

Setting Up a Fusion Cell

Now, we'll pivot to very tactical steps in the building of a Fusion Cell. As mentioned, no two will ever be exactly the same, but below you'll find critical variables that must be in place for a Fusion Cell to thrive.

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McChrystal Group (MCG)

Description:

McChrystal is your people performance partner. We help organizations leverage human potential to achieve business outcomes by applying our Team of Teams framework to three critical areas of performance: developing your leaders, implementing strategy, and measuring your organization's performance.

Stakeholder(s):

Fusion Cell Leaders

Vision

Fusion Cells are established.

Mission

To document the steps in building of Fusion Cells.

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1. Mission

Identify the mission.

Any municipality establishing a Fusion Cell must first ensure they are clear on the mission. When we built these during combat operations, a fusion cell was tasked with pushing actionable intelligence to front line units, that would then execute operations based on those new insights. If a fusion cell wasn't driving effective missions in the field, it was considered ineffective. For the COVID-19 fight, leaders will need to give equally specific guidance to Fusion Cells.

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2. Priorities

Establish priorities to execute on the mission.

With COVID-19, these lines of effort may be related to testing, availability and / or distribution of PPE to hospitals staff or first responders; establishing backup treatment facilities; economic loss mitigation; continuity of government; synchronized, daily intelligence updates; sharing of best practices; etc.

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3. Members

Identify core members (organizational and individual) for the Fusion Cell

Stakeholder(s)

Convening Executives :

The Convening Executive should identify critical organizations in the COVID-19 fight and invite them to send participants into the Fusion Cell. Note that some functional areas (such as finance and legal) may not initially come to mind as members but may prove vital to operational success.

Fusion Cell Members :

- *Individual members must have a strong knowledge base. Such personnel can quickly evaluate information, identify risks, and craft/assess recommendations.*
- *Individual members must have good standing in their home organization. Such personnel can quickly access the leadership in their home organization to turn new insights into effective actions.*

4. Establishment

Establish the Cell.

4.A. Connectivity

Provide virtual connectivity.

Location: COVID-19's social distancing constraints likely require virtual connectivity. Members will likely need to establish virtual rooms where they can maintain 24-7 connectivity and have a common repository for planning, dissemination, and knowledge capture.

4.B. Communications

Get the technology right.

Communications – robust, redundant and real-time. For many organizations, completely virtual operations will be a challenge, from both a technical and behavioral standpoint. It is worth staffing significant up-front effort to get the technology right, so that it does not distract from crucial interactions moving forward.

4.B.i. Bandwidth

Ensure that sufficient Internet bandwidth and WiFi are provided.

Robust: Internet bandwidth (and WiFi, optimally) must be sufficient to handle voice, video, and data for a large group (~100+) simultaneously.

4.B.ii. Redundancy

Provide multiple means of sharing information.

Redundant: Fusion Cells exist to share information. Members need access to telephone, email, video teleconferencing (VTC) systems such as Skype or Teams that include a chat feature. End-to-end encryption will likely prove a necessity.

4.B.iii. Data Repository

Share information in real-time on a shared portal page and/or data repository.

Real-time: Members will require a shared portal page and/or data repository where information can be shared, posted and updated in real-time. in order to maintain a “Common Operational Picture” (see paragraph 6, below).

4.C. Lines of Effort

Establish ownership of the lines of effort (LOE).

Each LOE must be owned by a Fusion Cell member. Usually, ownership is assigned to the Fusion Cell member whose home organization has the greatest equity in the LOE. Progress in these LOEs must be tracked daily, at a minimum, and their owners held accountable for progress. Daily sync meetings to track progress are critical.

4.4. Procedures

Set simple rules to structure progress.

Protocols need to be fast and agile. Set simple rules to structure progress but avoid overengineering. At a minimum, Fusion Cells will need clarity on:

4.D.i. Sharing & Updating

Determine how new information will be shared and updated.

How new information is to be shared. How often is the portal page / slide is to be updated.

4.D.ii. Critical Information

Establish “Critical Information Requirements” and review regularly.

What constitutes a noteworthy event, and how and how quickly that information is shared across the Fusion Cell. Establish “Critical Information Requirements” (information that must be shared immediately across the Cell) and review regularly.

5. Operating Rhythm

Establish an Operating Rhythm (OR)

5.A. Convenings

Convene at least twice daily to share information.

The Fusion Cell should convene, formally, at least twice daily to share information. These can be short “around the horn” virtual meetings.

5.B. Synchronization

Synchronize operating rhythm with the incident command center.

The Fusion Cell’s operating rhythm should be synchronized with the incident command center or applicable crisis response meeting schedule and support information sharing and decision-making within it.

Stakeholder(s):

Incident Command Centers

6. Operational Picture

Create a Common Operational Picture.

6.A. Strategic Alignment

Ensure that members are aligned on the Fusion Cell's mission and priorities.

All members must be aligned on the Fusion Cell's mission and priorities.

6.B. Value

Add value to the other organizations and stakeholders.

Members should spend most of their time asking how they can add value to the other organizations and stakeholders, not how the Fusion Cell can provide insights back to their parent-organization.

6.C. Portal

Ensure members have constant access to a shared portal.

All members need constant access to a shared portal.

6.D. Metrics

Regularly update a small number of key metrics visualized in the common operating portal.

A small number of key metric visualization tools should be placed on the common operating portal, and regularly updated. A Fusion Cell may need to build out their own dashboards.

6.D.i. Data

Break down system barriers to gather and deconflict data streams in real time.

Data stream availability and integrity is crucial. Many flows key to addressing the crisis may not exist. If so, the Fusion Cell will need to spend precious time and resources to gather and deconflict these in real time—breaking down previous barriers or traditional firewalls between systems.

6.D.ii. Analysis & Guidance

Provide data analysis and guidance on the information's operational impact.

A key Fusion Cell contribution is often data analysis and guidance on the information's operational impact on various member organizations and activities.

6.F. Decluttering

Regularly declutter common-portal areas.

Regularly updated chat-channels on key and/or evolving topics can help declutter common-portal areas.

6.G. Timeliness

Associate time/date stamps with all documents to ensure the timeliness of the data is understood.

All documents used for updates should have an “as of” or “last updated” time/date depicted to ensure timeliness of data is understood.

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7. External Connections

Connect with outside entities.

7.A. Outside Actors

Identify outside actors that can learn from your lessons in fighting the network spread.

Stakeholder(s):

States :

States should connect with other states, particularly those on their immediate borders.

Counties :

Likewise, counties and major metropolitan cities should do the same.

Metropolises

7.B. Contact

Establish contact.

7.B.i. Insights

Seek ways to push your insights to other entities that could benefit from the Fusion Cell work.

7.B.ii. Updates

Invite these entities to receive regular updates, listen in on sync calls, etc.

7.B.iii. Mentality

A Fusion Cell must have a give-mentality, and no pride in ownership.

7.B.iv. Improvements

Constantly improve the FC's ability to share data, trends, and lessons learned with any outside entities that might benefit.

8. Alignment & Refinement

Refine each of the following factors daily.

Stakeholder(s)

Fusion Cells :

A Fusion Cell is built to fight a fluid problem. It should never be complacent or static.

Align & Refine – Continue to refine each of the following factors daily. As the COVID-19 crisis evolves, the lines of effort needed to address the challenge will likely change, which may require adjustments in Fusion Cell membership. Tracking progress against its mission, the Fusion Cell will adjust accordingly. On a daily cycle, Fusion Cell directors must ensure the team remains properly focused on:

8.A. Priorities

Eliminate lines of effort that are accomplished or fail to gain traction and add new lines to address mission-critical needs as they arise.

Lines of effort that are accomplished or fail to gain traction, should be eliminated. New needs critical to addressing the mission may arise and should be added.

8.B. Membership

Add and retire Fusion Cell membership as needed to align progress to the mission.

Fusion Cell membership must be consistently aligned to progress on the mission. As the crisis evolves, members should be added and retired as needed to retain this alignment.

8.C. Operating Rhythm

Change the Fusion Cell's operating rhythm as appropriate.

As the crisis evolves, the Fusion Cell's operating rhythm may need to change to match.

8.D. Procedures

Keep things that work; adapt or scrap those that do not.

8.E. Relationships

Align and refine relationships with outside entities.

As the crisis progresses, outside entities and relevant points of reference may also shift.

Administrative Information

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