Welcome to the Edge #6

In this issue *The Leading Edge* brings you a look at team-building. As with the previous five editions, the reverse side of this newsletter contains ideas and prompts you can distribute to your flight-level leaders to encourage discussion on team-building and team motivation.

The Leading Edge is designed to generate ideas for your courses and serve as a bridge between flight-level leadership expertise at Air University and course directors, lesson managers, and individual leaders in the field. We offer topics, tips and resources specifically targeted for developing flight-level leaders.

Course Director Corner

"You are never going to have enough money. You are never going to have enough people. Leadership is the difference."

-- Colonel Hal Linnean, USAFR
Director, Air Force Reserve Professional Development Center

Developing leaders involves a comprehensive plan and a purposeful group of activities designed to grow expertise. Successful supervisors use daily actions to grow their subordinates as individuals, team leaders, and team members. This development occurs both at home station or in deployed locations using the experience of all team members.

Developing leader expertise is a Total Force *team* activity. Expertise doesn't just come from a short course or a sampling of readings. Expertise comes from experience. Air National Guard and Reserve Component members bring a wealth of experience to the FCE classroom -- the civilian skills of their members. Accordingly, course directors should actively encourage the use of this civilian-world experience to enhance peer-to-peer teaching and learning.

Most of FCEs **Leadership Lesson Plans** are designed to build expertise using peer-to-peer interactions based on the **Kolb Experiential Learning Model**. If you develop your own lessons based on local requirements or the FCE **Lesson Guides**, you should strive to integrate elements of cooperative learning. For example:

- Add "informal cooperative learning groups," rotating members during the course to expand team learning.
- Review how to do a "Think-pair-share" activity before your course begins. Prepare to explain to facilitators.
- Which of the lessons would you turn into a "Jigsaw" activity?

For more ideas on how to integrate cooperative learning into your courses, visit the **Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching**. Share images of your participants in action with your Public Affairs office.

FCE Lesson Focus: "Building and Busting Teams"

Teams are essential to the Air and Space Forces. Team-building contributes to mission success by producing Airmen and Guardians that are creative, adaptable, and decisive life-long learners capable of exercising mission command. As highlighted in the FCE lesson "Building and Busting Teams," the first (and perhaps most important) step in developing a team is to *create shared understanding*. Shared understanding gives the team a unifying purpose and ensures all members understand the mission and vision of the team so that they may work both collaboratively and independently toward the team's goals.

Recently, because of the enhanced role of remote work during the pandemic, the "Building and Busting Teams" lesson was expanded to include methods for leading and improving remote teams. As noted by the Director of the Air Force Reserve Professional Development Center, Colonel Hal Linnean, "Leadership is the difference." When leading remote teams, this is truly the case. Take a look at this lesson, crafted for flight-level leader development, use it inpractice, and share the story of your course with the DAF via your PAO.

Visit the AFPIMS site to download FCE experiential lesson plans and lesson guides, plus the Course Director's Guide for ideas on how to organize your own leader program, face to face, or online.

Team Building Behavior Guide
Included in the
"Building and Busting Teams"
leadership lesson on AFPIMS

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(Tip: Open this newsletter in your browser, then save page 2 as a PDF file to create a 1-page flyer you send out to flight-level leaders!)

THE LEADING EDGE

"Leadership is a human relationship between leaders and followers."

Richard Swain and Albert Pierce
The Armed Forces Officer

Building and Motivating Teams

Read — *Leading a Discussion with your Airmen on "Team Building"*
Squadron-Centered Learning

Watch — Daniel Pink on *The Puzzle of Motivation* (TED Video)
Understanding motivation is important to those who lead teams. Watch the 17-minute video, and then share takeaways with your team.

To Learn More — The **CSAF Leadership Library** provides many books and videos on building and motivating teams. Check it out!

Questions to Consider

What makes a team successful?

What makes us an effective team?

Ask these questions of yourself and your flight members

What is an effective team?
An effective team is not the result of coincidence! A team is effective because members **trust** one another, share a strong sense of **team identity** and have **confidence** in their abilities, and the abilities of their leader. An effective team is motivated to keep team-building every day.

How do you motivate your team?
As a leader you want to keep your team members motivated and enthusiastic about their work. However, it is important to strike a balance between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. As Daniel Pink emphasized in his video, don't rely too much on the power of incentives for extrinsic motivation. Instead, Pink recommends assigning people tasks they enjoy as an intrinsic method to motivate your team.

But what about motivating remote teams?
Some remote workers miss problem-solving in person with their teammates. It is important to try and replicate this experience in the remote environment -- video calls, teleconferences, even specific (but smaller) team tasks that require group work can go a long way toward improving motivation. However, you must be careful to not overschedule virtual time. Too many meetings can lead to burnout and decreased productivity. Strike a balance between meetings and individual work. In all remote work, communication with your team is critical. Make sure your weekly routine is not solely focused on the tactical-level work, but also includes discussions on elements of problem-solving and engagement with others on the team to brainstorm solutions. This helps to maintain team purpose.

Continue to challenge your team.
Experience is a developmental tool for leaders to use to grow their team. Create learning experiences based on what your flight expresses they want to learn. Ask them to list their top three to five skills they want to master as a group. Plan activities for the team that are connected to your unit's mission in some way; teach knowledge, skills, or abilities that will grow your team and help motivate them to continue to learn both individually and as a group.