



Turnover and transition are continual in high-operating tempo U.S. Army units, impacting training and readiness. To succeed during these transitions, organizations need strong leadership that demonstrates patience, possesses open-mindedness, and fosters a culture of trust. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. John Simpson)

# Winning in Transition

*By Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Allan Gilchrist*

Petroleum and Water Department, Romeo Company, 262nd Quartermaster Battalion,  
23rd Quartermaster Brigade

**T**urnover and transition are continual in high-operating tempo U.S. Army units (such as the Petroleum and Water Department). In fact, all formations experience change capable of

impacting training and readiness.

How can organizations continue to win while experiencing transition? The answer varies by organization, but one constant is the importance of developing solid



terms of reference to succeed during continuous transition.

Weathering major transition requires building capacity to sustain success through strong continuity systems. It is leaders who are responsible for plan and process continuity. Success demands performing continuity procedures during and after all operations (Department of the Army [DA], 2021).

Effective leadership requires patience and open-mindedness. As new leaders or leaders with incoming personnel, you must assess your subordinates while building credibility and trust.

You gain credibility and trust through open communication, demonstrating ethical standards, clearly expressing expectations, and displaying the leadership attributes and competencies expected of Army leaders.

The key for organizations to win now and in the future is leadership who maintains focus, demonstrates patience, possesses open-mindedness, and builds a culture of trust.

## Patience

Tactical patience involves allowing a situation time to develop before deciding how to react to it (Thompson, 2021). Patience is helpful whether individuals enter or

leave a position (or organization).

Always remember, people are the Army's greatest asset. The people in an organization drive the processes and are the most vital source of continuity.

Patience allows us to see how we affected an organization we left and how we can integrate into a new organization to make effective change. As an organization's new member, you must patiently observe what worked for that organization in the past and see how you can make changes that enhance it and not cause unnecessary disruption.

When combined with open-mindedness, patience allows for assessment, inquiry, and productive change.

## Open-Mindedness

Open-mindedness tends to support different viewpoints among leaders and Soldiers. In a 2013 profile piece, *'Shy' Soldier succeeds through taking chances, open mindedness*, by Senior Airman Jason J. Brown, 633rd Air Base Wing Public Affairs, Staff Sgt. Shawon Tucker hit the mark when describing how other Soldiers defied her expectations. "There were people that blew my mind because they really stepped up and went above and beyond," she said. "Now I always give people the benefit of the doubt" (Brown, 2013).



Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Gilchrist teaches a Master Resiliency Training class to Soldiers after finishing a 5-mile ruck march and a combative session. Building teams through trust is essential for maintaining effective and cohesive crews. Soldiers must trust their leaders to uphold standards and support the organization's improvement. (Courtesy photo of Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Gilchrist)

During transitions we've all heard, "Well, this is how it's always been done." Remaining open-minded allows leaders to assess and accept current practices with the intention of adopting better methods in the future.

While leaving an organization or joining another, individuals must embrace the force's diversity and recognize that certain situations require drastic change to advance the organization's culture and climate.

A prime example of open-mindedness is the support for female Soldiers in combat military occupational specialties. This change ensures the total force gets the best of the best in the combat arms, regardless of gender.

The Army's ability to embrace this change supports the third transition requirement, building and maintaining trust.

## Trust

Building teams through mutual trust is essential to sustaining effective and cohesive crews. It is a necessary skill for all Army leaders (DA, 2015). It is important to trust leaders' decisions made during times of transition.

Soldiers must trust that leaders make choices based on maintaining standards – and that their actions support the organization and its team members' betterment. Soldiers should not have blind faith but should recognize that the long-term goal is to improve the organization.

Patience, open-mindedness, and trust all build on each other. They allow leaders and team members to win at an individual and organizational level while in transition.



Soldiers work together to put camouflage netting in place during a field exercise. Patience allows leaders to reflect on their positive influence in previous positions while observing past successes in a new organization to discover how to enhance it and foster a learning environment that promotes growth and productive change. (Courtesy photo of Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Gilchrist)

## Conclusion

The U.S. Army must focus on patience, open-mindedness, and trust to win in transition, both now and in the future. As leaders and members of an organization, we must understand people have always been and will always be our greatest asset.

Remaining open-minded allows us to accept and embrace current practices and allows for opportunities to improve them in the future.

We must trust leaders making decisions based on maintaining standards and support the changes they make challenging their teams and organizations. ■

---

## References

- Brown, J. (2013, April). 'Shy' Soldier succeeds through taking chances, open mindedness. [https://www.army.mil/article/101269/shy\\_soldier\\_succeeds\\_through\\_taking\\_chances\\_open\\_mindedness](https://www.army.mil/article/101269/shy_soldier_succeeds_through_taking_chances_open_mindedness)
- Department of the Army. (2015) *Army team building* (ATP 6-22.6). [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/pdf/web/atp6\\_22x6%20FINAL.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/atp6_22x6%20FINAL.pdf)
- Department of the Army. (2021). *U.S. Army continuity of operations program and planning procedures* (DA Pam 500-30). [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/ARN30087-PAM\\_500-30-000-WEB-1.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN30087-PAM_500-30-000-WEB-1.pdf)
- Thompson, J. (2021, September). *Tactical patience: The art of delaying decision making*. Medium. <https://medium.com/horizonperformance/tactical-patience-fdb38bb19d13>

---

**Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Gilchrist** is the Operations Sergeant of the Directorate of Plans, Training, Mobilization, and Security for United States Army Garrison Japan, Camp Zama, Japan. He has served in various leadership assignments and positions over the last 18 years, ranging from squad leader to instructor. He holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from Columbia Southern University and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration from Columbia Southern University.

---



<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NCOJournal>

<https://twitter.com/NCOJournal>

**Disclaimer:** The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NCO Journal, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.

