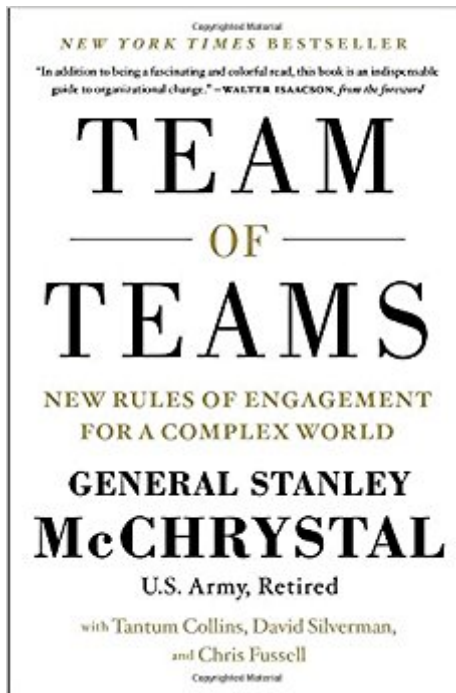




The book was found

Team Of Teams: New Rules Of Engagement For A Complex World



Synopsis

What if you could combine the agility, adaptability, and cohesion of a small team with the power and resources of a giant organization? THE OLD RULES NO LONGER APPLY . . . When General Stanley McChrystal took command of the Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2004, he quickly realized that conventional military tactics were failing. Al Qaeda in Iraq was a decentralized network that could move quickly, strike ruthlessly, then seemingly vanish into the local population. The allied forces had a huge advantage in numbers, equipment, and training—but none of that seemed to matter. TEACHING A LEVIATHAN TO IMPROVISE It's no secret that in any field, small teams have many advantages—they can respond quickly, communicate freely, and make decisions without layers of bureaucracy. But organizations taking on really big challenges can't fit in a garage. They need management practices that can scale to thousands of people. General McChrystal led a hierarchical, highly disciplined machine of thousands of men and women. But to defeat Al Qaeda in Iraq, his Task Force would have to acquire the enemy's speed and flexibility. Was there a way to combine the power of the world's mightiest military with the agility of the world's most fearsome terrorist network? If so, could the same principles apply in civilian organizations? A NEW APPROACH FOR A NEW WORLD McChrystal and his colleagues discarded a century of conventional wisdom and remade the Task Force, in the midst of a grueling war, into something new: a network that combined extremely transparent communication with decentralized decision-making authority. The walls between silos were torn down. Leaders looked at the best practices of the smallest units and found ways to extend them to thousands of people on three continents, using technology to establish a oneness that would have been impossible even a decade earlier. The Task Force became a "team of teams"—faster, flatter, more flexible—and beat back Al Qaeda. BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD In this powerful book, McChrystal and his colleagues show how the challenges they faced in Iraq can be relevant to countless businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations. The world is changing faster than ever, and the smartest response for those in charge is to give small groups the freedom to experiment while driving everyone to share what they learn across the entire organization. As the authors argue through compelling examples, the team of teams strategy has worked everywhere from hospital emergency rooms to NASA. It has the potential to transform organizations large and small.

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Customer Reviews

“In addition to being a fascinating and colorful read, this book is an indispensable guide to organizational change.”
—Walter Isaacson, from the foreword
“This is a bold argument that leaders can help teams become greater than the sum of their parts.”
—Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit*
“Team of Teams is erudite, elegant, and insightful. An unexpected and surprising wealth of information and wonder, it provides a blueprint for how to cope with increasing complexity in the world. A must read for anyone who cares about the future—and that means all of us.”
—Daniel Levitin, author of *The Organized Mind*
“Team of Teams is a compelling, pragmatic argument for a more information-rich, decentralized approach to management from a leader who has successfully weathered storms with higher stakes than most business leaders will ever encounter. A must-read book for anyone serious about taking their leadership further, faster.”
—John Venhuizen, president & CEO, Ace Hardware Corporation
“General Stan McChrystal’s *Team of Teams* is an instant classic. Best leadership book I have read in many a decade, by one of our nation’s most gifted and iconic general officers.”
—Admiral James Stavridis, USN (Ret), Supreme Allied Commander at NATO 2009–2013; dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University
“The lessons and concepts outlined in *Team of Teams* provide a valuable blueprint for leadership across any industry or domain. The principles of classical leadership struggle to deal with today’s pace of change, free-flow of information, and the entrepreneurial spirit of the digital generation. *Team of Teams* harnesses these new realities as assets, providing a

leader's ship framework to produce the inclusiveness and adaptability of a fast-moving start-up, at the scale of any size organization.

• Brad Smith, president and CEO, Intuit

"In Team of Teams, General Stanley McChrystal, who won some of our most striking victories in the great war between nations and terrorist networks, shares insights for all in this lucid, persuasive, and sometimes wrenching account of our troubled yet transformational times.

• John Arquilla, professor, Defense Analysis United States Naval Postgraduate School

"In the fast-moving world of today and tomorrow, organizations that don't adapt will simply fade. Team of Teams makes this case in compelling ways. I literally could not put the book down.

• Peter Bergen, author of Manhunt: The Ten-Year Search for Bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad

Stanley McChrystal retired from the U.S. Army as a four-star general after more than thirty-four years of service. His last assignment was as the commander of all American and coalition forces in Afghanistan. His memoir, *My Share of the Task*, was a New York Times bestseller. He is a senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs and the cofounder of CrossLead, a leadership consulting firm. Tantum Collins is currently studying international relations at Cambridge University as a Marshall Scholar. David Silverman and Chris Fussell are senior executives at CrossLead and former U.S. Navy SEAL officers.

Team of Teams offers insights into the modern practice of leadership and management required to navigate and succeed in this complex world. The book is not a military history, but instead a concise and exceptionally "fun to read" collection of insightful ideas told through entertaining stories ranging from industry to hospital emergency rooms. I recommend it for leaders and associates from all types of organizations who need to break down the effects of siloed teams in which information flow and decision making is ineffective in today's increasingly complex environment. If you are working your teams harder and putting more resources against a problem that isn't improving, READ this book and be prepared to look closely in the mirror. The discussions in the book are grounded in organizational management theory and leadership methods, but along the way gives a once in a lifetime look at the inside of the most storied Special Operations Forces (SOF) unit in existence today. This is not a book about the latest way to become a great leader. In fact it's about becoming the kind of senior leader that can develop and sustain an entire workforce of great leaders. The lessons the authors put forward to challenge the typical (and often failing) organizational models and

leadership approaches were paid for in blood over the last decade. I do not come at this review as a scholar of organizational management but rather as a participant and recipient of the Team of Teams approach in the military where I was a leader for over 20 years. I have known the author for more than 2 decades having served as a front line Soldier and leader in his unit and also as his assistant/confidante/advisor during his most senior command. Stan, along with his 3 co-authors, believes that the world is now so complex (vice complicated) that the old models of command and control are extinct. They are so passionate about this evolution that they have started a successful consulting firm to share their lessons. I have worked with 90 plus U.S. and international organizations in and out of government and I cannot think of one that would not benefit from this study. An alternate title to this book might have been Trust and Purpose meets Empowered Execution. The Task Force's journey towards shared consciousness and smart autonomy starts in 2003 with the stunning realization by the commander of the world's most precise and lethal Counter-Terrorism Task Force that they were losing the strategic war against Al Qaeda. From there the authors interlace examples and case studies of organizational models, leadership techniques, and technological advances from a myriad of areas. They include weather forecasting, basketball and soccer, engineering marvels, big data, airline customer service, aircraft crews, NASA, SEAL training, plastic surgeons at the Boston Marathon bombing, GM versus Ford, MIT studies, and the enduring effects of Ritz Carlton and Nordstrom. My favorite example is the Star Wars bar comparison. The discussions found in the various chapters of the book are wide-ranging but relevant to leading all organizations in this modern world. The following should be of interest to today's leaders: the difference between complicated and complex environments; how having more information available does not improve prediction nor mean lead to smarter decisions at the top; Taylorisms and efficiency ideals may actually cost you more than they save; the need to know fallacy; the value of using your best people as liaison officers or embeds; how resilient people make organizations stronger because they can adapt to changing environments; learning from your adversary is time well spent--they might have a better organizational model not necessarily better people; how to delegate authority to take action until you are uncomfortable; how to build trust and a shared awareness of the big picture; eyes on, hands off leadership; and the difference between creating Strategic Corporals and an organization full of Lord Horatio Nelsons. The book carries you forward in time to see how far the Task Force had come by changing their culture, structure, and habits to allow the larger corporate command to become as agile and

capable as its commandos. Pages 184-188 detail the successful operations that the Task Force were able to undertake after the shift. This short example, that covers just 46 minutes of a follow-on-target operation, highlights sharply the outcome of The Task Force's investment in transparency, trust building and empowered execution. The command took risks and luckily their bosses supported them and let them learn to beat AQI at its own game. Sir Lieutenant General Lamb, a close friend of Stan McChrystal, shared a paper with me once that he titled 'In Command and Out of Control' and it raises a lot of the same questions and concepts about how to lead in a complex and fast-paced world. The conclusions were similar. Success comes from giving freedom to subordinates, increasing speed of action, achieving self-synchronization---in a nutshell: decentralized command. The concept is literally about getting 'out of the control' business and realizing that in order for organizations to take advantage of fleeting opportunities teams must be empowered at the lowest levels to take action. McChrystal echoes this and the need to repeatedly broadcast so that everyone knows the goals and strategy of the organization. This includes letting everyone in the organization have a say about the direction of the ship and feel free to alert others of impending icebergs. McChrystal and Lamb's cooperation in Iraq was not by accident but from years of trust building and a shared awareness of the big picture. Missing from the book is a deeper discussion on the role of planning, plans, strategic thinking and strategy. While the Team of Teams approach allows organizations to be adaptable and resilient there is still a key role for planning and strategy. Maybe it's as simple as the old adage 'the plan is nothing but planning is everything' or maybe this is the topic for their next book. Although it's demonstrated throughout the book it's unstated that great leaders are often well-read. Only by studying leaders and organizations can you begin to see the need for the Nelson touch, to avoid the Perry principle, or understand the butterfly effect. The book is only 250 pages long but it is full of simple time-tested ideas that can be put into action with little cost. The difficult part of acting within the shared consciousness that Stan McChrystal describes is getting your people to realize they are empowered to make decisions. This task mostly falls on the senior leaders of an organization. This method can be exhausting and requires resilient and disciplined leadership at all levels, but the rewards are unmatched. I have personally served in organizations that utilize shared consciousness and empowered execution or have previously undergone a Team of Teams evolution. The fact that the culture endures after the leader departs says a lot about how powerful a culture change in an organization can be. I have also served in government agencies that just couldn't accept that their strength truly lied in informed and empowered employees. Luckily the latter are

destined for the dustbin of history. More and more often today leaders reinforce an environment that speeds up business failure. The world has changed and leadership models haven't kept up. This book can show you how to adapt to the complex world we find ourselves in. Team of Teams documents how the most professional and deadly special operations force found itself humbled by an enemy that was better adapted to the 21st century way of war. More importantly it's about how leaders at all levels need to be humble enough to realize when to change their old ways and trust their people to make rapid yet informed decisions.

I am writing this review from the perspective of a surgeon in an administrative leadership role at a large health system in the Midwest. I have no military background but found the details of military operations in Iraq riveting. The book is extremely well-written and easy to read, even for the militarily naive. In Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World, General Stanley McChrystal does a masterful job of weaving war stories and business lessons into an instructional manual for business leaders today. He charges leaders to create organizations that are nimble, transparent, horizontal rather than hierarchical, and which empower their people to execute based on the concept of shared consciousness. Teach them and allow them to trust their gut and use their best judgement based on their training and knowledge of organizational goals. Just as the military needed to adapt to overcome the changing landscape of battle in Afghanistan and Iraq in order to be successful, so must organizations in the ever-changing landscape of corporate America. This book should be read by leaders of organizations both large and small so they can get the most out of their workforce and thrive in today's ever-changing business climate.

No man better knows the meaning of the phrase "It takes a network to defeat a network" than Gen. Stan McChrystal. This book applies his new and successfully tested insights from counter-insurgency to a wide range of organizational problems along the way contributing to both military and management thinking in a very enlightening synthesis. Previous books apply military principles to business (think of titles such as the West Point Way of Leadership) were one-sided. McChrystal and his co-authors, by contrast, delve deep into management lessons from government, business and civilian life to paint a much more holistic picture of how complexity affects all organizations. One of the most important insights gleaned from both his military and advisory experience is that the continuum from strategy and action to assessment and revision is now a loop and a very rapid cycle one. No other set

of authors could possibly draw the parallels McChrystal and his team does between the spread of infectious diseases and insurgencies, between the social network savvy of Al Qaeda and ISIS operatives and today's "digital natives," or contrast historical battles led by top-down generals versus the crew that saved United Airlines flight 1549 (that safely landed the doomed plane in the Hudson River). Straightforward graphics in the book also nicely illustrate just how different confronting chaos is from traditional management philosophies. Another virtue of this book is bringing to life the importance of team building and trust. Here he reveals not just the intense military operational tempo that makes devolving decision-making essential, but also brings in timely real-world cases ranging from General Motors to Ritz Carlton. Having known Gen. McChrystal personally for more than 15 years, I have no doubt that this book is the continuation of a truly unique journey. Fortunately for readers, his journey is ever more relevant for leaders across all walks of life today.-- Dr. Parag Khanna Senior Research Fellow, New America Foundation

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