



Mission Creep

An Open Letter/Email to The Program Team:

Teammates,

I am so thankful for everyone's hard work. I truly appreciate how busy every member of our team is. With that said, I want to make everyone aware of an issue we *must* address as a team. Historically, we have held meetings, discussed things we must do to get better, agreed to do them... and then never did them. There are numerous excuses we make for why this occurs, but the most ubiquitous one that we must all address is "Mission Creep," or in civilian speak, "I got busy doing other things."

Admittedly, there are jobs where you are only responsible for one *tactical* objective: an assembly line task of putting a door handle onto a car door again and again... and again. Those jobs are not this job though. We are all responsible for numerous tactical objectives which allow us to



achieve our *strategic* objectives; ensure the entire car is being built correctly, in a timely manner, under cost, and safely.

Furthermore, not only do we each have defined tactical objectives as outlined in our job description, we are also consistently assigned or volunteer for additional ones. Jake MacDonald, Program Lead Instructor and co- author of *The Program* book, provides a great example of this in *The Program: Lessons from Elite Military Units for Creating and Sustaining High Performance Leaders and Teams*. He and his Marines were tasked with securing an important road intersection in Iraq during a critical battle. While doing so, a helicopter was shot down and the pilots had to be rescued. Jake and his Marines volunteered for this tactical objective as well. Immediately, he and some of his Marines left the road intersection and rescued the pilots while others stayed behind to continue to secure the road intersection. Both tactical objectives had to be (and were) successfully accomplished in order for U.S. military forces to win that battle and help our nation achieve its strategic objective.

Additional tactical objectives can, and often do, make achieving our strategic objectives more difficult. They do! Rather than become frustrated by them though, embrace them. Typically, additional tactical objectives are a reflection of growth. A retreating army does not have multiple tactical objectives. It has one: retreat.

Growth requires both tactical and strategic objectives being met consistently. As the CEO of this team, I must make the time to receive input from you on what you believe yours should be to help us achieve our strategic goals; your input on what is in fact, “most important” is invaluable to me and our organization. However, as the CEO, or person in position of authority, it is my obligation to make a final decision on them. I am then 100% responsible for ensuring that each of you knows them. Remember, if at any time you are unclear on them, you have the right and the obligation to ask for clarity. Once we have agreed upon them though, we are both then 100% responsible for doing what we said we were going to do.

If you can’t do it within the assigned timeframe and to the best of your ability, then you are responsible for communicating that. Once we have agreed to do something though, it must get done. We made a commitment to each other and we must honor that commitment. Trust is the foundation of every relationship. If either of us doesn’t honor our commitments, there will be a lack of trust. And if there is a lack of trust, there is no relationship, or at the very least, a poor one. Poor relationships don’t compete for championships. They retreat.

Disciplined behavior requires disciplined preparation, not excuses. Don’t make them and don’t allow your teammates to make them. Instead, do what you say you are going to do. Honor



commitments. Always. This is what a disciplined person and team does. And disciplined people and teams win. A lot. On every battlefield.

Eric Kapitulik

Program Founder and CEO

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