LEADERSHIP IN UNCERTAINTY
Strategies for Combating Chaos

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7 Strategies & Subthemes
with supporting quotes from interviews

Introduction
The focus of this project is leadership in uncertainty. Uncertainty in this context, is derived from the unpredictability of the environment, as well as a leader’s unfamiliarity with the problem set. This ultimately creates a challenge for a leader when a decisive moment is required.

Problem
Junior officers in the Marine Corps are immediately thrust into leadership positions in which they have minimal experience to draw upon when confronted with uncertainty and often times chaotic situations.

Purpose
The goal of this capstone is to provide junior officers in the Marine Corps a flexible set of strategies that have been employed by successful individuals and can be referenced to reduce the effects of uncertainty to manageable levels.

Methods
- Literature Review
- Qualitative Interviews
  - 7 interviews conducted.
  - Average of 21 years of military or corporate leadership experience.
  - 60% of interviewees possessed combat experience.
  - 15 interview questions with a deliberate focus on how uncertainty affected their decision making processes.

Literature Cited


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Thank you to my family for providing me the motivation to complete this program, even when I thought I couldn’t. To the faculty and staff, thank you for your mentorship and guidance. To my cohort members, your friendship and perspective has been invaluable to me, and I’m forever grateful... (citations)
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Conclusion
These 7 strategies can be referenced by junior officers in the Marine Corps, are tailorable to the specific needs of the leaders and organizations implementing them, and transcend organizational domain and mission. Preparing young leaders for the unpredictable through achievable strategies strengthens confidence and reduces the tangible effects of uncertainty through decisive action.

Strategy Summary
The below summarizes my analysis of the key points from the strategies that emerged from both literature review and qualitative interviews. These strategies were found to be most prominent during my research.

- Perspective measures a leader should take to prepare an organization or team for organizational challenges.
- A sense of accountability for one another should be cultivated.
- By knowing your team and understanding the environment, leaders and understand what type of leader they need to be at that moment.

- Understand the environment and information being received through patterns. Information sharing must be reciprocal amongst the team.
- Decisive action and decentralization present the environment from outpacing your decision making cycle as a leader.
- Training mitigates a cognitive stalemate and opens a leaders available processing capacity for further decision making.

- Image Projection
- Notable (leadership) Traits

- Perception of a leader by the led and their observable responses are critical to success. "It's not about you."
- "Never let your emotions outrun your intellect."
- Tangible leadership traits inspire action from your team.

- Develop an Organizational Culture

- Sense of Duty
  “The Marine had made it known through the chain of command, that if he got hit [soldier], I don’t want a Bambi sit-in Marine. I want one in Dutch after the unit has been pulled off. He didn’t want to be a distraction, he wasn’t even 22.”

- Developing an Organizational "Build Relationships"

- Emotional Intelligence
  "Decision making for FEMA teams I broke the tradition and broke the chains with humor in a susceptible space."

- Knowing Your Team
  "We go to a town, people that are not used to... who will allocate the organization." -

- Making Sense of Information

- Pattern Analysis
  "During company downsizing I had to frame what I was looking at, it is a company thing, the economy, or a combination of the two?"

- Reciprocal Feedback
  "Everyone (leader) was good at making things simple for me. He would say we’re good to go!" and I knew I could focus elsewhere..."

- Generate Tempo

- Delegation
  "That’s your level to decide and not me. It makes sense, and creates decision making authority at the lowest level.

- Anti-Decision inertia
  "I always leaned towards intensity over decision. Instead of something I [Donald] round a minute, give me all the rounds in 30 seconds. Make a decision and go with..."

- Develop a Subconscious Reflex

- Training
  "Taking context on patrol the squad leaders had tested over and pushed their squads to gain the advantage of the high ground preemptive strikes... I didn’t have to say anything... it was beautiful to watch."

- Image Projection

- Catering Informa
  "The answers of body language, and nuances of tone of voice. Those nuances that people pick up on are paramount."

- Stewardship Leadership
  "FEMA response to flooding [during company downsizing] I had to frame what I was seeing at. We have to frame..."

- Extroversion
  "The human comm’s [communication] are as important, person to person, vehicle to vehicle. Leadership through presence is most important."

- Notable (leadership) Traits

- Conscientiousness
  "Until all the weapons are back in the armory in [Camp] Lejeune…then we’re done."

- Making Sense, Generating TEMPO, Developing a Subconscious Reflex

Develop an Organizational Culture

Build Relationships

Making Sense of Information

Generate Tempo

Develop a Subconscious Reflex

Image Projection

Notable (leadership) Traits

References
Human Dimensions of Organizations | hdo.utexas.edu