



If you look in the Army's manual on Mission Command, it says the philosophy is based on 6 principles:

- Build cohesive teams through mutual trust
- Create shared understanding
- Provide commander's clear intent
- Exercise disciplined initiative
- Use mission orders
- Accept prudent risk

All of these are easier to recite than to actually internalize and set into practice. There is a simple solution already in tactical doctrine that could help leaders embrace the six principles much easier.

A decision point is an event, an area, a line, or a point on the battlefield where tactical decisions are required. Decision points do not dictate commander's decisions, they only indicate that a decision is required, and they indicate when and where the decision should be made to have the maximum effect on friendly or enemy courses of action.

During the planning process commanders might dictate to subordinate leaders the following: “Identify 3 decisions that you will have to make during the course of this operation and discuss them with me during the backbrief.”

This simple step will potentially have the following effects:

1. Commanders and subordinates gain a ***shared understanding*** of potential situations that may arise during operations.
2. Commanders and subordinates gain a greater appreciation for how each other thinks which increases the likelihood that both sides will accept ***prudent risks***.
3. Subordinates begin to understand they can ***trust*** the commander to support them when timely decisions are required , thereby speeding up the process.
4. The decision cycles of the entire organization are greatly decreased during actual operations

Mission Command is like a marriage; it takes a lot of work and open lines of communication, and there is no better time to do this in a military setting than before the actual battle begins.

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