



COMMAND MESSAGE

BG Bren D. Rogers, Commanding

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I am most honored and humbled... and ecstatic to serve as your next commanding general! I take this responsibility seriously and promise to work hard for all of you in the Colorado Army National Guard.

My intent for our Soldiers moving forward is to emphasize building trust and strength -- every day, in all that we do, everywhere that we go, and with all those we meet. If we concentrate on those two aspects, we will meet our other goals with ease and greater success.

I know how important building trust is. Ever since I was a young girl, my parents instilled the importance of "[Cowboy Ethics](#)" and, in particular, the tenet of "When you make a promise, keep it." Later on when I joined the COARNG, I learned how valuable these tenets were for building strong cohesive teams, accomplishing the mission, and being able to "win."

Generating trust provides a tremendous advantage in everything we strive to be and accomplish....as the writer Stephen Covey states in *Speed of Trust*, "Everything is impacted by trust and it truly is the one thing that changes everything!"

The world around us is becoming increasingly low-trust. If you look at where we are in our country today, there are so many areas where it has been lost. As a whole, our society is becoming more cautious... guarded... even suspicious, and this causes a downward cycle: sowing a cynicism that everyone feels is justified. This sort of malevolent environment makes success unattainable. It affects the way we see our problems, how we try to solve them, and the way in which we view the people around us.

If allowed the opportunity to fester, low-trust can destroy an organization and ruin any chance for building strong cohesive teams. This is something we must not permit. It is the duty of each and every one of us to do our part in giving and, even better, building trust. When we talk about winning our nation's wars, we need to win this "war" on trust....through leading by example and building healthy relationships based on trust. We cannot afford to let mistrust permeate our ranks and keep us from building strong cohesive teams that are disciplined, trained, and fit to fight. We cannot afford a lack of trust to come between the American people and us.

Change is happening at an extraordinary and unprecedented rate – not only the pace of it, but also the amount and the type. Unfortunately, trust is the most perishable commodity in a high-change environment. But trust also happens to be the only means by which people can generate the speed, commitment, and inspiration necessary to successfully navigate such a rapidly changing operational environment. Not only are we, as leaders, required to respond to constant change without losing speed: we need to get ahead of it. Therefore, we often need to create additional change in order to stay relevant and competitive. This can only be done successfully in a high-trust environment.

As Covey also points out, the balance of generational representation in the workforce is shifting. The younger generations are effectively motivated, inspired, and engaged in different ways than the generations that came before them. Younger generations desire to be inspired and be led with purpose. They want to make a difference and want to be trusted. Older generations tend to operate under the premise that trust is earned, while younger generations operate under the premise that trust is given. Both premises have merit but the very nature of the workforce today puts an even *greater* premium on trust. Bridging generational gaps is a leadership challenge that we need to ensure we get right.

I firmly believe that trust is the critical enabler of strategic initiatives. Consider some of the factors that become either driving or restraining forces to outstanding organizational performance – factors such as engagement, execution, innovation, retention, recruitment, partnering, collaborating, teaming, productivity, safety, and leading change. As Covey points out that when the needle is moved on trust, the needle is moved in every one of these areas and often the movement is disproportionately high. Therefore, “trust truly is the rising tide that lifts all boats.”

As of today, building trust is one of our key strategic initiatives – both internally and externally. We will intentionally measure trust because it is what matters the most! We will proactively focus on developing and growing trust from the inside out. Organizations that create a culture of trust are the teams that talented people compete to be a part of. *This* is what we are striving for.

Covey also points out that yesterday’s style of management is insufficient for today’s leadership needs and I strongly agree. He makes a great point in stating that we cannot “command and control” a person’s best contribution: he or she has to choose to give it. The style of leadership that succeeds in today’s world is one of “trust and inspire” – trust the people you work with and inspire them to make a difference. Being trusted is the most inspiring form of human motivation. It brings out the best in people and that is what we need in our world today.

While trust may not appear to have anything to do with the challenges we are currently facing, our ability to establish, build, extend, and even restore trust has everything to do with the solution. Because the way we solve problems and get things done is with and through people. And nothing is more impactful on people, their work, and their performance, than trust!

Trust remains, more than ever before, the one thing that changes everything!

BUILD TRUST, BUILD STRENGTH