Leader-Teams in the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) environment face the unique challenge of having to become effective in very short time frames while working across multi echelon, multi function, multiple governance structures, cultures, and hierarchical boundaries. The Teams of Leaders (ToL) approach combines the effective employment of information technology, and knowledge management collaboration processes with a deliberate team development methodology that enables the Leader-Team to see the problems, achieve actionable understanding, orient solutions, and get the job done faster and to a higher standard.

# EUCOM
# Teams of Leaders
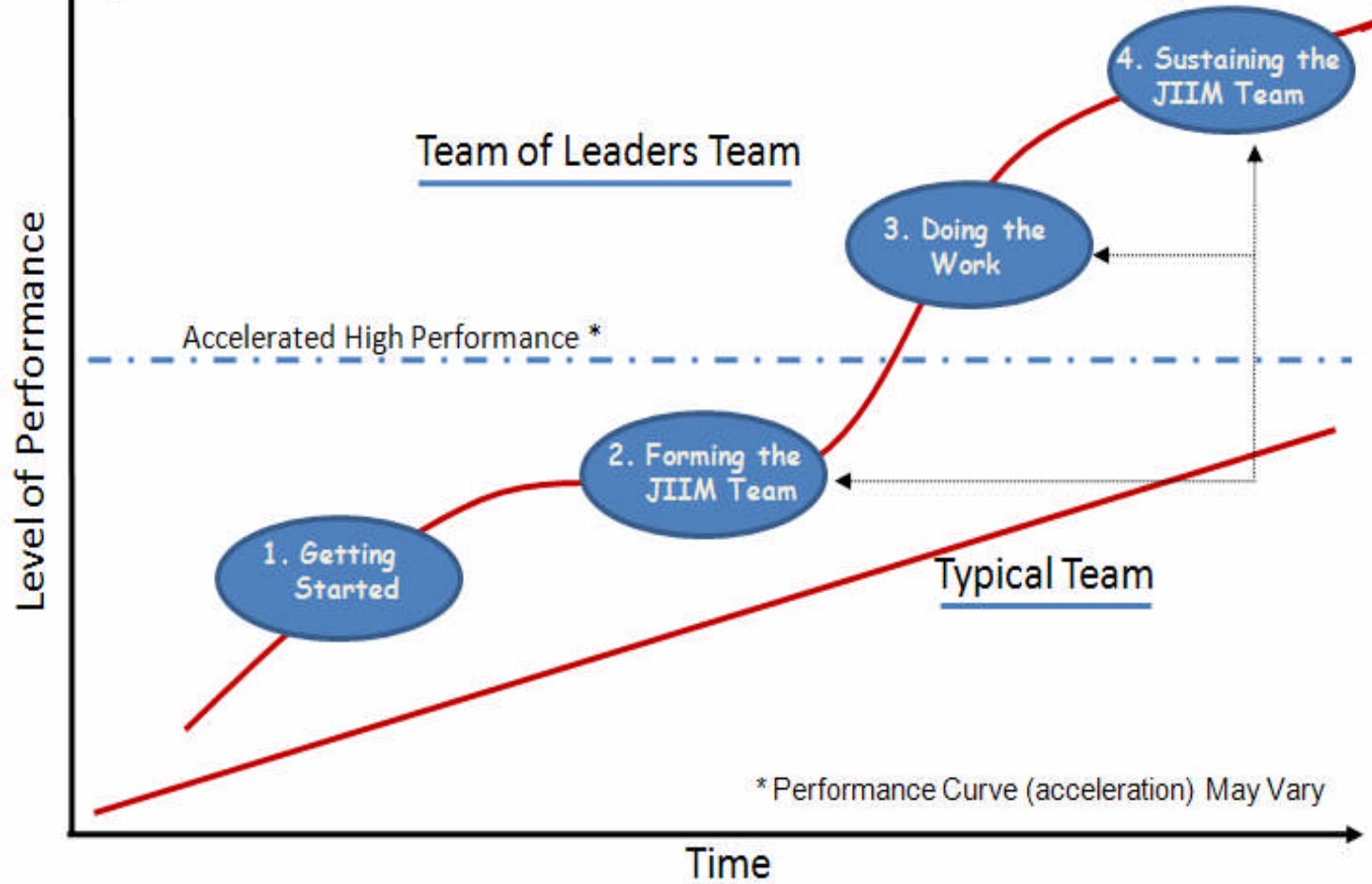# Coaching Guide version 1.0 (Excerpt)

## Introduction to Teams of Leaders Approach

Leaders of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) teams face unique challenges as they bring together teams of other leaders that cross multiple boundaries and attempt to operate at high performance levels. In the military culture, team building seems intuitive since there is a shared culture, set of values, lexicon, and doctrine, etc. This common background makes the Teams of Leaders (ToL) approach appear naturally occurring.

However, within JIIM teams, obtaining high-performance is much more difficult due to the added complication of diversified backgrounds, agendas, perspectives, and situational understanding, which can significantly complicate leader-team formation and render some traditional teams dysfunctional. The ToL approach mitigates the challenge of operating within such complex JIIM environments, allowing leader-teams to not only function, but rapidly achieve high performance through developing shared qualities faster than traditional teaming practices focused on task proficiency.

Improved Performance with ToL

Level of Performance (y-axis)

Time (x-axis)

Team of Leaders Team

4. Sustaining the JIIM Team

3. Doing the Work

Accelerated High Performance *

2. Forming the JIIM Team

1. Getting Started

Typical Team

* Performance Curve (acceleration) May Vary

# Building High-Performing Teams of Leaders

## *What Are High-Performing Leader-Teams?*

The term Teams of Leaders is used to describe a high-performing leader-team whose members are from different organizations, cultures, agencies, or backgrounds and who each bring specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the cross culture JIIM leader-team. These leader-team members often represent a parent agency, organization, or country and come with varying backgrounds, skill sets, motivations, and agendas as they interact to accomplish a common mission or objective. Due to the complexity and a less defined hierarchy where European Command (EUCOM) may not be the lead agency, each leader-member of the team may find themselves in a lead role of a project or objective. Rather than a team consisting of clearly defined leaders and subordinates focused on task proficiency, the team is transformed into one of peer leaders or a *leader-team*, where the relationship among members is the cornerstone to achieving high-performance.

Unlike traditional military teams that focus on task-mastery, the ToL approach is to zero in on the process of teaming. The approach is to accelerate the sharing of four qualities of vision, trust, competence, and confidence among and between leader-team members. It is a streamlined approach designed to break through barriers and boundaries that stagnate team development and ultimately performance. Along with an evolutionary method called the LTX, leader-teams are able to harness the power of Information Management (IM) and

Knowledge Management (KM) to achieve rapid high-performance. That synergistic effect, of bringing Leader-Team qualities to bear with IM and KM to achieve high performance with the attendant actionable understanding, is what has become known as Team of Leaders.

Many teams face the challenge of having to become effective in a very short amount of time while working across organizations, cultures, or agencies. Organizations are challenged as they build teams that cross multiple boundaries and attempt to operate at high performance levels. Team building seems intuitive when cultures, values, and language are shared; however, in some teams, the diverse backgrounds, agendas, perspectives, and situational perspectives complicate things and can even render a team dysfunctional.

The term Teams of Leaders describes an approach used to generate high-performing leader-teams quicker than conventional methods. This approach rapidly develops the shared vision/purpose, trust, competence, and confidence required for high performance. It leverages IM technologies, effective KM, and learning strategies to communicate and collaborate across time and space boundaries, while a newly developed LTX is used to build understanding of the operational situation and team requirements. And the developmental-models of how the team might execute the mission or tasks results in actionable knowledge needed to perform at high levels.

Every team goes through a set of developmental stages; the synergistic use of the three elements in the ToL approach accelerate the leader-team movement through those stages by addressing the leader-team requirements and cultural and organizational obstacles quickly and effectively . The ToL approach broadens the circle of the team and emphasizes building relationships and finding expertise. This approach develops a larger shared rolodex and an adaptive nature that immediately looks for and finds the workaround when obstacles are encountered.

The ToL approach is a new, adaptive way of teaching leaders how to observe, think, and act in high stakes, highly complex situations. It is about capacity building for non-routine situations that demand rapid and creative solutions.

## *What is a Leader-Team?*

Leader-teams are comprised of members from different organizations, cultures, agencies, or backgrounds joined to accomplish a mission or task. These teams exist across government, the military, industry, academia, and in our neighborhoods. Each member brings specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes to the team to help accomplish an objective and each "leader" is part of a greater organization that the leader-team member can reach back to for expertise and support. These teams do not follow a hierarchical organizational model, but rather operate as a network within the hierarchy. At any time, any member of

the team may be placed in a lead role for a project or objective. ToL is a new approach that achieves higher performance faster than traditional teaming practices.

## *Leader-team effectiveness depends on three criteria:*

1. Producing a team outcome (product or service) acceptable to whomever the leader-team is serving.
2. A growth in leader-team capacity (which in turn improves capacity of the organization).
3. A group experience meaningful and satisfying to members (which results in improved confidence).

## *High performance can be measured by:*

4. Amount of shared situational understanding.
5. Amount of shared purpose and vision about the mission (ability to see an end-state, a compelling direction).
6. Amount of shared trust between team members.
7. Amount of perceived competence of other team members.
8. Amount of confidence each member has in the team's ability to get the job done… and more.
9. The amount of latitude it is given by leaders to get the job done (enabling structure that facilitates rather than impedes).
10. Level of expertise available or accessible to the team (the bigger the shared rolodex the better).
11. The ability to use their social network to include and co-opt others into supporting the team.
12. Time it takes to accomplish a mission/task.
13. Quality of work the team produces (satisfaction of the customer).
14. Contribution of knowledge and expertise shared beyond the leader-team.

## How Does the ToL Approach Accelerate Team Performance?

ToL accelerates learning, understanding, and action through the synergistic effect between successfully applying advanced leader-team development practices (created through the development of shared vision/purpose, trust, competence, and confidence) with effective use of information technology (IM/IS) and virtual collaboration tools and processes (KM) to learn and perform more rapidly and at higher levels than before.

The ToL methodology is not an externally generated exercise or training; it is a way of thinking, understanding, and acting. It is used during the normal course of operations in the context for the situation at hand. This approach will enable leader-teams to observe, listen, stimulate, and support those who will themselves "create shared actionable understanding" from the bottom up, drawing on their practices and expectations so actual ground truth is first supported. These approaches also help a leader-team frame and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to support the high priority issues facing JIIM teams. The ToL approach helps leader-teams identify and overcome obstacles that can keep them from accomplishing the mission.

## *Qualities of a High-Performing Team*

<mark>High-performing leader-teams possess four well-developed qualities—shared vision/purpose, shared trust, shared competence, and shared confidence.</mark>

These leader-teams also possess an adept ability to build relationships and work through problems to achieve their mission.

### 1.Shared Vision/Purpose

Shared vision exists when members of the leader-team have a common understanding of:

- The overall mission or objective
- Goals and sub-goals of the mission
- Strategies for reaching the goals
- Team members' strengths and weaknesses
- Values and preferences of the leader-team as a whole and among the individual members
- The roles each member will play and want
- The big picture (such as, how this particular mission contributes to a larger purpose)

## 2.Shared Trust

Among the meanings associated with trust is the expectation that a person has a high level of integrity and dependability. People are willing to put themselves at risk because of their confidence that the other person will do what they expect. People tend to initially develop trust by superficial factors such as rank, position, résumés, or combat patches, which can lead to assumptions about a person's prior experiences and or qualification. As a barometer of trustworthiness, such assumptions are neither predictive nor reliable. However, direct experience with one another over time allows leader-team members to develop more informed, deeper levels of shared trust.

## 3.Shared Competence

Competence is evident when people perform their work at or above standard. Individuals and teams, as a whole, have competencies; it's important to ask whether the team has the competencies necessary to accomplish the mission. Shared competence means the team collectively is competent.

Rapid development of competence is important because:

- Leader-team members rely on one another to round out leader-team expertise;
- The sum of a leader-team's skills is greater than the separate parts;

- Complexity and change keep accelerating, which means that few leader-teams have all the skills and knowledge needed within the core group; and
- Confidence builds as the team demonstrates competence.

## 4.    Shared Confidence

As trust, purpose, and competence build, the accelerator to attaining and continuing to build "high performance" is confidence. Small successes develop confidence, which in turn causes teams to undertake new and more difficult challenges. With each accomplishment, leader-team confidence grows, as does the leader-team's culture and ability to collaborate.
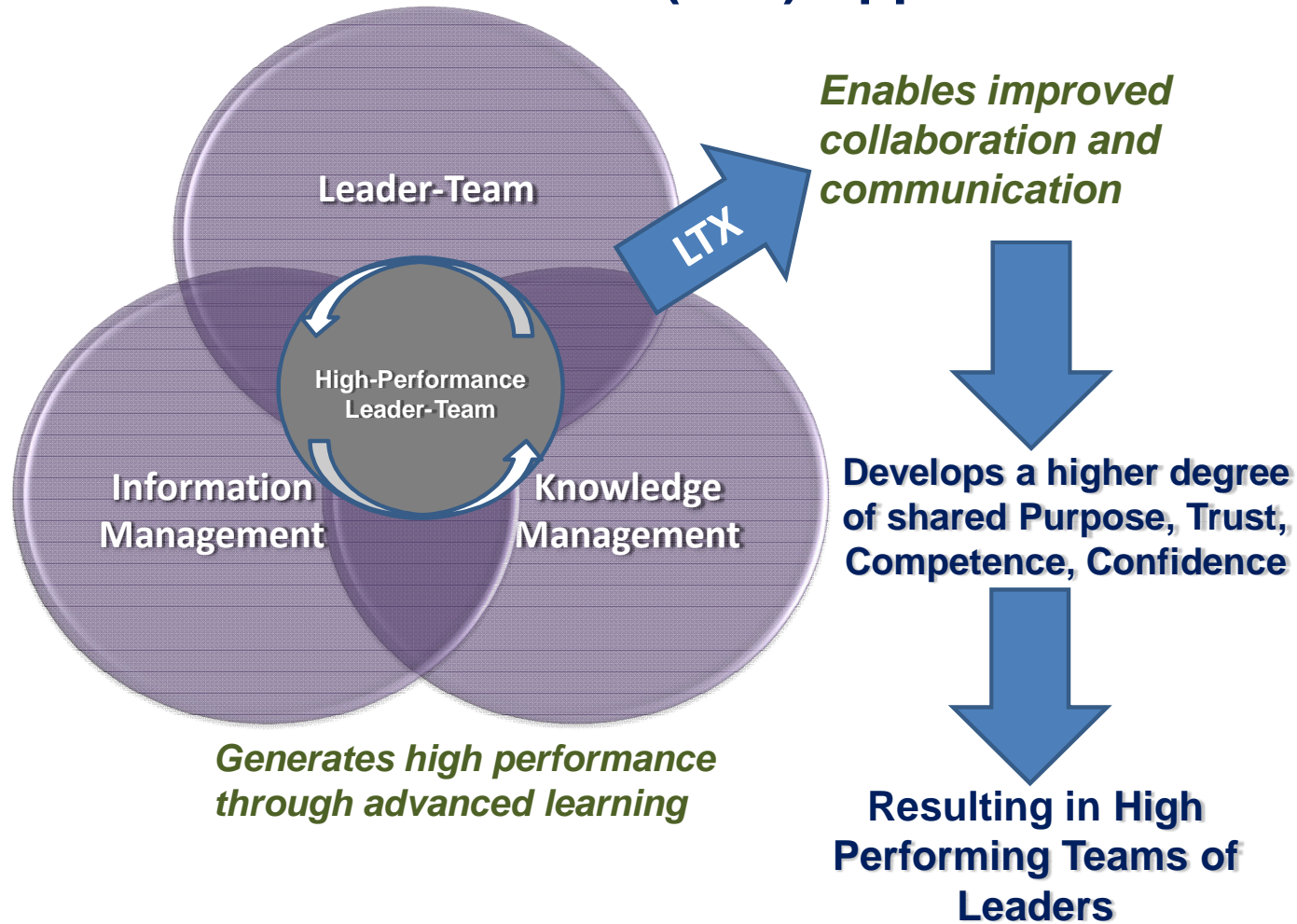
## Enabling High-Performing Teams

The Teams of Leaders (ToL) approach is a means to improve team learning and performance levels by deliberately developing shared, **actionable-understanding** (*knowledge-in-motion; the leader-team has in-depth situational awareness, accurate information, and the concerted ability to use that information swiftly and correctly*) using a combination of continuing sequence Leader-Team Exercises (LTX) while expanding the team's ability to collaborate and communicate across various boundaries.

ToL consists of three main components:

- The Leader-Team
- Information Management (IM) Tools
- Knowledge Management (KM) Processes

# Teams of Leaders (ToL) Approach

Leader-Team

Information Management

High-Performance Leader-Team

Knowledge Management

LTX

*Enables improved collaboration and communication*

**Develops a higher degree of shared Purpose, Trust, Competence, Confidence**

*Generates high performance through advanced learning*

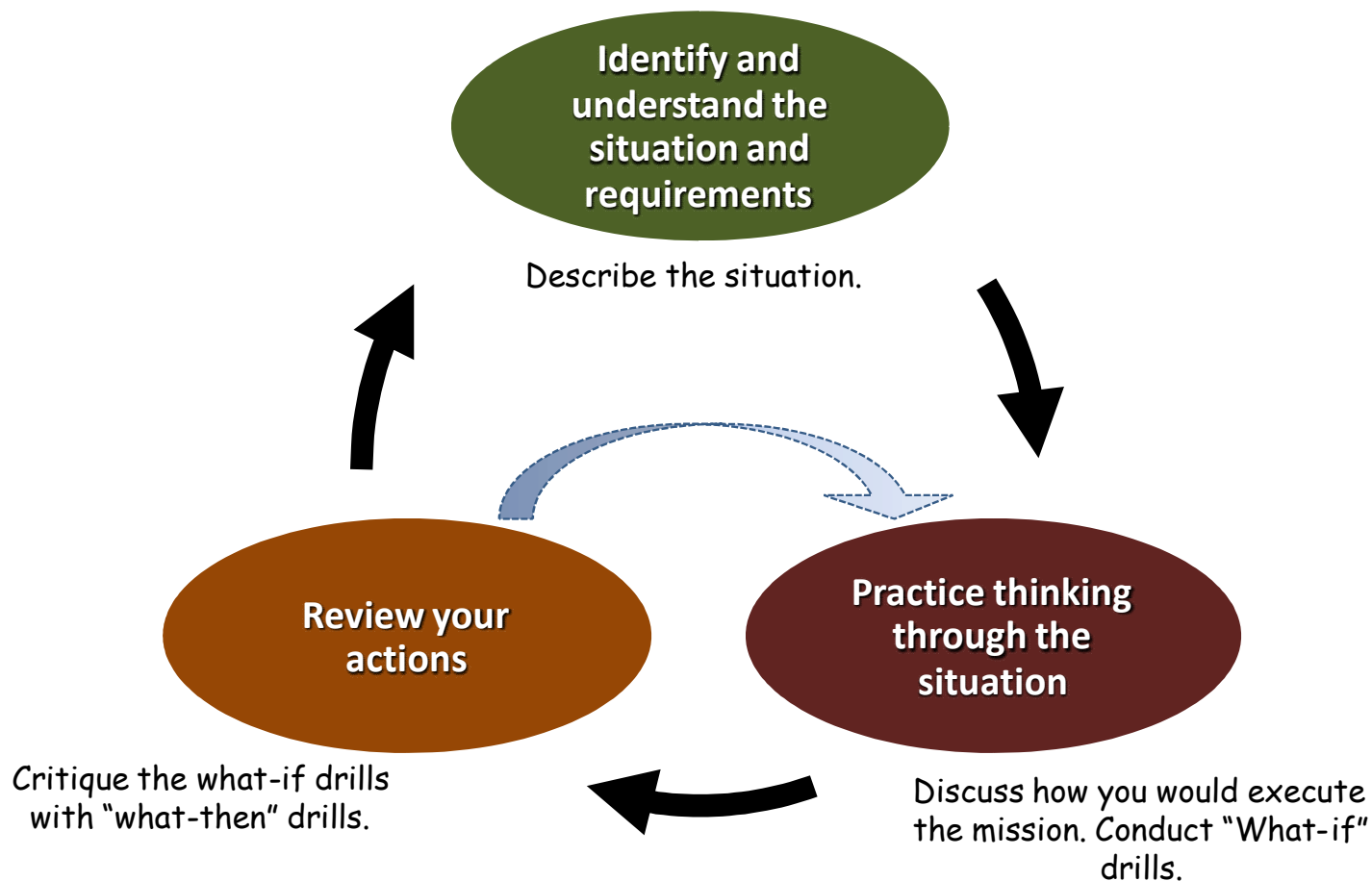**Resulting in High Performing Teams of Leaders**

## *The Leader-Team Exercise*

The LTX is the "driver" that propels and accelerates the team of leaders though the natural team development stages, helping it achieve high-performance, exhibiting actionable understanding more quickly. The LTX should be conducted in an operational setting as a way to think through a situation and build the actionable understanding discussed above.

The art of building high-performing leader-teams is sensing what combination of *practices* and *expectations* to stimulate when and with whom to generate the intensive collaboration that fosters development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes (SKA) that are characteristic of high-performing teams of leaders (shared trust, vision/mission, competence, confidence).

The LTX process comprises three steps. Team SKA develops primarily through the team, as a group, discussing short vignettes (situations in story form), analyzing the mission/task "what if…," and developing options and considering the "what then…". The three steps are:

1. Determine and understand the team's situation and requirements.
2. Practice by thinking (talking) through the situation.
3. Review your shared actions and decisions.

# Leader-Team Exercise (LTX) Framework

**Identify and understand the situation and requirements**

Describe the situation.

**Practice thinking through the situation**

Discuss how you would execute the mission. Conduct "What-if" drills.

**Review your actions**

Critique the what-if drills with "what-then" drills.

Adopted from Gary Klein, PhD
The Power of Intuition, 2003

To develop such high-performing leader-teams requires an approach that goes beyond traditional "train to task" models. Rather, these exercises develop the "art" of adaptive thinking and learning. This advanced methodology develops clear and shared understanding, critical-thinking and reasoning skills, and promotes adaptive behaviors, not conditioned responses. The leader-team exercise, done in the context of the current mission and situation, results in an accelerated maturation of the four shared qualities: vision, trust, competence, and confidence. They help the team develop understanding with respect to the purpose, situation, conditions, and decisions as well as how to work around obstacles together. These mental exercises apply available IM and KM enablers and improve the leader-team's ability to effectively communicate and collaborate across organizational boundaries, time zones, and cultures. Using the technique of facilitated discussion, leader-team members gain shared insights by accelerating a process that normally transpires over a long period of time and becomes evident through real world interactions.

By varying the situations and techniques, you help maintain participant interest and deepen understanding. Initially, keep the situations simple. Focus on areas in which the entire leader-team can agree, then as shared understanding, trust, and confidence build, you can create more difficult "what if" situations.

# Summary

## The ToL Approach is Different from How Teams are Trained Today

This approach facilitates rapid leader-team building by providing specific questions and issues to consider at each stage of a team's lifecycle and in the context of the operational mission. These questions help develop mental models of the leader-team's missions/requirements, concerns, and possible actions. No stepping away from the real world to "conduct an exercise." Each LTX discussed in this approach is _in context_ and contributes to mission outcomes. The leader-team discussions, stimulated by the questions and considerations, accelerate shared understanding and set conditions to develop the four key qualities for a high-performing leader-team: shared team vision/purpose, shared trust, shared competency, and shared confidence. Developing these qualities in combination with artfully applying IM tools and effective KM processes help a leader-team communicate across time and distance virtually and collaborate more effectively. The result is a leader-team that can observe, orient, decide, and act (OODA) faster than the way we work today. The ToL objective is to build leader-teams that can "connect the dots" ahead of others to influence outcomes across boundaries of organization, function, level, or culture.

**Leader-Team Shared Qualities Grow & Solidify as You Step Through the JIIM Team Stages**

Confidence

**WHAT**

Competence

**HOW**

**4. Sustaining the JIIM Team**

**3. Doing the Work**

= Improved Communication & Collaboration

Leader-Team Exercise

Trust

**Identify and understand the team's requirements**

Purpose

**2. Forming the JIIM Team**

**Review your actions and make adjustments**

**Think through the execution**

**1. Getting Started**

| FORMING | STORMING | NORMING | PERFORMING | CHECKING | SUSTAINING |

## *Measures of Leader-Team Effectiveness*

### Examples of MOE How will we know if we are performing at higher levels?

- Leader-team members feel connected and challenged by their work and take pride in it.
- Leader-team members feel empowered to try new approaches to their work.
- Leader-team members can make decisions and take actions across boundaries increasingly in the face of uncertainty.
- Leader-team members encourage one another and their ideas across boundaries, grouped or virtual.
- Leader-team members constructively discuss and challenge one another's ideas and approaches.
- Leader-team members feel comfortable collaborating and coordinating pre-decisional across boundaries, including levels—both bottom up and top down.
- Leader-team members are quick to resolve differences and find common ground.
- Leader-team members feel safe sharing ideas and collaborating with one another. Sharing, sharing, sharing.
- Leader-team members feel confident to brief superiors about their levels of informal coordination across boundaries.
- Leader-team members have and use standard operating agreements (ROE) for how to work formal and informal collaboration, particularly across boundaries.
- Transition and succession plans within leader-teams are understood and facilitate smooth handoff of responsibilities across boundaries.
- Leader-team members quickly identify barriers and obstacles to collaboration and find effective workarounds.
- Leader-team members do not feel that "everything must go through the boss" before it is shared, particularly across boundaries