

education

➔ How to use fighter-pilot techniques to put on better meetings, part two of three

The Five Rs of an Effective Briefing

By Anthony "AB" Bourke

In the first segment of this three-part series of articles, I described how fighter pilots and meeting planners have much more in common than most people would imagine. Both work in high-speed, rapidly changing environments that are fraught with perils. We also discussed how pilots and planners can develop standards within their organizations to improve execution and to prevent them from having to "reinvent the wheel" every time they plan a new mission. Finally, we introduced the concept of "The Feedback Loop" as a simple system to ensure that teams are aligned and flying in formation during events and as a tool to drive continual improvement.

At the heart of The Feedback Loop is a system of regular briefing and debriefing that takes place around key meetings and events. As previously discussed, the briefing is not a planning session or a two-way conversation. Similar to a quarterback calling a play in a

team huddle, a briefing is a one-way communication from a team leader to her staff on how she expects the team to execute.

There is a template you can use to conduct a clear, concise briefing before your events, as well as at the beginning of every week when you are back in your office. This template is based on "The Five Rs of an Effective Briefing." These Five Rs should be used by a leader to make sure that he has his bases covered during the planning process, and also to provide a checklist of the key details that must be communicated to a team prior to a successful meeting. The Five Rs are:

- Roadmap
- Results Desired
- Room and Logistics
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Risks

The **Roadmap** paints the big picture and brings everyone up to speed. The team leader recaps where the team has been and where it wants to be at the end of the mission.

Results Desired enumerate specific, measurable objectives for a mission. In other words, what will success look like today, and how will we measure it?

Room and Logistics encompass all the

things that must happen during an event and the resources needed to make them happen. A meeting planner cannot be too granular in plotting out these details. Start with the basics. Does everyone know the location of the meeting rooms? These elements may seem pedestrian, but they must be worked out before the brief begins.

Roles and Responsibilities is the meat of your briefing and should warrant the greatest portion of your time. This section clarifies every team member's role in the meeting and paints a picture of the flow of a perfect day.

Once you have laid out the perfect plan to your team, now it is time to rip the plan apart and talk about **Risks**. For fighter pilots, risks come in two categories: controllable and uncontrollable. Controllable risks are potential roadblocks for which you can plan.

Using the fighter pilot's Five Rs to prepare for your meetings and to communicate your plans will guarantee that your team will fly in formation for the entire event. **SM**

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