

Where there is Innovation, there is Transformation - ACT

Written by ACT Staff Writer

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Generally speaking, people love the idea of 'Innovation'. As Allied Command Transformation (ACT) again renovates its organisation and functions to provide better performance to NATO, one division has been assigned the responsibility to stimulate innovation in the Command and ultimately the Alliance.

The about-to-be-formed Capability Engineering and Innovation (CEI) Division incorporates most of the existing Capability Engineering Division but adds to it the Transformation Network Branch and Lessons Learned Branch. Both Branches are proven contributors to the Transformation effort.

Recently the CEI Division held a leadership forum, known as an offsite, to discuss how the changing organization, functions and additional Innovation nomenclature may affect the Division and to create a strategy to address these changes. In an effort to show how Innovation is actually considered a significant part of the culture of other domains, the offsite was held at a local race car track to investigate Innovation within the racing culture. "I believe that this is an excellent opportunity to examine the essential elements of an Innovative culture through the windshield of another domain," said BGen Giovanni Fungo, Assistant Chief of Staff Capability Engineering and Innovation, and the leader of the offsite.

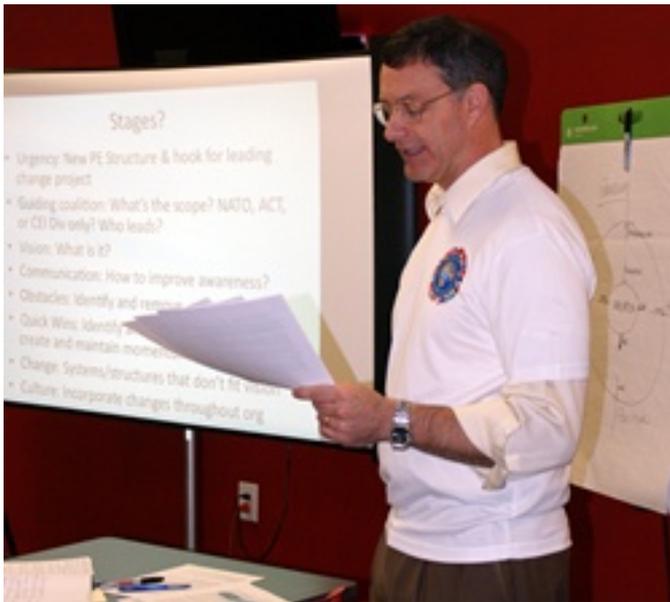
Creating a strategy for Innovation is only half of the equation. To be successful, an Innovation initiative must also work in practice. Essential skills of teamwork, trust, alacrity, reputation, communication, operating in environments of uncertainty, and dealing with a rapidly changing landscape and events, are all critical to creating breakthrough thinking and actions.

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Holding the offsite at the local racing track, a high performance, racing theme destination in Virginia Beach accomplished several of these team goals. Truly Innovative thinking requires getting people out of their comfort zones; practicing Innovation, and exploring new opportunities for personal performance within a high-functioning team environment. Racing is an excellent model for Innovation in that few things better integrate separate disciplines – engineering, design, technology, decision making, into a single high performance activity.



Moreover, many of the tools in use in Capabilities Engineering and Innovation, such as modelling and simulation, human factors, experimentation and lessons learned have become foundational elements in helping racing teams test new ideas and future solutions in gaining a competitive advantage.

The leadership team received a number of pertinent facilitated briefings throughout the day related to their new work. The morning was spent reviewing internal relationships and collaborative opportunities. The afternoon was spent discussing external relationships and the identity that CEI wishes to achieve. A special opportunity in the afternoon was to participate in high speed kart racing. The facilitator of the day, Mr. Tom Osha of Wexford Science and Technology, observed that, "the sharing and collaboration that we have experienced here today is key to implementing a successful Innovation culture within CEI."

The outcome of the CEI Offsite was so impressive that Branch Heads were directed to ensure that they take their Branches on an offsite in the near future and discuss the items that had been reviewed at the Divisional Offsite.