create more opportunities for officers to meet and create new networks of peers and mentors from different backgrounds. This further encourages the use of MyVECTOR; by encouraging early introduction and creating reoccurring opportunities to meet others from varying backgrounds, the Air Force can establish a growing buy-in and immersion for MyVECTOR among officers, which will in turn aid in development. Further, if officers use this technology early in their careers and frequently thereafter, they are more likely to grow to become genuine mentors and to create the networks necessary for success and leadership development.

This capstone's recommendations outline a comprehensive approach that begins when officers enter AFSOC and does not end at a specific time, but rather seeks to empower constant engagement among the AFSOF officer corps. Some challenges when considering implementation include resistance to change, request for additional resources, and the leveraging of technology to develop the next generation of leaders in a digital era. The need to develop leaders is universal and critical to mission accomplishment across the military and business worlds alike. Finding the right balance to train, develop, and educate Air Commandos while achieving mission success will continue to be a challenge for all AFSOF leaders.

---

[3] Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, AFMAN 36–2643 (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, May 2017), 3, https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/ publication/afman36-2643/afman36-2643.pdf.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I.   INTRODUCTION

Leadership and management are areas of study that have universal application in every organization. Whether the industry is civilian, governmental, corporate, nonprofit, or educational, leaders create a culture for their employees to achieve the visions and missions of their organizations. The effectiveness of one's leadership profoundly affects the success of an organization. But how do successful leaders develop? Are they born, made, or a combination of the two? There is much literature regarding leadership from successful military leaders—such as Admiral William H. McRaven's *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life…And Maybe the World*[1] and General Colin Powell's *It Worked For Me: In Life and Leadership*[2]—which civilian leaders, employees, and organizations welcome as great advice. However, it seems military organizations and leaders are hesitant to draw upon leadership and management best practices from the civilian world. This capstone offers research that can help bridge the gap between effective civilian leadership and management best practices, and practices in the military. In an era of scarce resources and rapid technological changes, the military—and specifically the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)—could benefit from best practices in civilian business models for developing effective leaders.

This capstone provides three recommendations designed to revitalize Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) officer leadership development. It delivers additional intellectual capital to the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School (USAFSOS) and the AFSOC Cochran Group in their current development of four courses focused on leadership in squadrons, and as they create an AFSOF development strategy to build joint teams and joint leaders. The recommendations in this capstone can supplement these stakeholders'

---

[1] William H. McRaven, *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life…And Maybe the World* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2017).

[2] Colin Powell, *It Worked For Me: In Life and Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).

current leadership development efforts in response to the call from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) to revitalize squadrons.[3]

A.   INVESTMENT IN LEADERSHIP

"Humans are more important than hardware" is one of the five truths of Special Operation Forces (SOF).[4] U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) places priority on training its members for combat, for it is the "people, not the equipment, that makes the critical difference."[5] This human investment extends to the personal, professional, and leadership development of all SOF members. The current CSAF, General David L. Goldfein, shares this view, and has taken initiative to revitalize squadrons, which he believes "are the heartbeat of the USAF because that is where we develop, train, and build Airmen."[6] Businesses similarly agree that it is "necessary to develop effective leaders to address challenges and to position organizations for future success."[7] While AFSOC is in a unique position—it must develop, train, and build AFSOF from the clear strategy, culture, values, and mission sets of USSOCOM and the United States Air Force (USAF)—AFSOC can use insights from successful business leadership development programs to further invest in its leaders.

Since General Goldfein's tenure as CSAF began, there have been strides in revitalizing the USAF within wings and squadrons. For example, the 366th Fighter Wing at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, began testing a concept that allows squadron

---

[3] David L. Goldfein, "CSAF Focus Area: The Beating Heart of the Air Force … Squadrons!" United States Air Force, August 2016, https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/csaf/letters/CSAF_Focus_Area _Squadrons.pdf.

[4] "SOF Truths," U.S. Army Special Operations Command, accessed April 16, 2019, https://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/SOFTruths.html.

[5] "SOF Truths," U.S. Special Operations Command, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.socom.mil/ about/sof-truths.

[6] Goldfein, "CSAF Focus Area," 2.

[7] Rebecca R. Ray, "For CEOs, It's Still about Developing Leaders," in *Global Leadership Forecast 2018: 25 Research Insights to Fuel Your People Strategy* (Bridgeville, PA: Development Dimensions International, 2008), 4, https://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/glf2018/global-leadership-forecast-2018_ddi_tr.pdf?ext=.pdf.

commanders to report directly to the wing commander.[8] The initiative also "flattens the organization structure to encourage faster, decentralized decision-making and creates an environment where people are empowered to lead."[9] Additionally, the enlisted force began innovating its professional military education (PME) system as a response to the 2018 National Defense Strategy's call to evolve PME and emphasize intellectual leadership and military professionalism.[10] The new system allows 100 percent of enlisted members to attend in-residence PME and eliminates the prerequisite of completing PME by correspondence. In another example, the USAF's Air University began a new leader development course in fall 2018 that helps future squadron commanders build the skills necessary to create "effective, adaptive and lethal" squadrons.[11] On the tail of these improvements, the timing is prime for AFSOC to reevaluate and improve how it is developing its officer corps and preparing officers for success.

This capstone looks to the business industry to determine how AFSOC can best invest and develop its workforce. Particularly, the research explores the leadership development programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's, which have successfully developed leaders and have prepared employees who show the highest potential for future leadership roles. The basis of selection for these businesses is largely due to their refined and proven leadership development programs which can be seamlessly executed within AFSOC. While searching for feasible solutions, the ultimate question this capstone research project asks is: How do businesses develop successful leaders and what best practices could AFSOC implement to revitalize its officer leadership development practices?

---

[8] James Bolinger, "Air Force Tests New Wing Structure that Eliminates Group Commanders," *Stars and Stripes*, May 28, 2018, https://www.stripes.com/news/us/air-force-tests-new-wing-structure-that-eliminates-group-commanders-1.529827.

[9] Bolinger.

[10] "AF Announces Changes to Courses 14 and 15," U.S. Air Force, April 26, 2018, www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1503016/af-announces-changes-to-courses-14-and-15/.

[11] Phil Berube, "Air University's New Leader Development Course Helps Squadron Commanders 'Thrive,'" U.S. Air Force, December 28, 2018, https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1721978/air-universitys-new-leader-development-course-helps-squadron-commanders-thrive/.

B.   METHOD AND SCOPE

Over the past five years, USAF leadership has been focusing on the Air Force's retention problem; CSAF Goldfein specifically acknowledged a pilot shortage back in the summer of 2016.[12] But retention is not just a problem for pilots: the USAF is also facing a shortage of experienced aircrew. To address this concern, the Aircrew Crisis Task Force was established in March 2017.[13] The task force is now focusing on retention efforts that reflect the "large investment" the Air Force has made in its Airmen, with a desire "to retain that talent."[14] Retention issues can be complex, but research into effective civilian business practices can offer solutions. One of the many ways to improve retention is to improve workforce and leadership development programs. Other solutions involve various components of *talent management* or *human capital management*, as it is called in business, or *force development*, as it is known in the USAF. According to the Department of the Air Force, force development is "dynamic and deliberate in design to develop institutional and occupational competencies in all Airmen through education, training, and experience opportunities to satisfy current and future Air Force mission requirements."[15] All three terms—talent management, human capital management, and force development—rely on the same principles when it comes to employees (or Airmen): attracting, selecting, developing, rewarding, and appraising.[16]

This capstone also provides additional research to supplement a previous Naval Postgraduate School thesis by Paul R. Andrews, Jr., and Brett Stitt titled "Human Capital

---

[12] Christopher Woody, "The Air Force Is Facing A 'Quiet Crisis' of Manpower, but Recruitment Isn't the Problem," Task & Purpose, October 10, 2017, https://taskandpurpose.com/air-force-manpower-recruitment.

[13] Christopher Woody, "The Air Force Has Made a Big Personnel Move to Address its Ongoing Pilot Shortage," Business Insider, August 28, 2017, https://www.businessinsider.com/general-now-leading-air-force-aircrew-crisis-task-force-2017-8.

[14] "Finding Answers: Task Force Director Is Looking for Ways to Solve Pilot Shortage," *Airman Magazine*, June 27, 2018, https://airman.dodlive.mil/2018/06/27/finding-answers/.

[15] Department of the Air Force, *Executing Total Force Development*, 5.

[16] Edward E. Lawler III, *Reinventing Talent Management* (Oakland, CA: BK/Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017), ix.

Management of Air Force SOF: Leadership Identification, Selection, and Cultivation."[17] Their thesis examines ways for AFSOC to improve its human capital management and leadership, focusing on the broader aspects of force development, to include case studies on General Electric and the U.S. Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. Andrews and Stitt found inflation and vagueness in USAF officer performance reports, a deficit of feedback, antiquated management software, and flaws in the selection and identification of high-potential officers. Their recommendations indicate that the USAF must improve its methods for identifying and selecting future senior leaders, providing individual feedback, mentoring, coaching, and developing technological systems for management.

Working from Andrews and Stitt's foundation, this capstone narrows the scope to further focus on the *development* of AFSOF officers by looking to successful business examples for solutions. Refining leadership development is critical, as well-developed leaders are necessary for mission accomplishment. Like Andrews and Stitt's thesis before it, research into USAF force development for this capstone uncovered development gaps. The USAFSOS is taking steps to resolve these gaps by creating leadership courses, and the recommendations developed in the capstone can help shape those courses for success.

The civilian leadership development programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's, which are compared to USAF and AFSOF processes in this capstone, were selected due to the companies' backgrounds of finance, health, technology, and food service. These particular companies were chosen for their overall business success and continuous improvement in refining their talent management processes. Moreover, these businesses provide successful programs, and elements of their programs could be feasibly implemented for AFSOC. If implemented, the recommendations of this capstone will not only fill USAF development gaps but will also supplement USAFSOS actions and contribute to the overall revitalization of AFSOF officer leadership development.

---

[17] Paul R. Andrews Jr. and Brett Stitt, "Human Capital Management of Air Force SOF: Leadership Identification, Selection, and Cultivation" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2017), http://hdl.handle.net/10945/56729.

C. ORGANIZATION OF CAPSTONE

This capstone consists of five chapters. Chapter I has introduced the purpose, stakeholder interest, scope, and method of research. Chapter II examines the importance of leadership development, the current state of USAF force development and its gaps, AFSOF's leadership development, and how the USAFSOS is alleviating the force development problem. Next, Chapter III introduces the leadership development programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's, along with leadership dilemmas these companies faced, to understand the methods and reasoning behind their leadership development solutions. Chapter IV details the three recommendations to revitalize AFSOF officer leadership development and proposes specific courses of action for to implement them. Finally, Chapter V explores future challenges that may impede the implementation of the recommendations.

II. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

In the *Journal of Business and Economics Research*, leadership development is defined as "a process whereby current leaders or aspiring leaders learn the skills, competencies, and behaviors needed to be a more effective leader i.e., to influence and facilitate others towards achieving some goal."[18] Much like a corporation itself, leadership development within a corporation is part of a larger system of processes. The overarching system, which must consider the individual processes of talent management or human capital management—or force development, as it is known in the USAF—"needs to be driven by an organization's strategy and the capabilities it requires for it be effectively implemented. Every strategy is only as good as an organization's ability to implement it, and its implementation is only as good as its talent's ability to execute it."[19] This chapter reaffirms why the universal concepts of leadership development are important for AFSOF. Additionally, this chapter examines the USAF force development structure and its gaps, AFSOF leadership development, and the four courses USAFSOS is creating to revitalize leadership development in squadrons.

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Throughout history, leadership has been critical for institutions that seek to transform, innovate, and challenge the status quo. Without the stern leadership of General William "Billy" Mitchell, for instance, the importance of air superiority for the U.S. military may not have been realized, and the USAF may never have become a separate branch of service. With today's rapid technological advancements, businesses and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) alike must invest in their future leaders to combat potential threats and ensure organizational survival. The U.S. military is unique among organizations, however, since it is an all-volunteer force and must recruit, develop, advance, retain, and transition its members back to civilian life when their service ends.

---

[18] Jane Whitney Gibson and Jerry L. Mason, "Executive Leadership Development as a Strategy for Long Term Business Success," *Journal of Business & Economics Research* 5, no. 9 (February 2011): 19.

[19] Lawler, *Reinventing Talent Management*, 16–17.

Simultaneously, the military must also compete with employers for talent. Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter recognized this dilemma, warning that "the Defense Department [will] need to keep pace with the dramatic changes reshaping the economy, the labor market, and human resource management."[20] Carter also acknowledged that the DoD must change the way it processes and treats its talent throughout the full career cycle, both for uniformed and civilian personnel.[21] His leadership led to changes in the DoD that aim to retain the best talent. While the military is unique, the retention challenges it faces are similar to those of other industries, and leadership development is one recognized way to improve retention.

Regardless of industry, developing effective leaders is important to all organizations; good leaders create the atmosphere needed to achieve their organizations' visions and missions. Effective leaders ensure their organization's strategic survival and enrich their workforce's motivation and purpose. Without the common understanding that its leaders help to espouse, an organization would fail to recruit, develop, and retain future talent, which would ultimately cause the organization to fail. It is therefore in the best interest of every organization to invest in the personal and professional development of its people to ensure qualified leaders are ready to fill vacant senior leadership positions. This becomes increasingly important in a military structure—and particularly so in AFSOC due to the high operational tempo and the risk involved in the operations its members conduct daily, on a worldwide scale.

A high operational tempo can create intense stress on the force, but constant and effective leader engagement can provide some relief from the pressures. The Department of the Air Force defines leadership as "the art and science of motivating, influencing, and directing Airmen to understand and accomplish the Air Force mission in joint warfare…. Effective leadership transforms human potential into effective performance in the present

---

20 Ash Carter, "What I Learned from Transforming the U.S. Military's Approach to Talent," *Harvard Business Review*, May 23, 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/05/what-i-learned-from-transforming-the-u-s-militarys-approach-to-talent.

21 Carter.

and prepares capable leaders for the future."[22] Leadership development is especially significant in AFSOC, where the command must delicately balance mission readiness with the overall health and resilience of its forces. AFSOC Commander Lieutenant General Marshall "Brad" Webb explains that, "at any given time, there are about 1,200 air commandos deployed to more than 40 countries; with only 14,461 active duty officers and enlisted airmen in AFSOC, the pace of deployments for these elite, highly skilled airmen can obviously create demands on them and their families."[23] AFSOC leaders must be able to accomplish missions while mitigating risks. "Scholars are unanimous, that effective leadership is paramount to achieving organizational goals, and themes, such as accountability, trust in their leadership, and belief in the organization are essential to attaining mission accomplishment."[24] For some, the personal engagement necessary for effective leadership comes naturally; for others, however, it must be learned. It is therefore imperative that AFSOC continues to look for innovative ways to develop its future leaders.

Leadership development creates future leaders and strives to arm them with the necessary skills, qualifications, and aptitude to transform an organization in an ever-changing environment. The leadership programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's, discussed in more detail later, ensure the organizations' workers are prepared to take on increasing levels of leadership. Although the military's mission is national defense and corporations focus on profit, leadership development is common in both types of institutions. The universal purpose of leadership development is to guarantee an organization's livelihood, maintain or grow its competitive advantage, and, most importantly, identify and groom future leaders who can tackle

---

[22] Department of the Air Force, *Volume II: Leadership* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, August 2015), 27, https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Volume_2/Volume-2-Leadership.pdf.

[23] Stephen Losey, "Three-Star: AFSOC Getting Job Done Despite Unprecedented Deployment Rate," *Air Force Times*, September 17, 2017, https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2017/09/17/three-star-afsoc-getting-job-done-despite-unprecedented-deployment-rate/.

[24] Dennis M. Baker Jr., "A Look at Leadership in the United States Air Force and the Effects on Operational Readiness" (master's thesis, American Military University, 2015), 20–21, https://digital commons.apus.edu/theses.

adversity. By revitalizing AFSOF officer leadership development, AFSOC can prepare its officer corps for leadership opportunities across the command, the USAF, and USSOCOM.

B.   USAF FORCE DEVELOPMENT

When training officers, the USAF must balance the development of primary job competencies for operational needs and the development of an Airman as a whole. Officer force development falls under Air Force Instruction 36–2640, *Executing Total Force Development*, and uses the continuum of learning (CoL) to facilitate individual development throughout an officer's career. According to the instruction, force development

> aims to produce adaptable and knowledgeable Airmen through a combination of education programs, such as developmental education, undergraduate, advanced academic degrees, and professional continuing education; training programs such as technical, on-the-job, flying, ancillary, expeditionary Airman training, Civilian Acculturation and Leadership Training, and advanced training such as the Air Force Weapons School and other advanced courses; experience gained through an appropriate series of assignments or special programs, such as intern programs, education with industry, Developmental Special Duties or fellowships with research organizations, and leveraged through appropriate mentoring.[25]

The CoL is designed to help Airmen understand the USAF mission and doctrine, and provides lessons tailored to an Airman's current rank and responsibilities, focusing on providing "the right development to the right person at the right time…. The USAF believes in learning throughout an Airman's career and through the CoL, it exposes them to broad-based education, training, and experience framework that equips them with the competencies to serve as leaders in rank and responsibility."[26]

While company-grade officers (CGOs) have career field and initial skills training from the rank of second lieutenant through captain, it is not until they are nine or ten years into service, at the rank of senior captain and major, that deliberate force development

---

[25] Department of the Air Force, *Executing Total Force Development*, 5.

[26] Department of the Air Force, *Annex 1–1: Force Development* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, April 2017), 5–6, https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Annex_1-1/1-1-Annex-FORCE-DEVELOPMENT.pdf.

begins through development teams (DTs; discussed in more detail later in this chapter). Figures 1 and 2 graphically depict the career field and leadership development process for a USAF officer and, more specifically, an AFSOF rated officer.
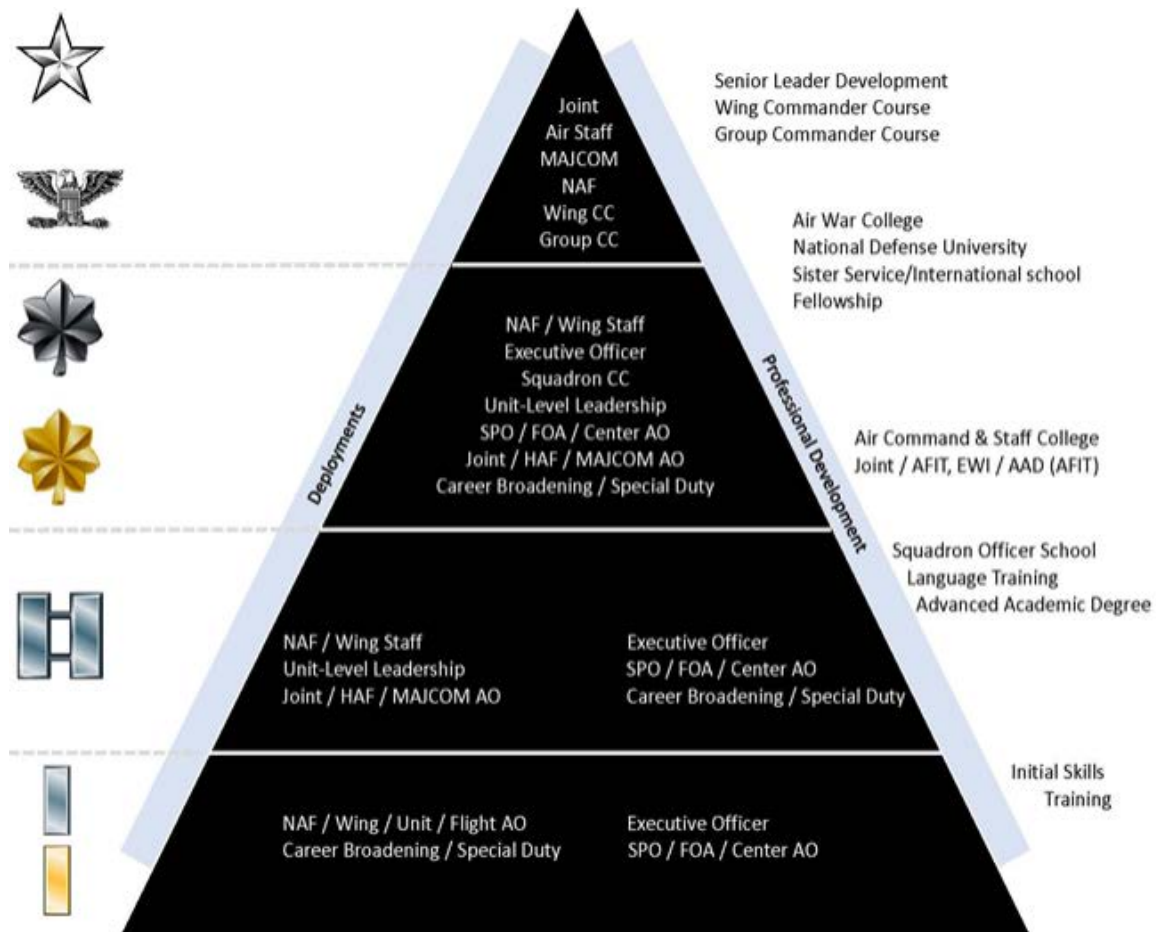
Figure 1.   Career Field Pyramid for USAF Officers[27]

[27] Source: Department of the Air Force, *Executing Total Force Development*, 80.
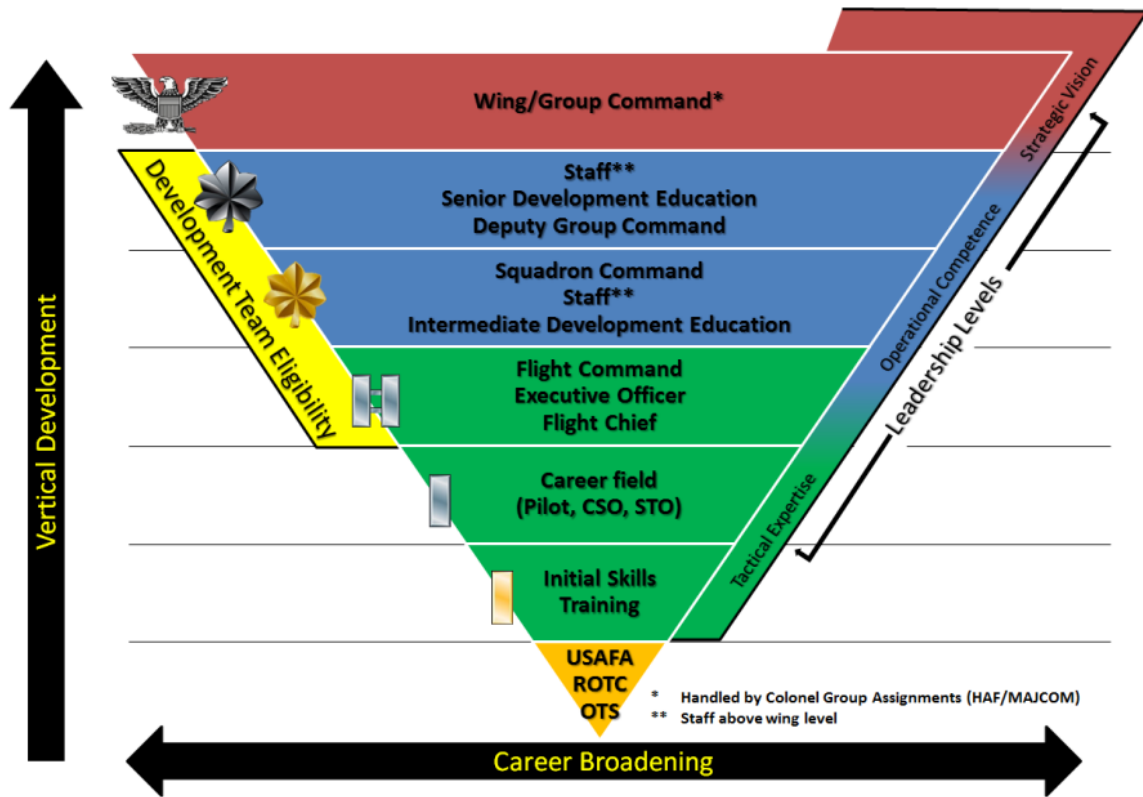
Figure 2.   AFSOF Rated Officer Leadership Levels and Development[28]

1.   Three Leadership Levels

In addition to the lessons they learn from the CoL and other educational programs, officers engage in leadership development training throughout their careers based on three levels—tactical expertise, operational competence, and strategic vision—as depicted in Figure 3.[29] From the rank of second lieutenant to senior captain, officers are in the tactical expertise leadership level, which emphasizes the development of personal competencies. During these early stages of their career, officers "should master their core duty skills, develop experiences in applying those skills, and begin to acquire the knowledge and experience that will produce the qualities essential to effective leadership."[30] This level is

---

[28] Source: Andrews and Stitt, "Human Capital Management," 7.

[29] Department of the Air Force, *Volume II: Leadership*, 34.

[30] Department of the Air Force, 35.

also when rated AFSOF officers become experts in their aircraft, when they upgrade to instructor and evaluator, and when they become leaders among their peers. They also complete the in-residence Squadron Officer School with the overall goal of becoming an expert aviator and achieving operational competence as a leader.
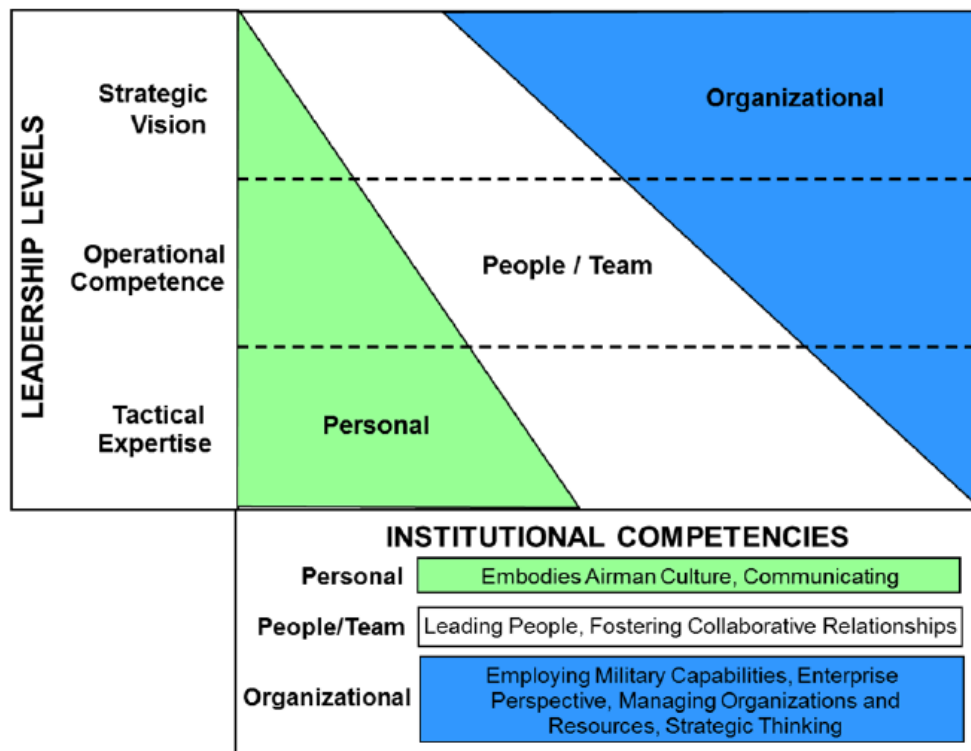
Figure 3.   USAF Leadership Levels[31]

Within the ranks of senior captain, major, and lieutenant colonel, "the full-spectrum of institutional competencies is balanced across the operational competence leadership level where officers understand the broader Air Force perspective and the integration of diverse people and their capabilities in the execution of operations."[32] At this level, officers focus on broadening their perspective through various leadership positions, such as flight commander, shop chief, executive officer, assistant operations officer, operations officer,

---

[31] Source: Department of the Air Force, 34.

[32] Department of the Air Force, 36.

and squadron commander. Education also begins to play a larger role during this time, when "officers are eligible for various deliberate development opportunities to include intermediate developmental education, joint PME, advanced academic degree programs, fellowships, etc."[33] These educational opportunities, however, are highly competitive. The selection process, which occurs through DTs (described more fully in the next section), is based on the officer's competencies, performance reports, and training reports, as well as awards and decorations. If an officer is not selected for an in-residence opportunity, he or she can still accomplish the education online; however, selection for in-residence PME is an indicator of an officer's high potential, and selection means the officer may have access to greater opportunities in the future.[34]

From the rank of senior lieutenant colonel and upward, the strategic vision level combines "highly developed personal and people/team institutional competencies to apply broad organizational competencies."[35] Officers in this level of their career are expected to lead complex and large organizations using their previous experience and educational background. Officers at this stage have leadership roles at a major USAF command, a geographical theater command, USAF headquarters or service equivalent, or the DoD.[36] Officers at this level also have more opportunities to expand their "breadth of experience and continue to take part in other developmental experiences through senior development education, operational assignments, exercises and wargames, self-development, and mentoring."[37]

2.   Development Teams

When it comes to leadership development, the most competitive and pivotal point in an officer's career occurs during the transition from tactical expertise to operational competence, around the rank of senior captain. During this time, other stakeholders—in

---

[33] Department of the Air Force, 37–38.

[34] Andrews and Stitt, "Human Capital Management," 8.

[35] Department of the Air Force, *Volume II: Leadership*, 38.

[36] Department of the Air Force, 39.

[37] Department of the Air Force, 40.

DTs—control the next stages of an officer's development, and the opportunities an officer can pursue. The members of a DT are shown in Figure 4; the team contains "a functional manager who serves as the development team chair (O-6 or higher), career field manager, major command level functional leadership, wing commanders/directors, officer assignment teams, and anyone else the development team chair feels is necessary."[38]
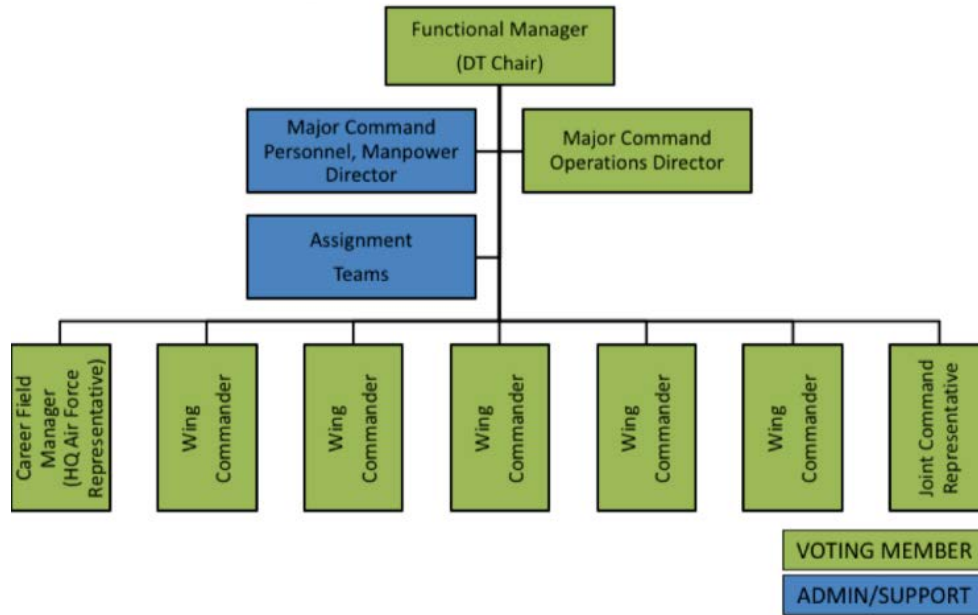
Figure 4. Development Team Members[39]

DTs meet at least once per year and use a selection process much like the process that businesses use to evaluate high-potential candidates:

> They identify education, training, and experiences appropriate for within each functional community based on current and future requirements; they use total force assessments, career pyramids, and manning products to make informed vector recommendations and assist functional managers and career field managers with updating this guidance based on career field dynamics as well as current and projected personnel requirements.[40]

---

[38] Andrews and Stitt, "Human Capital Management," 9.

[39] Source: Andrews and Stitt, 10.

[40] Department of the Air Force, *Executing Total Force Development*, 20.

Moreover, DTs make recommendations for officers, by level and type, based on the officer's leadership potential, performance reports, awards and decorations, and competencies, as shown in Figure 5.[41]
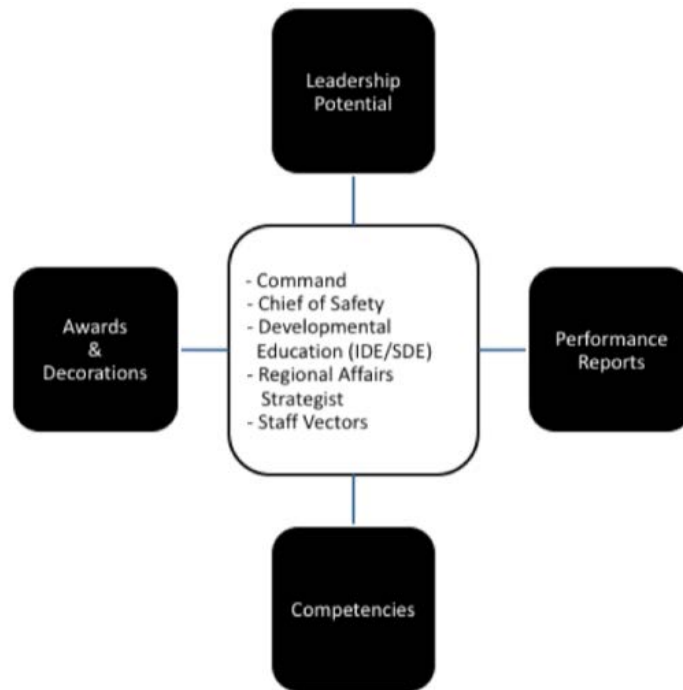
Figure 5.   Development Team Considerations[42]

3.   USAF Force Development Gaps

a.   *The 0–10-Year Development Gap*

While CGOs have access to PME, advanced academic degrees, and on-the-job training opportunities through various leadership positions, it is not until they reach the rank of senior captain, around ten years into service, when their personnel records are sent to DTs for deliberate development opportunities. Before this point, it is often up to the officers to seek guidance from their direct supervisors, commanders, mentors, and even peers to understand how they can promote to the next rank or set themselves up for success.

---

[41] Andrews and Stitt, "Human Capital Management," 11.

[42] Source: Andrews and Stitt, 12.

This initiative and direct feedback from others is critical if an officer is to meet or exceed the status quo for DT selection and further development. It is also essential during this time that an officer's records—to include performance reports, competencies, leadership skills, marks for potential in various positions, awards and decorations, and PME—are complete and accurate. The three recommendations provided in this capstone, discussed in detail in Chapter IV, seek to address this ten-year gap by providing deliberate development opportunities from the start of an officer's career. Until this gap is addressed, not all officers will receive professional development support throughout their careers.

b. *Development Teams*

DTs were created in 2002, both to focus on the individual development of officers and to serve the wider interests of the USAF.[43] "The intent was to move away from 'chance' development and toward deliberate development that offers synchronized and tailored career development opportunities for individual officers but also wanted to balance functional and career field needs against corporate and officership needs."[44] In 2015, RAND released a report titled *Improving Developing Teams to Support Deliberate Development of Officers*. In the report, researchers pointed to nine areas where force development can better balance the interests of officers and the USAF. Two of the nine recommendations specifically address individual development; the report indicates that "DTs should provide personalized feedback to individual officers with an emphasis on learning and development."[45] While general feedback from DTs is currently given to senior leaders, "there is evidence to suggest that targeted or personalized feedback is beneficial because it can result in performance improvements."[46]

The USAF is moving in the right direction to provide more feedback, particularly through the MyVECTOR system, which was released in May 2017; MyVECTOR is

---

[43] Eric Cring et al., *Improving Developing Teams to Support Deliberate Development of Officers*, RR1010 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015), viii, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1010.html.

[44] Cring et al., 29.

[45] Cring et al., 36.

[46] Cring et al., 36.

discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, under *Recommendation #3*. If leveraged properly, MyVECTOR has the potential to not only provide personalized feedback for an officer's development but also to address other gaps in the USAF's force development structure; indeed, it could be capable of implementing all the recommendations proposed in this capstone. However, until a digital infrastructure can be designed, developed, and implemented within the MyVECTOR software, this capstone's three recommendations can address the development shortfall today.

C.   AFSOF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

AFSOC supplements USAF force development through the USAF Special Operations School (USAFSOS) at Hurlburt Field, Florida, which was established in 1968. It is aligned to the 492d Special Operations Wing and, as of academic year 2018, has grown to conduct 165 iterations of twenty different formal courses and thirty-three customized Mobile Education Events.[47]

> USAFSOS provides SOF indoctrination, as well as political, military, and cultural studies supporting SOF operations in the various combatant theaters; they also provide language training, and specialized instructions on irregular warfare principles; building partner nation aviation capacity; aviation foreign internal defense; dynamics of international terrorism; and command, control and integration of AFSOF assets and AFSOF leadership development.[48]

Similar to USAF force development and its three leadership levels (tactical expertise, operational competence, and strategic vision), USAFSOS uses what it calls a *spiral of expertise*, shown in Figure 6, to illustrate the three levels of educational support it provides to AFSOF. When coupled with the field experience officers receive throughout their SOF careers, this spiral is intended to build an ever-increasing operational capability.

---

[47] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, "USAFSOS Factbook 2018" (report, U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, January 2019), 3, https://www.afsoc.af.mil/Portals/86/Users/133/ 89/389/FACTBOOK%202018%20(23%20Jan%2019)%20ps.pdf?ver=2019-01-31-120854-983.

[48] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 3.

The levels in the spiral focus first on indoctrination, then critical thinking, and ultimately advanced strategic thinking.[49]

Figure 6.   USAFSOS Spiral of Expertise Model[50]

1.   Revitalizing Squadrons

USAFSOS conducts various courses to prepare officers for future leadership positions in AFSOC. In addition to the Mission Commander's Course, which prepares officers for a command position in a deployed environment, USAFSOS is currently developing a family of four courses focused on leadership in response to the CSAF's priority of to revitalize squadrons: the Flight Leadership Course, Air Commando Leadership Development Course, Squadron Leadership Course, and Operations

---

[49] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 4.

[50] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 4.

Leadership Course.[51] These courses target the three levels of leadership within a squadron: flight level, operations level, and commander level. Most importantly, these courses alleviate the developmental gaps in the current USAF force development structure. By focusing efforts at the squadron level, more Airmen will have access to greater opportunities to refine their leadership skills.

a.   *Flight Leadership Course*

USAFSOF's Flight Leadership Course is an educational and mentorship-based course designed to proactively develop AFSOC's unit-level flight leadership teams into fully effective leaders before they step into a leadership role; students complete this course prior to assuming flight leadership duties.[52] To help Airmen thrive throughout their careers, the course provides them with practical tools and communicates clear expectations for their responsibilities.[53] While the course is relatively new—there have been only three completed iterations comprising ninety-three students as of January 2019—students have given positive feedback about the course and the networking opportunities it provides.[54] Ideally, this course will be followed up by a wing-led event that builds upon the course's lessons and trains members on local procedures and priorities, such as working with functional and key staff networks.[55]

b.   *Air Commando Leadership Development Course*

Despite its newness, the Air Commando Leadership Development Course, already redesigned and redubbed the AFSOC Leadership Development Course, has been through at least four iterations since its introduction in December 2016.[56] To attend the course, Airmen and USAF civilians must be nominated by a wing commander; the course is

---

[51] Michael Grub, "Bullet Background Paper on AFSOC Flight Leadership Course" (email to author from Michael Grub, USAFSOS Special Operations Department Chair, February 6, 2019).

[52] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, "USAFSOS Factbook 2018," 54.

[53] Grub, "Bullet Background Paper."

[54] Grub.

[55] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, "USAFSOS Factbook 2018," 54.

[56] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 39.

designed to prepare the top 10 percent of high-performing O-3s/O-4s, E-7s, and GS-12s/13s for future leadership roles.[57] The course lasts five days, and students are exposed to four areas of instruction:

> (1) AFSOC strategic vision and mission, (2) legal, administrative and financial responsibilities of SOF leaders within SOCOM organizations, (3) specialized topics, including the importance of Total Force Integration, role of industry in furthering the AFSOC/USSOCOM missions, introduction to the Air Commando Association, and effective writing/communications workshop, and (4) an in-class exercise employing different leadership scenarios that examine legal and ethical issues in real-world simulated situations.[58]

As of January 2019, the redesigned AFSOC Leadership Development Course has had four completed iterations comprising 147 students; 98–99% of the students have agreed that the course was effective and appropriate.[59]

c. Squadron Leadership Course

The USAFSOS Squadron Leadership Course is also new, with three completed iterations. Airmen are selected to attend the course from the Commando Eagle (O-5s selected for command) and E-8 list. The students first complete online education and then attend a five-day, in-residence capstone course that focuses on the commander and senior enlisted leader leadership team.[60] Each day of the five days covers a distinct topic: AFSOC culture, squadron command team development, readiness, force development, and ethics and leadership.[61] The course is designed to help Airmen build relationships, set the vision and environment for a unit, and develop an initial action plan for their first six months of command.[62]

---

[57] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 38.

[58] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 38.

[59] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, 38.

[60] Grub, "Bullet Background Paper."

[61] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, "Draft Squadron Leadership Course Agenda 2019" (email to author form Major Rafael Lopez, USAFSOS Flight Leadership Branch Chief, February 6, 2019).

[62] Michael Grub, "AFSOC Family of Leadership Courses" (PowerPoint presentation, email to author from Michael Grub, USAFSOS Special Operations Department Chair, February 6, 2019).

d. *Operations Leadership Course*

The Operations Leadership Course is currently being developed at USAFSOS and is expected to roll out in fiscal year 2020. It is focused on teaching assistant operations officers (O-4s/O-5s), operations officers (O-5s), and operations superintendents (E-7s/E-8s) to manage squadron operational duties and responsibilities. Further topics during this course also include translating the commander's intent into operational action in flights, deployment and redeployment concepts and requirements, readiness requirements and methods of improvement, concepts to translate wartime missions to operational test and evaluation during in-garrison missions, and operations/maintenance flying hour management and fleet sustainment.[63]

2. Addressing Development Gaps

The current USAF force development structure seems to only select, identify, and develop a tiny fraction of officers to become squadron commanders. This development gap for the remaining officer corps is what AFSOC is attempting to alleviate through USAFSOS's four leadership courses, which are designed to prepare both officers and enlisted members for success before they step into leadership roles at the squadron level. This early education is imperative, as it lays the foundation for improvement and continued learning throughout an Airman's career. The courses also offer a response to the CSAF's call to revitalize the squadron; the courses teach young leaders important lessons about decision-making, and help them build lasting relationships across the various special operations wings and groups (medical, support, maintenance, operations). These deliberate leadership courses will help officers take early ownership for their learning and will prepare them for success in future leadership roles.

As mentioned—and discussed in more detail in Chapter IV—this capstone makes three recommendations that, based on best practices in the business world, can revitalize leadership development for AFSOC. In many ways, USAFSOS's four leadership courses already reflect the recommendations. The courses provide early development in an

---

[63] Grub.

Airman's career and lay a foundation of learning—the goal of *Recommendation #1*. As described in *Recommendation #2*, the courses also provide customized support for squadron leadership development. Furthermore, they create opportunities for both officer and enlisted AFSOF members to network, they provide mentorship, and they begin to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders, which resonates with *Recommendation #3*. While the USAFSOS leadership courses are providing solutions to resolve current development gaps, the recommendations in this capstone go a step further: they offer a more comprehensive and long-term solution to sustain officer leadership development as the USAF continues to improve its overall talent management processes.

D.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explained the importance of leadership, and why leadership development is crucial for AFSOF's mission success. The chapter also reviewed the USAF's force development strategy, including the three leadership levels through which officers progress, and revealed a development gap: it is not until officers meet a DT, around the ten-year point in their career, that they have deliberate leadership development opportunities. USAFSOS is currently creating four leadership courses that aim to fill this gap by providing development opportunities earlier in an officer's career, with hopes of retaining talent for the USAF and DoD. With retention in mind, the next chapter examines the successful leadership development programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

III.   SOLUTIONS FROM THE BUSINESS WORLD

Despite differences in industry and strategic objectives, all companies can maintain a competitive advantage by developing their talent. This chapter describes the successful leadership programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's. All four programs use a top-down approach based on skills and competencies, which has allowed them to build and scope various programs. These businesses showcase that leadership development is critical in every organization, and they provide lessons learned that AFSOC can use to customize its own solutions.

A.   BANK OF AMERICA

Bank of America is a well-known financial company and a "global leader in corporate and investment banking."[64] With clients in more than 150 countries worldwide and total assets worth $2.34 trillion, Bank of America has recognized the necessity of ensuring its executives are skillful and well prepared.[65] The company's leadership development program, which is supported by feedback and coaching, has one of the most comprehensive approaches to executive onboarding, with a seven-year proven record of accomplishment; "Of the 196 executives who were hired, only 24 terminations occurred, resulting in a new hire turnover of 12 percent, compared to estimates as high as 40 percent in large corporations."[66] The executive onboarding approach has prevented failures in leadership and has helped new executives build essential knowledge and relationships quickly.[67] Key components of the approach, shown in Figure 7, can be used within AFSOC; this is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, as part of *Recommendation #1*.

---

[64] "Our Businesses," Bank of America, accessed March 8, 2019, https://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/who-we-are/our-businesses.html#fbid=iqmzDa3pOrT.

[65] Amanda Dixon, "America's 15 Largest Banks," Bankrate, February 20, 2019, https://www.bankrate.com/banking/americas-top-10-biggest-banks/#slide=1.

[66] Jay Conger and Brian Fishel, "Bank of America," in *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, ed. Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010), 18.

[67] Conger and Fishel, 18.
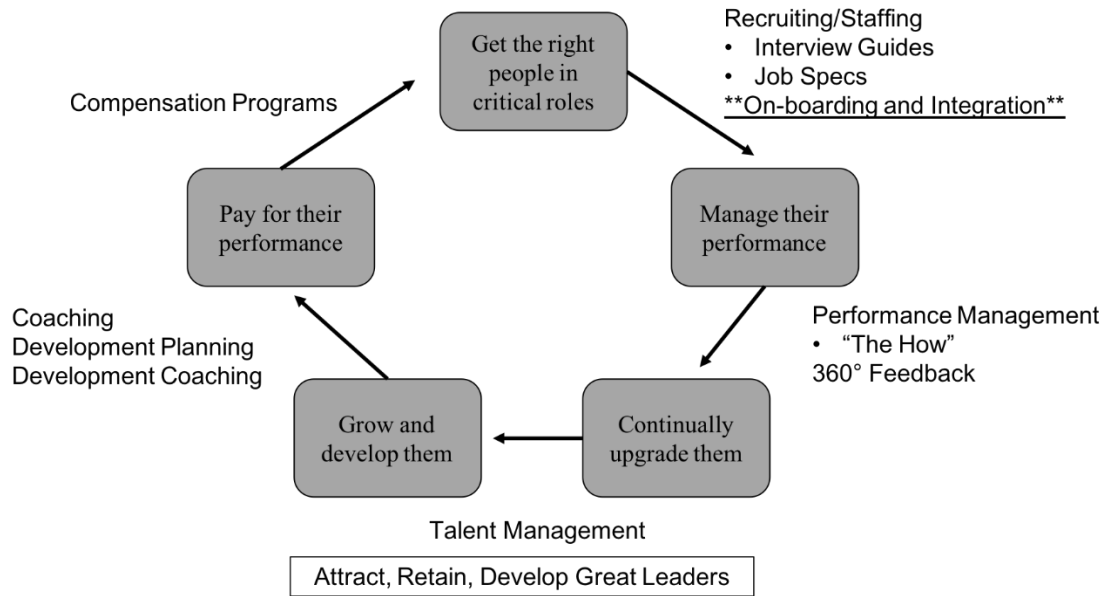
Figure 7.   Executive Development at Bank of America[68]

B.   KAISER PERMANENTE COLORADO

Kaiser Permanente was founded in 1945 and is known as one of the nation's prominent health-care providers, currently serving 12.2 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia, with an annual operating revenue of $72.7 billion.[69] Kaiser Permanente Colorado, specifically, is composed of thirty-nine offices, over 647,000 members, and 6,700 employees.[70] The company's mission is "to provide high-quality, affordable health care services to improve the health of their members and communities they serve."[71] Kaiser Permanente Colorado has a proven record of success; in 2017, J.D. Power reported that the company achieved the highest score among health providers in Colorado, and ranked the company as "highest in member satisfaction for the

---

[68] Source: Conger and Fishel, 22.

[69] "Fast Facts about Kaiser Permanente," Kaiser Permanente, accessed March 9, 2019, https://share.kaiserpermanente.org/about-us/fast-facts/.

[70] "Colorado Fast Facts," Kaiser Permanente, accessed December 31, 2018, https://share.kaiser permanente.org/about-us/fast-facts/colorado-fast-facts/.

[71] Margaret Turner, "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Region," in *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, ed. Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010), 138.

10th consecutive year … among 168 other health plans in 22 regions."[72] After Kaiser Permanente Colorado discovered a developmental gap in its executive hiring processes, the company developed a comprehensive leadership succession plan for senior leaders that creates a pipeline for regional and national roles.[73] The executive team sees "leadership development not as a program, but rather as *part of the organizational strategy that creates leadership capability*."[74] Kaiser Permanente Colorado's leadership development components (shown in Figure 8) are used as lessons learned in *Recommendation #2* and *Recommendation #3* in Chapter IV.
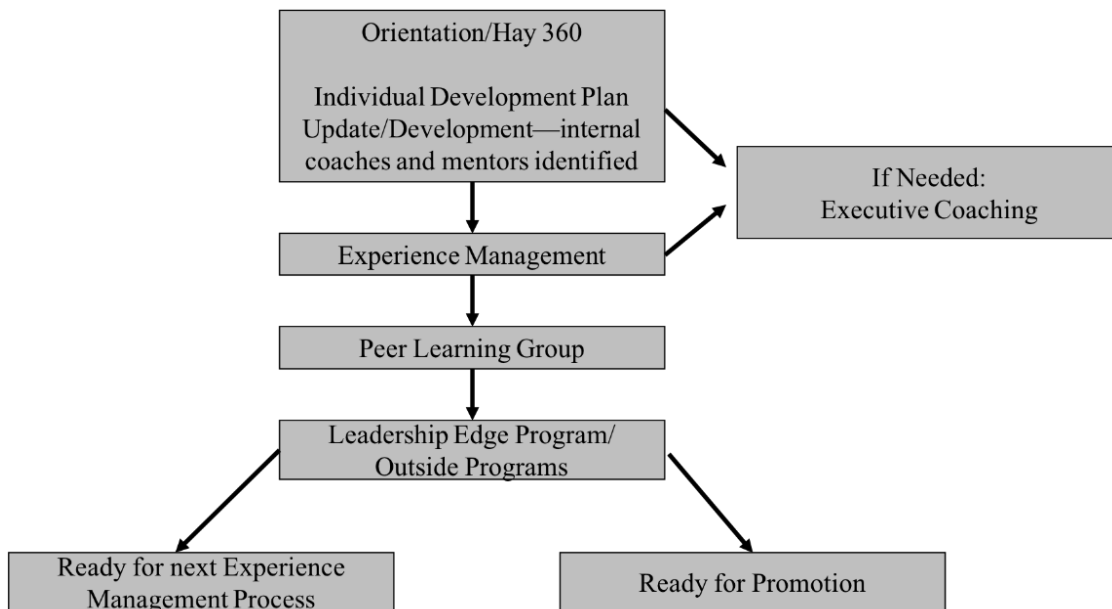
Figure 8.   Kaiser Permanente Colorado's Leadership Development Process[75]

---

[72] "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Ranked Highest in the State in J.D. Power Member Satisfaction Study for 10th Year in a Row," Kaiser Permanente, May 30, 2017, https://share.kaiserpermanente.org/article/kaiser-permanente-colorado-ranked-highest-state-j-d-power-member-satisfaction-study-10th-year-row/.

[73] Turner, "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Region," 138–140.

[74] Turner, 139.

[75] Source: Turner, 147.

C.   MICROSOFT SALES AND SERVICES MARKETING GROUP

Founded in 1975, the Microsoft Corporation was named the world's largest company both in 2002 and 2018.[76] Microsoft is best known for its computer operating system and its direct competition with Apple Inc. With more than 134,000 employees worldwide, Microsoft's mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.[77] Much like its outward mission, within the company Microsoft is committed to providing opportunities for ongoing learning and development to employees; it has invested more than $375 million per year in formal education programs.[78] Microsoft also invests in smaller groups of employees who are identified early in their careers as being high-potential candidates for more senior or critical roles in the company. Microsoft works with these high-potential employees—also known as *exceptional potential*, or ExPo, employees—to accelerate their paths to the next career stage.[79]

Microsoft's Sales, Marketing, and Service Group (SMSG), specifically, has a program for future leaders called ExPo Leaders Building Leaders. The group developed this program after discovering that its original program failed to provide consistent criteria for identifying high-potential employees, failed to align with Microsoft's leadership career model, failed to meet objectives, and resulted in inconsistent experiences.[80] As its name suggests, the revitalized ExPo program is based on the leadership development philosophy of *leaders building leaders*; it is a "cascading approach to the investment of time and resources by current leaders into emerging leaders at the next career stage level."[81] In this new program, high-potential employees are first identified and then sorted by career tiers

---

[76] Andrew Cave, "How Microsoft Regained its Crowned as the World's Biggest Company," *Forbes*, November 30, 2018, https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewcave/2018/11/30/how-microsoft-regained-its-crown-as-the-worlds-biggest-company/#313e1c2f5ce1.

[77] "Facts about Microsoft," Microsoft, last modified June 30, 2018, https://news.microsoft.com/facts-about-microsoft/.

[78] Carter McNamara, Brian O. Underhill, and Shannon Wallis, "Microsoft Corporation," in *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, ed. Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010), 178.

[79] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 178.

[80] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 179.

[81] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 179–180.

(shown in Figure 9) so that leadership can provide a tailored development experience based on their needs. The accelerated development for these employees builds upon the five "drivers" and five "development components" shown in Table 1.

The Tier 1 development focus is:
- Building Leadership Capability in identified priority areas
- Building a globally diverse network

The Tier 2 development focus is:
- Increasing an understanding of the requirement of leadership at Microsoft
- Broadening network across the time zone

The Tier 3 development focus is:
- Building commitment and aspiration to leadership through greater self-awareness
- Understanding of Microsoft SMSG and non-SMSG business

Figure 9.   Key ExPo Tiers[82]

Table 1.   Microsoft's Exceptional Potential Development Drivers and Components[83]

Five Development Drivers	Five Development Components
1. Senior leadership commitment to developing leaders	1. Leadership Orientation
2. Manager capability and engagement in the development of high-potentials	2. Leadership Conferences
3. A professional network that allows for contacts throughout the business	3. Leadership in Action
4. A high-quality customized stretch development plan with clear objectives	4. Learning Circles
5. On-the-job experiences	5. Coaching and Mentoring

[82] Source: McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 181.

[83] Source: McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 181–189.

D. MCDONALD'S

Founded in 1954 and sold to Ray Kroc in 1955, McDonald's today is the world's leading food service organization and one of the world's most prominent and respected brands; the company is valued at more than $98 billion and operates more than 30,000 restaurants in 118 countries, serving 55 million customers daily.[84] With over sixty years of operation, the company has been "successful in growing its business while utilizing a decentralized approach in managing its global workforce."[85] McDonald's provides another example of how to successfully identify employees to fill key leadership positions—and prepare them for those positions—through a comprehensive talent management system.

In 2001, McDonald's revised its talent management processes and developed five initiatives, shown in Table 2, to align with the company's overall business strategy and key values. In the next chapter, the third, fourth, and fifth initiatives are examined further as part of *Recommendation #2*, as they show how McDonald's helps leaders reach their full potential.

Table 2.   McDonald's Five Key Initiatives for Talent Management[86]

1	Redesign the performance development system
2	Introduce a new talent review process for officer-level positions
3	Enhance development of high-potential employees with the Leaders at McDonald's Program (LAMP)
4	Introduce the McDonald's Leadership Development Institute
5	Launch the Global Leadership Development Program

---

[84] "Our History," McDonald's, accessed March 13, 2019, https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/about-us/our-history.html.

[85] James Intagliata and Neil Kulik, "McDonald's," in *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, ed. Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010), 156.

[86] Adapted from Intagliata and Kulik, 159.

E.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Despite their different industries and backgrounds, Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's share a similar commitment to developing their talent and preparing employees for success in higher leadership positions. Selection for these companies include the information availability and analysis of their programs as well as their dedicated obligation to invest in their leaders' development, refine outdated talent management processes, and simultaneously remain competitive and profitable in their respective industries of finance, health, technology, and food service. Bank of America focuses on executive development to "pre-empt leadership failures and to accelerate the knowledge and relationships necessary to step into am executive role."[87] Kaiser Permanente Colorado creates a leadership pipeline through individualized development plans, executive coaching, management experience, peer learning groups, and outside programs. The SMSG at Microsoft bases its model on the philosophy of leaders building leaders, driven by the five development components of leadership orientation, leadership conferences, leadership in action, the learning circle, and coaching and mentoring. McDonald's focuses on the development of high-potential individuals specifically through two initiatives, LAMP and the McDonald's Leadership Institute. In the next chapter, these practices are examined in more detail as they relate to this capstone's three recommendations for a revitalized AFSOF leadership development approach.

---

[87] Conger and Fishel, "Bank of America," 18.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the examples from the companies discussed in the previous chapter, this capstone proposes three overarching recommendations to revitalize AFSOF officer leadership development:

- *Recommendation #1*: Refine onboarding programs to focus on dialogue and interaction, and to lay a foundation of learning and ownership of development early in an officer's career

- *Recommendation #2*: Create a consistent focus on individual development through additional customized support and resources to foster an atmosphere of leadership in action

- *Recommendation #3*: Enhance networking and mentoring programs to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders

The recommendations supplement the efforts of USAFSOS and the AFSOC Cochran Group as they respond to the CSAF's initiative to revitalize USAF squadrons and their people. They call for a comprehensive approach to realizing the full potential of AFSOF officers and can be applied universally across officer force development. They recognize, also, that the timing of officer development is critical to officers reaching their potential and to the return on investment for the command. More importantly, as the programs at Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's do for their employees, the recommendations are designed to provide AFSOF members with the skills necessary to preempt failures in future leadership roles. The lessons learned from the business industry show the importance of arming leaders with essential skills before they take higher leadership roles within the organization. This chapter distills the recommendations into three courses of actions: (1) refine onboarding programs, (2) focus consistently on individual development, and (3) enhance networking and mentoring programs.

A.   RECOMMENDATION #1: REFINE ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

By refining onboarding programs to focus on dialogue and interaction, AFSOF can lay a foundation of learning and help officers take ownership of their development early in their careers. This recommendation hinges on providing leadership education and development opportunities for Airmen right away; this is a critical first step for any organization to show its employees that their development is important to the organization.[88] Refined onboarding programs will furthermore help leaders understand what is expected from them and can motivate them to constantly improve and develop as leaders on their own.

The refined onboarding programs should apply beyond one-time tasks and key leadership positions; they should be offered universally to the entire AFSOF officer corps, and particularly targeted to company-grade officers (CGOs) and field-grade officers (FGOs). To further explain this first recommendation, the next sections examine Bank of America's onboarding program for executives and present a proposed course of action for feasible implementation.

1.   Bank of America

Bank of America's onboarding program for executives is designed to ensure both internal promotions and external hires will succeed in leadership positions, and will receive equal attention for development. The strategy, which is a part of a larger, multifaceted approach (refer back to Figure 7 in Chapter III Section A) is supported by the chief executive officer, who meets with the company's top executives each summer to review the organization's development strategies. The executive onboarding program is split into four phases: selection, initial entry, mid-point phase of 100 to 130 days, and final review phase. Analysis of the selection phase is omitted from this discussion since it is outside the scope of this capstone.

---

[88] Lawler, *Reinventing Talent Management*, 64.

a.   Initial Entry Phase

The entry phase takes place during the first four weeks or so after an executive is hired, when the executive must: "(1) develop skills specific to the new role, (2) learn the organizational culture, (3) master the role's leadership demands, and (4) build critical relationships within the organization."[89] To meet these demands, Bank of America relies on three components: "(1) onboarding plan and new leader/team and new leader/peer integration processes, (2) orientation forums for new employees and new executives, and (3) coaching and support from a hiring executive, human resources generalist, and leadership development partner."[90] During this phase, executives are provided with critical information about their new leadership positions; within the first ninety days, they will be expected to use this information to establish objectives for their teams. While working closely with a leadership development partner, new executives review their own developmental issues and determine how to address them. They are also referred to peer coaches and senior advisors for mentoring in their careers.[91]

During this phase the executives also attend a new leader team integration session to identify current challenges in their new team, build key relationships, and understand ongoing processes. This session "creates an opportunity for the leader and team to establish open channels of communication, exchange views, and become more acquainted with their respective operating styles and expectations."[92] The executives also attend a peer integration session, which is discussed in more detail in regard to *Recommendation #3*. Finally, the executives attend orientation forums to connect with peers, establish a cohort identity, and build the rapport needed to work with their teams and counterparts.

---

[89] Conger and Fishel, "Bank of America," 25.

[90] Conger and Fishel, 25.

[91] Conger and Fishel, 26.

[92] Conger and Fishel, 26.

b. Mid-point Phase (100 to 130 Days)

During the mid-point phase, executives participate in what is called a key stakeholder check-in session, where they receive written and verbal feedback from other key employees. "This experience is designed to accelerate the development of effective working relationships between new leaders and the stakeholders, who now share the responsibility for the new leaders' success."[93] This mid-point phase highlights Bank of America's rich feedback and coaching culture. The executive also meets with a leadership development partner, who goes over anonymous feedback from interviews to identify the executive's strengths and problem areas. Other components of the mid-point phase align more closely with *Recommendation #2*, discussed later in this chapter.

c. Final Review Phase (12 to 18 Months after Mid-point)

Following stakeholder reviews during the mid-point phase, the new executives meet with a leadership development partner again to receive another 360-degree feedback assessment from their key stakeholders. This review gives the new leader an opportunity to show improvement based on feedback from the mid-point phase, and to show how his or her competencies align with Bank of America's expectations for senior leadership (based on the model shown in Table 3). The new executives also use this review to further improve their development plans and to discuss those plans with their boss ahead of their individual performance reviews.[94]

---

[93] Conger and Fishel, 29–30.

[94] Conger and Fishel, 31.

Table 3.   Bank of America's Senior Leadership Model[95]

TO GET RESULTS LEADERS SIMULTANEOUSLY…			
I. Grow the Business	II. Lead People to Perform	III. Drive Execution	IV. Sustain Intensity and Optimism
A. Demonstrate dep and broad business acumen B. Create competitive and innovate business plans C. Build customer/ client-driven environment D. Institutionalize error free quality processes E. Excel at risk/ reward trade-off	A. Align enterprise capabilities B. Recruit and grow great talent C. Inspire commitment and followership D. Communicate crisply and candidly	A. Instill management focus and discipline B. Build partnerships to achieve swift adoption C. Demonstrate sound judgement and act with speed	A. Constantly raise the bar B. Display personal courage C. Continuously learn and adapt
LIVE OUR VALUES… Winning—Leadership—Inclusive Meritocracy—Doing the Right Thing—Trusting and Teamwork			
WHILE NOT EXHIBITING DERAILING BEHAVIORS…			
• Failing to deliver results • Betraying trust • Resisting change		• Being exclusive vs. inclusive • Failing to take a stand • Over leading and under managaing	

Throughout these phases, Bank of America's executive onboarding program provides support and feedback to preempt leadership failures. It involves multiple intervention intervals over time, allowing leaders to create intrinsic ownership for their development. The program also recognizes that quality interaction must occur between the executive and the team. For the organization to succeed, all parties must take ownership in the process. While the program focuses on the individual executive, the anonymous interviews and the review process allow the rest of the team to help the executive learn, adapt, and improve over time—rather than rushing the executive through a quick, noniterative program with a set-it-and-forget-it mindset. As mentioned, Bank of America's executive onboarding program also lays foundations for the concepts in *Recommendation #2* and *Recommendation #3*.

---

[95] Source: Conger and Fishel, 32.

2. Proposed Course of Action

Like Bank of America does for its new executives, AFSOC can tailor its onboarding program for CGOs and FGOs to include iterative development opportunities. Overall, the two main objectives of this course of action are to preempt failures in officers' future roles and to help officers establish an ownership mindset, in which they take responsibility for their own leadership development, through multiple interventions.

Whether at the USAFSOS, squadron, group, or wing level, officers can complete onboarding programs when they arrive, and then on a quarterly basis. During onboarding sessions, senior leaders can present professional development topics to the CGOs and FGOs, but with interactive dialogue on the skills these officers will need to succeed in future leadership positions, such as flight commander, shop chief, mission commander, or assistant operations officer. As a starting point, the USAF Institutional Competency List (see Table 4) can used as a guide to formulate onboarding sessions as officers progress through their careers at AFSOC.

To implement this recommendation, AFSOC will need to consider the time demand. The initial onboarding session would be mandatory and could be implemented at USAFSOS, much like the Introduction to Special Operations Course that all officers must complete within six months of assignment to AFSOC.[96] Then later, reoccurring sessions can occur in a classroom or can be presented as a brief; either way, they should focus on interaction and dialogue. AFSOC may want to consider, however, offering these reoccurring sessions digitally if the time demand of in-person sessions is too intense. Research from the Mayo Clinic has shown that "the new millennial workforce shapes their successful learning experience through mentorship, collaboration, technology, and feedback."[97] As more technically savvy Airmen enter the force, AFSOC could offer the sessions through a smartphone app, or could create self-paced, interactive online resources as a primary or secondary way to conduct the sessions.

---

[96] U.S. Air Force Special Operations School, "USAFSOS Factbook 2018," 64.

[97] Stephen Meyer, "Study: How Millennials Learn Best," Rapid Learning Institute, January 6, 2017, https://rapidlearninginstitute.com/blog/study-millennials-learn-best/.

Table 4.   USAF Institutional Competency List[98]

Category	Competency	Subcompetency
Personal	Embodies Airman Culture	- Ethical Leadership - Followership - Warrior Ethos - Develops Self
	Communicating	- Speaking and Writing - Active Listening
People/Team	Leading People	- Develops and Inspires Others - Diversity
	Fostering Collaborative Relationships	- Builds Teams and Coalitions - Negotiating
Organizational	Employing Military Capabilities	- Operational and Strategic Art - Leverage Technology - Unit, Air Force, Joint, and Coalition Capabilities - Non-adversarial Crisis Response
	Enterprise Perspective	- Enterprise Structure and Relationships - Government Organization and Processes - Global, Regional, and Cultural Awareness - Strategic Communication
	Managing Organizations and Resources	- Resource Stewardship - Change Management - Continuous Improvement
	Strategic Thinking	- Vision - Decision-making - Adaptability

This refined onboarding training lays an important foundation for the remaining recommendations. If AFSOC invests in young officers from the get-go, they can establish a consistent focus on individual development; and when officers build essential leadership skills early in their careers, they are more likely to understand their personal responsibility for development and how to take advantage of additional resources. Furthermore, when officers develop foundational skills before they are assigned to key leadership roles, they are less likely to form bad leadership habits and are positioned for success.[99] Additionally, if CGOs and FGOs are targeted by year group, those officers can grow as cohorts and form their own networking and mentoring circles. Most importantly, the refined onboarding

---

[98] Source: Department of the Air Force, *Annex 1–1: Force Development*, 14.

[99] Development Dimensions International, *Proof that DDI's Leadership Development Pays Off: 40+ Years of Research on the Impact of Interaction Management* (Bridgeville, PA: Development Dimensions International, 2017), 17, https://www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/Proof/IM/proof-im-impact-analysis-tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf.

facilitates "learning beyond a classroom as for today, leadership development is more of a conversation with a lot of emphasis on building a knowledge network."[100] Moreover, this recommendation solidifies AFSOC's commitment to continuous development and supports the USAF's force development construct as "a function of both individual and Air Force institutional responsibility."[101] Through a mix of classroom and technology-driven training, technologically savvy officers may be able to shape their own development to their full potential.

B. RECOMMENDATION #2: FOCUS CONSISTENTLY ON INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

The first recommendation starts officers on the right foot to reach their full potential: providing them with dialogue, interaction, and resources early on signals AFSOC's commitment to prepare them for success in future leadership roles. Once this commitment is established, deliberate individual development can help officers refine the leadership skills they will need in their current and future roles. Kaiser Permanente Colorado; Microsoft's Sales, Marketing, and Service Group (SMSG); and McDonald's have used a variety of methods to this aim, such as individual development planning, one-on-one coaching, classroom instruction, and 360-degree feedback assessments.

Like *Recommendation #1*, which this recommendation complements, *Recommendation #2* can be implemented throughout an officer's entire career. To further explain this recommendation, this section examines components of Kaiser Permanente Colorado's leadership development process, Microsoft SMSG's ExPo Leaders Building Leaders program, and initiatives at McDonald's, and then describes a course of action for feasible implementation. Kaiser Permanente Colorado's individual development plan and executive coaching, Microsoft SMSG's learning orientation, and the McDonald's initiatives show how focusing on individual development can enable leadership in action.

---

[100] Amy Bernstein and Daniel McGuinn, "We're Giving Ownership of Development to Individuals" (interview with Samantha Hammock, chief learning officer, American Express; Sankaranarayanan Padmanabhan, executive chairman, Tata Business Excellence Group; and Nick van Dam, retired global chief learning officer, McKinsey & Company), *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2019): 54.

[101] Department of the Air Force, *Annex 1–1: Force Development*, 3.

Although designed for high-potential employees, the companies' programs are applicable across organizations and employee types. They all include individual assessments and development plans, individual coaching through third-party interaction and accountability, and leadership development resources. The programs also provide the opportunity for tailored learning and developmental experiences to create a foundation for success as employees progress throughout their careers. "Developing these skills in talent is important because they provide a competitive advantage, increase value to the organization, and most importantly creates a powerful talent retention tool."[102]

1.   Kaiser Permanente Colorado

The previous chapter described how Kaiser Permanente Colorado creates a leadership pipeline that is integrated with the company's organizational strategy.[103] Most applicable, however, are two of the program's components: individual development plans and executive coaching.

a.   Individual Development Plans

An individualized plan is part of the first step in Kaiser Permanente Colorado's leadership development process for high-potential employees. The employee is assigned a case manager, who creates a development plan and meets with the employee's manager quarterly to review progress.[104] The plan "focuses on [an employee's] business objectives, what behaviors need to be developed to successfully execute them, and identifies his or her future roles, development needs, and experiences for that role."[105] The case manager also addresses any significant challenges to the employee's development and identifies experiences needed for future positions. This individualized approach is much like working with a personal trainer at the gym; employees receive continual personalized guidance for their development.

---

[102] Lawler, *Reinventing Talent Management*, 66.

[103] Turner, "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Region," 139.

[104] Turner, 148.

[105] Turner, 147.

b.   *Executive Coaching*

Executive coaching is a voluntary program at Kaiser Permanente Colorado that provides a structured approach for individual development. As an extension of the individual development plan, employees can seek guidance from an external executive coach.[106] Based on his or her development needs, the employee selects a coach and then meets with both the coach and his or her manager to agree on expectations. All three parties take part in an initial meeting, mid-point reviews, and a final meeting and evaluation. The executive coaching program has resulted in "increased quality of the individual development plan, noticeable increase in leadership effectiveness, and noticeable increase in commitment to development at multiple levels."[107]

2.   Microsoft SMSG

The previous chapter briefly described how Microsoft's SMSG builds a pipeline of future leaders through its ExPo Leaders Building Leaders program. This program "sets up a cascading approach using the investment of time and resources by current leaders into emerging leaders at the next career stage level."[108] Of its five development components (refer back to Table 1 in Chapter III Section C), *leadership orientation* focuses most on individual development. Like an onboarding program, "Learning Orientation provides the programmatic component of ExPo and addresses learning needs high-potentials will need to be successful at Microsoft."[109] During orientation, sessions are conducted in peer groups by career tiers (refer back to Figure 9 in Chapter III Section C). "Expert classroom-based instruction is then provided on leadership theory and practice that is not meant to duplicate development found in other management or leadership development courses."[110] Opportunities are also made available "to provide a forum for delivering developmental feedback, network with peers and other executives, as well as to set up executive coaching,

---

[106] Turner, 149.

[107] Turner, 149.

[108] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, "Microsoft Corporation," 179–180.

[109] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 184.

[110] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 184–85.

mentoring, and learning circles."[111] Orientation provides a tailored development experience based on the employee's needs. It also initiates three activities that place more emphasis on individual development: assessments, a member/manager contract, and executive coaching.

a. Assessments

As a skill-building activity for individual competencies, Microsoft uses one of three assessments for employees: "A Microsoft sponsored 360-degree assessment tool; or Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory 360 instrument; or Assessment of psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions via the Myer Briggs Type Indicator psychometric questionnaire."[112] These assessments provide an initial benchmark for future individual development progress and refinement.

b. Member/Manager Contract

Much like Kaiser Permanente Colorado's individual development plan, Microsoft creates a partnership between the employee, his or her manager, and a human resources representative through a member/manager contract. This development contract is self-managed, but "is accomplished with approval, collaboration, and encouragement from all stakeholders. It is designed to assist high-potentials and their managers in clarifying the purpose, expectations, roles, responsibilities, and commitments of their development process."[113] The contract makes the employee's accelerated development and advancement a shared responsibility among stakeholders.

c. Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is available to Tier 1 employees—business leaders, functional managers, and managers of managers—in their first year, and is offered through a third-party company called CoachSource. CoachSource was selected because of the "availability

---

[111] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 185.

[112] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 185.

[113] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 186.

and quality of their global coaching pool, use of technology to support the coaching process, and flexibility demonstrated in meeting Microsoft's needs."[114] The coaching process, shown in Table 5, consists of two sessions per week over a maximum six-month period and can be conducted in person or over the phone. "It focuses on feedback from the Microsoft 360-degree assessment, associated Microsoft leadership competencies, other relevant data points, and a Coaching Action Plan."[115] Once a coach is selected and a plan is established, goals are created and shared with the member's supervisor so all stakeholders are able to measure growth and progress. "Microsoft believes that executive coaching provides the most effective ongoing behavioral development for leaders as participants received regular, individualized follow-up to help drive behavioral change over time."[116]

Table 5.   Microsoft SMSG Executive Coaching Timeline Example[117]

Coaching Month	Suggested Coaching Topics	Coaching/ Mentoring Hours
1	**Session 1 (telephone):** Debrief 360° assessment, goal setting, and action planning	1.5
	Session 2 (in person): Finalize action plan, meet with manager to gain support for action plan	0.5
2	**Session 3 (telephone):** Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
	Session 4 (telephone): Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
3	**Session 5 (telephone):** Coaching on goals and action plans	1.5
	Session 6 (telephone or in person): Review post-coaching development plan, meet with manager to gain support for post-coaching development	0.5
4	**Session 7 (telephone):** Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
	Session 8 (telephone): Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
5	**Session 9 (telephone):** Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
	Session 10 (telephone): Coaching on goals and action plans	1.0
	Total Coaching Hours	10.0

---

[114] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 191–92.

[115] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 192.

[116] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 192.

[117] Source: McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 193.

3. McDonald's

McDonald's revised its talent management and development processes through five initiatives (refer back to Table 2 in Chapter III Section D). These initiatives were designed to better identify employees who could fill key positions, and to prepare them for those roles. Three of the five initiatives, LAMP, McDonald's Leadership Institute, and the Global Leadership Development Program, facilitate focused individual development and provide networking and mentoring opportunities. LAMP accelerates leadership development, while the McDonald's Leadership Institute enhances that development by creating a global, online community of learning resources. The Global Leadership Development Program is exclusive, but focuses specifically on preparing employees with the highest potential for broader leadership roles. All three initiatives provide a consistent focus on individual development and offer opportunities that also complement *Recommendation #3*.

a. *LAMP*

Participants are hand-selected for the Leaders at McDonald's Program, where they have the opportunity to expand their mindset to a global perspective, enhance their skills to maximize business performance, and engage in outside-the-box thinking. "From an organizational perspective, the goals of the program are to build a deeper bench strength for key leadership positions, shorten ramp-up time required for newly promoted officers, increase effectiveness in developing and retaining top talent, and improve diversity at the officer level."[118] The program focuses on strengthening future leaders' capabilities so they can achieve tangible results both in their current roles and future positions.

The LAMP sessions, described in Table 6, provide opportunities for employees to learn in both group and individual environments. The group sessions, which could also be part of an onboarding process, allow employees to assess their own skills, network with their peers, collaborate on real-world business challenges, and interact directly with senior leadership. "Individual learning during LAMP includes a dedicated coach for developmental support and feedback, and LAMP! Online, a web-based tool that supports

---

[118] Intagliata and Kulik, "McDonald's," 168.

individual learning, facilitates dialogues about the business, and tracks the progress being made against the LAMP goals and key deliverables."[119] LAMP requires a strong commitment from participants and their direct supervisors. Since its implementation in 2004, the program and has shown significant results in terms of retention, promotion, and development: by 2008, 37 percent of the 249 graduates LAMP—from thirty-four countries—had been promoted, and only 5 percent had left the company for other opportunities.[120] Moreover, "boss feedback has indicated that development has taken place as a result of this experience and being demonstrated in practical ways on the job."[121]

---

[119] Intagliata and Kulik, 169, 171.

[120] Intagliata and Kulik, 173.

[121] Intagliata and Kulik, 173.

Table 6.   Leaders at McDonald's Program Group Sessions (LAMP)[122]

Program Session	Session Description	Length
Program Orientation and Executive Assessment	• Assessment Process of: (1) inventories of thinking skills, personality, work style, and interests, (2) 360-degree feedback, (3) realistic work and business simulations, with immediate feedback, and (4) background interviews • LAMP leadership framework, goals, and key deliverables • Opportunity to speak with senior executives • Post Assessment Process: Verbal feedback provided by assessor/coaches • Detailed written summary provided three weeks later	4 days
Individual Development Planning and Executive Dialogue	• Assessment summary is received and participants work with their bosses and coaches to create a development plan to achieve their goals • Two executive dialogue sessions are provided to learn more about the business and leadership through direct interaction with senior McDonald's leaders	2 days
Executive Dialogue and External Thought Leader	• Another opportunity is provided to directly interact with senior McDonald's leaders • Time is devoted in building knowledge and skills around the critical component of high-performing teams • Participants form teams to develop and deliver a "business improvement recommendation" to executive councils	2.5 days
Executive Education Program	• A university consortia program that brings a select group of non-competing globally focused companies together to gain a broad understanding of global strategic issues to strengthen general management skills • Learning is reinforces through discussions, case studies, exercises and simulations	2 weeks
Business Improvement Recommendations	• Team review and feedback session for each "business improvement recommendation" • Additional development, feedback, support, and coaching is provided from an external expert in executive communications • Another opportunity is provided to directly interact with senior McDonald's leaders	2 days
Presenting Team Recommendations and Program Wrap-up	• Participants present their "business improvement recommendation" to executive leadership councils comprised of twelve most senior executive of McDonald's • Round table discussions on overall impact of the program on their personal development and on their individual business results.	2.5 days
	Total Length Leadership at McDonald's Program	**17 days**

---

[122] Source: Intagliata and Kulik, 170–71.

b. McDonald's Leadership Institute and Global Leadership Development Program

These two initiatives were introduced in 2006 as "important additions to McDonald's arsenal to support leadership talent development by attracting and retaining high-performing leaders."[123] While the Global Leadership Development Program is exclusive—offered only to the company's highest-potential officers and managing directors, who must prepare for broader leadership responsibilities—McDonald's Leadership Institute provides enhanced development support for all leaders through an online development resource center. With a focus on individual development, the institute creates a global online community with access to curriculums, learning events, and executive coaching. The institute also provides

> innovative opportunities for leaders to participate in challenging development experiences at critical career points and transitions; interact and network with leaders globally from both inside and outside McDonald's; use individual consulting tools for development needs assessment, development planning, and key transition activities; and receive leading-edge information on the company, industry, business practices, and leadership.[124]

4. Proposed Course of Action

AFSOC can create a consistent focus on individual development by providing more deliberate and personalized feedback to AFSOF officers. The course of action begins with the implementation of individual assessments and development plans and is followed by iterative 360-degree assessments, expert classroom instruction, and one-on-one developmental coaching when appropriate.

Individual feedback is already required through the USAF Airman Comprehensive Assessment (ACA) worksheet, which supplements performance reports that are completed for initial, midterm, and final intervals for both officers and enlisted members.[125] The

---

[123] Intagliata and Kulik, 174–75.

[124] Intagliata and Kulik, 175.

[125] Department of the Air Force, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluations Systems*, AFI 36–2406 (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, November 2016), 62, https://static.e-publishing. af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf.

process can be improved, however, to create a more meaningful impact on the ratees' professional development. This second recommendation can use the current ACA worksheet as a starting point, then apply the lessons learned from Kaiser Permanente Colorado and Microsoft's SMSG to improve and accelerate focused individual development for AFSOF officers.

It bears repeating that implementation of this second recommendation complements the first. Individual development plans and initial 360-degree assessments can be conducted by group (CGOs and FGOs), or even further by year group, at the first onboarding session at the USAFSOS or wing level. The development plans and subsequent feedback on 360-degree assessments could then be completed at the squadron level either with the commander, a functional manger, flight commander, rater, or mentor. Whatever the case, someone must be available to help vector, monitor, and develop the officers as they progress in their careers. The main objective is to have a dedicated process through which officers and their "coach" are accountable for the officer's progress, and through which the officer receives feedback. Feedback is a critical component to the development of essential leadership skills, but the manner in which it is conducted determines its impact. Individual development plans and 360-degree assessments are only effective when the people charged with giving feedback are invested, have a shared responsibility, and have a desire to develop others and build personal connections. "We excel *only* when people who know us and care about us tell us what they experience and what they feel, and in particular when they see something within us that really works."[126]

This second recommendation additionally complements *Recommendation #1* by supporting continued classroom instruction focused on leadership theory and practice. While classroom-based education provides a broad opportunity for officers to learn outside of the USAF PME curricula, technology can also be leveraged to increase communication and collaboration and to accelerate AFSOF leadership development in the future. The McDonald's Leadership Institute, for example, provides easily accessible learning

---

[126] Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall, "The Feedback Fallacy," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2019): 101.

resources to enhance individualized leadership development. "Technology is creating better ways to conduct learning virtually where people can join from anywhere and feel like they're in class together. However, face to face interaction can never be replaced as in-person sessions bring great value when bringing people together."[127] Limited individual coaching by a third-party service needs to be considered to foster and accelerate developmental progress. This personalized service can alleviate constraints on current manpower and time commitments.

A deliberate focus on developing officers creates a better pool of leaders for promotion opportunities and key leadership positions. Given the time and manpower demanded to implement this recommendation, however, further discussion and a feasibility study would be needed to determine its impact on mission requirements and strain on current manpower and responsibilities. Stakeholders will also need to discuss the use of third-party services, such as Microsoft's use of CoachSource, to offer the option of limited one-on-one developmental coaching.

C.   RECOMMENDATION #3: ENHANCE NETWORKING AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

As an extension of *Recommendation #2*, this recommendation suggests implementing enhanced networking and mentoring programs within AFSOC to cultivate a culture of leaders developing leaders. This recommendation can also complement the USAF's MyVECTOR mentoring system, which is slowly picking up traction. "Mentoring is about helping you grow as a person and as a professional in the direction you want to go and MyVECTOR allows you to connect with someone you have in mind."[128] A more robust and intensive networking and mentoring program, either through MyVECTOR or other means within AFSOC, could facilitate long-lasting relationships among the command, across the USAF, and throughout USSOCOM. Programs at Kaiser Permanente

---

[127] Bernstein and McGuinn, "Ownership of Development," 54.

[128] "Mentoring Is for the Total Force," U.S. Air Force, July 10, 2017, https://www.af.mil/News/ Article-Display/Article/1240744/mentoring-is-for-the-total-force/.

Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's offer examples for facilitating and building relationships among leaders within an organization.

1.   Kaiser Permanente Colorado

In peer learning groups, employees at Kaiser Permanente Colorado meet quarterly to discuss their development progress and delays, along with possibilities for future projects. The executive team attends the group meetings as well, to share their personal experiences with leadership challenges throughout their careers.[129] The peer learning groups provide an opportunity to create relationships across the organization, which helps prevent stovepipe or groupthink mindsets. The groups also help to establish a peer support network that facilitates internal and external mentoring. The development program for high-potential employees at Kaiser Permanente Colorado "has proven to increase the retention of their leaders"; the company has seen a less than 5 percent attrition rate for employees who have gone through the program.[130]

2.   Microsoft SMSG

In addition to a focus on individual development, the ExPo Leaders Building Leaders program also creates networking and mentoring opportunities to accelerate the development of its talent. These opportunities align with the four remaining development components of the program: leadership conferences, leadership in action, learning circles, and coaching and mentoring.

a.   *Leadership Conferences*

Microsoft holds a two-day leadership conference for executives and high-potential employees to "create a forum for dialogue around strategic business issues and challenges of leadership in the company."[131] Conference attendees take part in roundtable discussions and live meetings that bring everyone together for mutual benefit and learning.

---

[129] Turner, "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Region," 148.

[130] Turner, 149.

[131] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, "Microsoft Corporation," 186.

Conferences are usually attended by employees in Tiers 1 and 2 with some participation from Tier 3 employees (refer back to Figure 3 for a description of the tiers). The conference "is designed to facilitate reflection, build critical relationships from one level to the next, and provide an additional form for sharing learning from the job that is discussed throughout the year in other components."[132] Most importantly, the conference allows employees to "work collaboratively with peers and leadership teams on strategic business challenges; gain insight into the requirements of being a broad business leader and the transition required from functional expertise; develop relationships and raise their profile as high-potentials with members of their leadership team; and build and extend their network."[133]

b.   *Leadership in Action*

Microsoft further accelerates development of its high-potential employees through Leadership in Action meetings, during which small groups find solutions to real business challenges. "Research demonstrates that emerging leaders develop new leadership capability when their learning is linked to real business impact."[134] In these small groups, a tier 1 employee is selected to be a team leader; team leaders work with their groups to come up with a solution to a problem in the next six months. This work is intended to build upon the other Microsoft developmental components of assessment, and executive and career-focused coaching. This practicum benefits the employees by "providing the opportunity to practice thinking systematically; developing their mastery of listening and coaching through use of action learning methodology; building deep relationships with peers across Microsoft and extending their networks; and increasing their strategic perspectives on the company."[135]

---

[132] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 186.

[133] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 187.

[134] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 187.

[135] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 187.

c.   *Learning Circles*

Learning circles are peer learning groups "consisting of 5–7 diverse high-potentials from different functional and geographical areas to mutually support each other in developing themselves as leaders."[136] They meet in person or virtually to form a close network and to help each other address current priorities or problems, as well as to progress in their careers. Learning circles complement individualized coaching and feedback and further cultivate employees' personal and professional development as leaders. Moreover, learning circles help employees create long-lasting relationships that positively affect the business as a whole as leaders deliver innovative solutions to strategic business issues.

d.   *Coaching and Mentoring*

During the first year of the ExPo program, Microsoft employees also have access to coaching and mentoring. This "one-to-one partnership enables thought-provoking processes that inspires the individual to maximize his or her personal and professional potential."[137] When personalized feedback is coupled with coaching and mentoring based on an individual development plan, employees get more out of the experience. "Microsoft's coaching and mentoring enable their talent to build skills and close development gaps; develop 'big picture' understanding of the company and industry through cross-boundary and cross-role exposure; and become more accountable for their own development since the coaching and mentoring process is a self-directed one."[138]

3.   **McDonald's**

LAMP, McDonald's Leadership Institute, and the Global Leadership Institute help employees develop critical relationships with each other, and throughout McDonald's as a whole. LAMP's group sessions and individual learning experiences encourage leaders to network and find a mentor for their personal and professional development. LAMP Online! and McDonald's Leadership Institute particularly enhance leadership development by

---

[136] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 188.

[137] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 188.

[138] McNamara, Underhill, and Wallis, 189.

creating a global and online community of learning resources. According to McDonald's Vice President of U.S. Training Diana Thomas, "mentoring has always been an integral part of McDonald's approach to developing employees and promoting a continuous learning culture as it gives employees the opportunity to build their confidence and competence through informal and formal mentoring."[139] Through top management involvement and a comprehensive leadership development process, McDonald's has created a powerful way to enable relationship building, which contributes to the company's overall business successes.

4.   Proposed Course of Action

Extra emphasis should be placed on networking and mentoring because these concepts can have a valuable impact on an individual's personal and professional development alike, both of which are important for mission readiness and success. AFSOC can implement enhanced networking and mentoring programs by capitalizing on—and emphasizing the importance of—the existing MyVECTOR system.

Networking, or growing one's cadre of personal and professional contacts, is something leaders seldom consider or that they place as a low priority as they promote up through the ranks. However, networking is an integral part of a leader's development plan, as it can help "in reaching for a leadership position or succeeding at it."[140] Networking involves stepping outside one's own comfort zone and requires genuine interaction. AFSOC should follow the example of businesses like Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Microsoft, and McDonald's, which recognize the importance of helping their employees build key relationships. In further looking at the examples of these businesses, leadership networking has three distinct yet interdependent forms that are vital for leaders as they ascend in rank: operational, personal, and strategic (see Table 7). "Operational networking helps manage current internal responsibility, personal networking boosts personal

---

    [139] Lorri Weinstein, "McDonald's Recipe for Success," *Training Magazine*, accessed March 25, 2019, https://trainingmag.com/content/mcdonald's-recipe-success/.

    [140] Mark Hunter and Herminia Ibarra, "How Leaders Create and Use Networks," *Harvard Business Review* (January 2007): 41.

development, and strategic networking opens eyes to new business directions and stakeholders."[141] These three forms of networking can help leaders create diverse personal contacts who can provide support, feedback, and resources when challenges arise.[142]

Like networking, mentoring in the USAF is voluntary. However, mentoring "is an essential ingredient in developing well-rounded, professional, and competent future leaders as it helps Airmen maximize their full potential."[143] Mentoring is an inherent responsibility of leadership, and the success of a mentoring relationship relies on the "direct involvement of commanders, directors, and supervisors in the professional development of their people."[144] Former USSOCOM Commander General Raymond A. Thomas believes leaders should be personally invested in their mentees; he says active mentorship from his senior leaders got him where he is today.[145] More proactive mentorship from senior leaders could build long-lasting relationships among AFSOF officers and across USSOCOM.

The USAF has made a significant improvement in its mentoring program through the 2017 implementation of MyVECTOR, which provides online opportunities that encourage Airmen to "be proactive about career development and mentoring relationships."[146] MyVECTOR makes it possible for mentees to choose mentors from across the global USAF enterprise, and helps users "build career plans based on real opportunities and share it with development teams and mentors and get involved in discussion forums to grow their professional network."[147] To get ahead of USAF enterprise implementations, AFSOC can rapidly supplement the efforts of MyVECTOR by providing AFSOF-tailored online learning resources of its own to enhance individualized leadership development.

---

[141] Hunter and Ibarra, "How Leaders Create and Use Networks," 41.

[142] Hunter and Ibarra, 40.

[143] Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, 3.

[144] Department of the Air Force, 3.

[145] Raymond A. Thomas, "Priority #1: To Provide the World's Greatest Special Operations Forces" (speech, Hurlburt Field, FL, February 26, 2019).

[146] "MyVector," U.S. Air Force Personnel Center, accessed March 25, 2019, https://www.afpc.af.mil/Force-Development/MyVECTOR/.

[147] U.S. Air Force Personnel Center.

Table 7.   The Three Forms of Networking[151]

	Operational	Personal	Strategic
Purpose	• Getting work done efficiently • Maintaining the capacities and functions required of the job	• Enhancing personal and professional development • Providing referrals to useful information and contacts	• Figuring out future priorities and challenges • Getting stakeholder support for them
Location and temporal orientation	• Contacts are mostly internal and oriented towards current demands	• Contacts are mostly external and oriented toward current interests and future potential interests	• Contacts are internal and external and oriented towards the future
Players and recruitment	• Key contacts are relatively nondiscretionary • They are prescribed mostly by the task and organizational structure, so it is very clear who is relevant	• Key contacts are mostly discretionary • It is not always clear who is relevant	• Key contacts follow from the strategic context and the organizational environment, but specific membership is discretionary • It is not always clear who is relevant
Network attributes and key behaviors	• Depth: building strong working relationships	• Breadth: reaching out to contacts who can make referrals	• Leverage: creating inside-outside links

---

[151] Source: Hunter and Ibarra, 43.

Enhanced networking and mentoring programs for AFSOF officers will cultivate a culture of leaders building leaders. While these activities must be emphasized, they must also be delicately balanced with the needs of mission requirements. To do so, AFSOC can combine this recommendation with *Recommendation #1* and incorporate networking and mentoring into the recurring onboarding sessions; this way, young AFSOF officers would understand the significance of these activities early in their careers. For networking and mentoring programs to be successful, they will also need buy-in from senior leadership across the command, who can impress the significance of the programs down the chain of command, through the wing commanders and all the way to individual supervisors. While participation in leadership networking and mentoring is voluntary, education about the importance and benefits of these activities for personal and professional development can be instilled in officers early in their careers. Success does not come solely from achievement; it comes from early adoption of responsibility, from understanding how to deal with conflicting priorities of performance and people, and from support, encouragement, recognition, and the occasional admonishment.[152]

In addition to establishing networking and mentoring activities early, AFSOC could institute reoccurring leadership conferences or informal gatherings at the squadron and group levels. Bringing individuals together from varying units can create more opportunities for officers to meet and create new networks of peers and mentors from different backgrounds. This can further encourage the use of MyVECTOR. If officers begin using MyVECTOR early in their careers, they will have more opportunities to engage with genuine mentors and to grow the networks necessary for success and leadership development.

D.   CHAPTER CONCLUSION

It is important that AFSOC continues to refine and innovate officer leadership development as new generations enter the community each year. The manner in which officers are developed—and the timing of that development—is essential. The

---

[152] Ulrich F. Zwygart, Leaders: How to Avoid Failing, How to Develop, How to Stay on Top (Zurich: LULU Press, 2012), 120–21.

recommendations presented in this chapter are designed to provide officers with education, feedback, and supporting resources early in their careers, and to empower a culture change that focuses on dialogue, interaction, and relationships. AFSOC faces leadership development challenges not unlike those faced by Bank of America, Kaiser Permanente, Microsoft, and McDonald's. All organizations must find ways to attract, train, develop, and retain their top talent. Companies realize that in order "to survive in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, they need leadership skills and organizational capabilities different from those that helped them succeed in the past."[153] For these recommendations to be successful, AFSOC must be committed to consistent development, and this commitment must be embraced at all levels of leadership.

The final chapter summarizes the three recommendations to revitalize AFSOF officer leadership development, describes how their implementation fills gaps in USAF force development and supplements USAFSOS leadership development programs, and explores future challenges of leadership development.

---

[153] Das Narayandas and Mihnea Moldoveanu, "The Future of Leadership Development," *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2019): 42.

V. CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter detailed three recommendations to revitalize AFSOF officer leadership development. This chapter discusses potential challenges with their implementation.

A. FUTURE CHALLENGES

Stakeholders are likely to run into three primary challenges when implementing these recommendations: resistance to change, resource constraints, and technology challenges. Moreover, institutions must also consider the millennial generation workforce and how millennials learn effectively.

1. Resistance to Change

One of the biggest challenges when presenting new ideas to any organization is resistance to change. Resistance to change is particularly prominent in military organizations, which are largely rules-based. However, change is possible, particularly when it brings improvements. "Guiding change may be the ultimate test of a leader—no business survives over the long term if it can't reinvent itself. But human nature being what it is, fundamental change is often resisted mightily by the people it most affects: those in the trenches of business. Thus, leading change is both absolutely essential and incredibly difficult."[154] The three recommendations are designed to embed within the current USAF and USAFSOS development processes; they simply call for refinement and stakeholder involvement to realize a complete revitalization of AFSOF officer leadership development.

2. Resources

Because the recommendations will require requests for additional resources—in terms of money, manpower, and time—they are likely to meet hesitation and uncertainty. This is particularly true in the military, where resources must be prioritized for mission

---

[154] John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review* (January 2007): 2, http://www.hbrreprints.org.

readiness; "AFSOC's pace of deployments has weighed heavily on the Command for more than 18 years and can create demands on personnel and their families."[155] Adding additional requirements could add to the existing stressors of AFSOC's high operational tempo. However, leadership development must be viewed as an investment that will provide benefits in the long term, when balanced with the needs of the mission and the Airmen. More emphasis needs to focus on leveraging technology (i.e., computer-based training to supplement classroom instruction). Not only will this reduce the time required for in-person participation, it will also provide an incentive to increase participation as AFSOF leadership development innovates in today's digital age.

3. Technology

While leveraging technology is a benefit, it can also be a challenge. The design, infrastructure, and execution of an adequate system, like MyVECTOR, can take some time to reach full implementation. However, AFSOC can model its technology after corporate universities' use of the personal learning cloud—"a mix of online courses, social and interactive platforms, and learning tools to address talent development needs."[156] Technology can foster rapid growth of learning and development to keep AFSOF members engaged on the job and provide development resources straight to officers' fingertips. While technology can improve communications gaps within AFSOF ranks, a delicate balance is necessary to ensure technology does not create an environment in which officers avoid face-to-face interaction, conversation, and building of crucial relationships.

B. CONCLUSION

The three recommendations provide solutions to the current gaps in the USAF force development process, and supplement USAFSOS's four leadership courses. USAFSOS is revitalizing leadership in AFSOF squadrons and living up to USSOCOM's SOF truth that humans are more important than hardware. As mentioned, some components of this capstone's three recommendations are already embedded within the USAFSOS leadership

---

[155] Losey, "Three-Star."

[156] Narayandas and Moldoveanu, "Future of Leadership Development," 43.

courses. However, more support from AFSOC senior leadership is needed for force development to truly be revitalized. Developing leaders is universal and critical to mission success. Finding the right balance to train, develop, and educate Air Commandos while achieving mission success will continue to be a challenge for all AFSOF leaders.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY EFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Airman Magazine. "Finding Answers: Task Force Director Is Looking for Ways to Solve Pilot Shortage." June 27, 2018. https://airman.dodlive.mil/2018/06/27/finding-answers/.

Andrews, Paul R. Jr., and Brett Stitt. "Human Capital Management of Air Force SOF: Leadership Identification, Selection, and Cultivation." Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2017. http://hdl.handle.net/10945/56729.

Baker, Dennis M. Jr. "A Look at Leadership in the United States Air Force and the Effects on Operational Readiness." Master's thesis, American Military University, 2015. https://digitalcommons.apus.edu/theses.

Bank of America. "Our Businesses." Accessed March 8, 2019. https://about.bankof america.com/en-us/who-we-are/our-businesses.html#fbid=iqmzDa3pOrT.

Bernstein, Amy, and Daniel McGuinn. "We're Giving Ownership of Development to Individuals." Interview with Samantha Hammock, chief learning officer, American Express; Sankaranarayanan Padmanabhan, executive chairman, Tata Business Excellence Group; and Nick van Dam, retired global chief learning officer, McKinsey & Company. *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2019).

Berube, Phil. "Air University's New Leader Development Course Helps Squadron Commanders 'Thrive.'" U.S. Air Force, December 28, 2018. https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1721978/air-universitys-new-leader-development-course-helps-squadron-commanders-thrive/.

Bolinger, James. "Air Force Tests New Wing Structure that Eliminates Group Commanders." *Stars and Stripes*, May 28, 2018. https://www.stripes.com/news/us/air-force-tests-new-wing-structure-that-eliminates-group-commanders-1.529827.

Buckingham, Marcus, and Ashley Goodall. "The Feedback Fallacy." *Harvard Business Review* (March-April 2019).

Carter, Ash. "What I Learned from Transforming the U.S. Military's Approach to Talent." *Harvard Business Review*, May 23, 2017. https://hbr.org/2017/05/what-i-learned-from-transforming-the-u-s-militarys-approach-to-talent.

Cave, Andrew. "How Microsoft Regained its Crowned as the World's Biggest Company." *Forbes*, November 30, 2018. https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewcave/2018/11/30/how-microsoft-regained-its-crown-as-the-worlds-biggest-company/#313e1c2f5ce1.

Conger, Jay, and Brian Fishel. "Bank of America." In *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, edited by Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter, 17–35. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010.

Cring, Eric, Lawrence M. Hanser, Nelson Lim, and Douglas Yeung. *Improving Developing Teams to Support Deliberate Development of Officers*. RR1010 Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2015. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1010.html.

Department of the Air Force. *Air Force Mentoring Program*. AFMAN 36–2643. Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, May 2017. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afman36-2643/afman36-2643.pdf.

———. *Annex 1–1: Force Development*. Maxwell AFB, AL: Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, April 2017. https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Annex_1-1/1-1-Annex-FORCE-DEVELOPMENT.pdf.

———. *Executing Total Force Development*. AFI 36–2640. Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, August 2018. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2640/afi36-2640.pdf.

———. *Officer and Enlisted Evaluations Systems*. AFI 36–2406. Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, November 2016. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf.

———. *Volume II: Leadership*. Maxwell AFB, AL: Curtis E. Lemay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, August 2015. https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/Volume_2/Volume-2-Leadership.pdf.

Development Dimensions International. *Proof that DDI's Leadership Development Pays Off: 40+ Years of Research on the Impact of Interaction Management*. Bridgeville, PA: Development Dimensions International, 2017. www.ddiworld.com/DDI/media/trend-research/Proof/IM/proof-im-impact-analysis-tr_ddi.pdf?ext=.pdf.

Dixon, Amanda. "America's 15 Largest Banks." Bankrate, February 20, 2019. https://www.bankrate.com/banking/americas-top-10-biggest-banks/#slide=1.

Gibson, Jane Whitney, and Jerry L. Mason. "Executive Leadership Development as a Strategy for Long Term Business Success." *Journal of Business & Economics Research* 5, no. 9 (February 2011).

Goldfein, David L. "CSAF Focus Area: The Beating Heart of the Air Force … Squadrons!" United States Air Force, August 2016. https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/csaf/letters/CSAF_Focus_Area_Squadrons.pdf.

Hunter, Mark, and Herminia Ibarra. "How Leaders Create and Use Networks." *Harvard Business Review* (January 2007).

Intagliata, James, and Neil Kulik. "McDonald's." In *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, edited by Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter, 155–176. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010.

Kaiser Permanente. "Colorado Fast Facts." Accessed December 31, 2018. https://share.kaiserpermanente.org/about-us/fast-facts/colorado-fast-facts/.

———. "Fast Facts About Kaiser Permanente." Accessed March 9, 2019. https://share.kaiserpermanente.org/about-us/fast-facts/.

———. "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Ranked Highest in the State in J.D. Power Member Satisfaction Study for 10th Year in a Row." May 30, 2017. https://share.kaiserpermanente.org/article/kaiser-permanente-colorado-ranked-highest-state-j-d-power-member-satisfaction-study-10th-year-row/.

Kotter, John P. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." *Harvard Business Review* (January 2007). http://www.hbrreprints.org.

Lawler, Edward E. III. *Reinventing Talent Management*. Oakland, CA: BK/Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017.

Losey, "Stephen. Three-Star: AFSOC Getting Job Done Despite Unprecedented Deployment Rate." *Air Force Times*, September 17, 2017. https://www.airforce times.com/news/your-air-force/2017/09/17/three-star-afsoc-getting-job-done-despite-unprecedented-deployment-rate/.

McRaven, William H. *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life…And Maybe the World*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2017.

McDonald's. "Our History." Accessed March 13, 2019. https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/about-us/our-history.html.

McNamara, Carter, Brian O. Underhill, and Shannon Wallis. "Microsoft Corporation." In *Best Practices in Talent Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and Retain Top Talent*, edited by Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter, 177–207. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010.

Meyer, Stephen. "Study: How Millennials Learn Best." Rapid Learning Institute, January 6, 2017. https://rapidlearninginstitute.com/blog/study-millennials-learn-best/.

Microsoft. "Facts about Microsoft." Last modified June 30, 2018. https://news.microsoft.com/facts-about-microsoft/.

Narayandas, Das, and Mihnea Moldoveanu. "The Future of Leadership Development."
Harvard Business Review (March-April 2019).

Powell, Colin. *It Worked For Me: In Life and Leadership*, New York: HarperCollins
Publishers, 2012.

Stephen Losey, "Three-Star: AFSOC Getting Job Done Despite Unprecedented
Deployment Rate," *Air Force Times*, September 17, 2017, www.airforce
times.com/news/your-air-force/2017/09/17/three-star-afsoc-getting-job-done-
despite-unprecedented-deployment-rate/.

Ray, Rebecca R. "For CEOs, It's Still about Developing Leaders." In *Global Leadership
Forecast 2018: 25 Research Insights to Fuel Your People Strategy*, 4–5.
Bridgeville, PA: Development Dimensions International, 2008. www.ddiworld.
com/DDI/media/trend-research/glf2018/global-leadership-forecast-
2018_ddi_tr.pdf?ext=.pdf.

Turner, Margaret. "Kaiser Permanente Colorado Region." In *Best Practices in Talent
Management: How the World's Leading Corporations Manage, Develop, and
Retain Top Talent*, edited by Marshall Goldsmith and Louis Carter, 138–154. San
Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010.

U.S. Air Force. "AF Announces Changes to Courses 14 and 15." April 26, 2018.
https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1503016/af-announces-changes-
to-courses-14-and-15/.

———. "Mentoring Is for the Total Force." U.S. Air Force, July 10, 2017.
https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/1240744/mentoring-is-for-the-
total-force/.

U.S. Air Force Personnel Center. "MyVECTOR." Accessed March 25, 2019.
https://www.afpc.af.mil/Force-Development/MyVECTOR/.

U.S. Air Force Special Operations School. "USAFSOS Factbook 2018." Report, U.S. Air
Force Special Operations School, January 2019. www.afsoc.af.
mil/Portals/86/Users/133/89/389/FACTBOOK%202018%20(23%20Jan%2019)%
20ps.pdf?ver=2019-01-31-120854-983.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command. "SOF Truths." Accessed April 16, 2019.
https://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/SOFTruths.html.

U.S. Special Operations Command. "SOF Truths." accessed May 1, 2019,
https://www.socom.mil/about/sof-truths.

Weinstein, Lorri. "McDonald's Recipe for Success." *Training Magazine*, accessed March
25, 2019. https://trainingmag.com/content/mcdonald's-recipe-success/.

Woody, Christopher. "The Air Force Has Made a Big Personnel Move to Address its Ongoing Pilot Shortage." Business Insider, August 28, 2017. www.business insider.com/general-now-leading-air-force-aircrew-crisis-task-force-2017-8.

———. "The Air Force Is Facing A 'Quiet Crisis' of Manpower, but Recruitment Isn't the Problem." Task & Purpose, October 10, 2017. https://taskandpurpose.com/air-force-manpower-recruitment.

Zwygart, Ulrich F. *Leaders: How to Avoid Failing, How to Develop, How to Stay on Top*. Zurich: LULU Press, 2012.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1.   Defense Technical Information Center
        Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2.   Dudley Knox Library
        Naval Postgraduate School
        Monterey, California