

Techniques for Influencing Up

Delivering hard truths is a core leadership function. How you deliver them determines whether you bring a problem or drive a solution.

Ambushing your leader with a raw problem invites resistance. Presenting a well-crafted solution seizes the initiative.

The **C.O.R.E. LOOP** helps you shape the conversation, protect the mission, and give your recommendations the best chance of success.

- Turn problems into opportunities for influence.
- Demonstrate higher-level problem-solving.
- Equip your leader with decision-making intel.
- Drive outcomes; don't just report problems.

C.O.R.E LOOP

CALIBRATE

Cool Head. Hard Data. Right Frame.

EXECUTE

Own the Next Move. Loop Back if Needed.

OPEN

Lead with the Point, Not the Panic.

RESOLVE

Come Ready. Think Together. Get to Yes.

C — CALIBRATE: Conduct Tactical Prep

Don't improvise. Preparation sets you up to win the engagement before you walk in the room.

- Master Your Response: Recognize the pressure, then shift quickly to mission-focused problem-solving. Composure is your first tactical advantage.
- Stress Test the Intel: Develop at least two viable Courses of Action (COAs). Know the timelines, second-order effects, risks, and resource costs.
- Center Leadership Priorities: Filter your recommended COA through your leader's known priorities. Be ready to answer: "How does this protect or advance the mission?" If you can't answer that, your brief isn't ready.

O — OPEN: Seize the First 15 Seconds

Your opening sets the trajectory. Project control and focus from the first word.

- Deliver the BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front): State the hard truth directly, without apology or preamble.
- Immediately move to "Breach and Clear": You breach the door with the bad news and immediately clear the room with a solution-focused stance.

Example: Instead of saying you have some concerns about the timeline, say: "Sir, the Friday deadline for 'X' is no longer viable. I have a COA that still minimizes mission impacts."

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The Hard Truth: A Leader's Guide to Influencing Up

FROM CONFLICT TO COHESION



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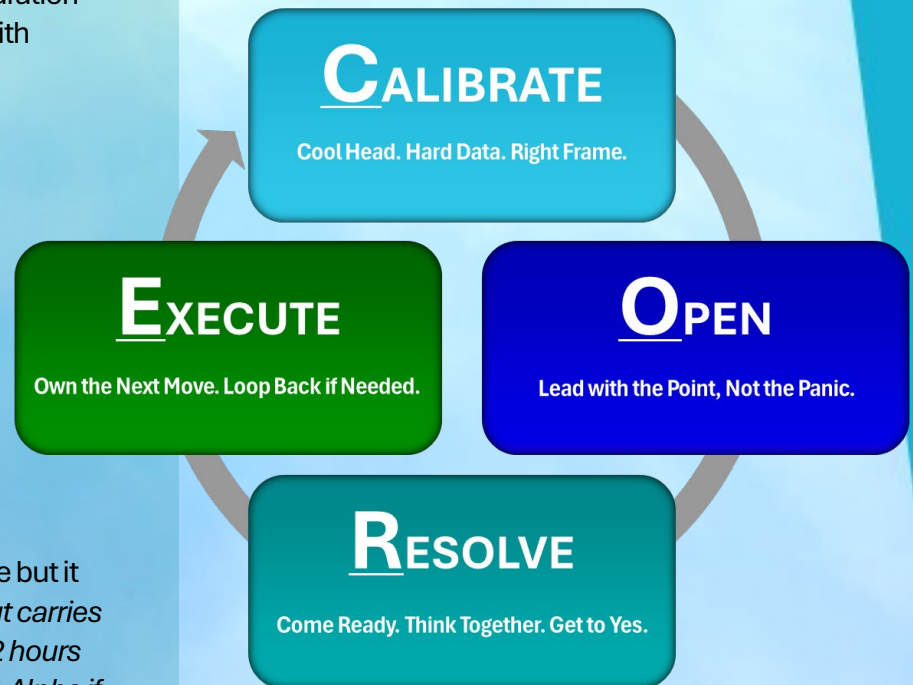
R — RESOLVE: Drive the Problem-Solving

This is the negotiation. Your thoughtful preparation allows you to lead through the complexity with confidence.

- **Table Your Recommendation:** Present your primary COA and how it protects the mission.
- **Present Trade-Offs:** Frame alternatives as choices with different levels of risk, speed, or cost.
- **Welcome Tough Questions:** Your answers demonstrate you came prepared.

Example: Instead of saying it could be done but it would be risky, say: *“COA Alpha is faster but carries a higher risk of X. COA Bravo is slower by 12 hours but eliminates that risk. I recommend COA Alpha if speed is the determining factor.”*

C.O.R.E LOOP



E — EXECUTE: Solidify the Win

Close the loop with clarity. Be sure you understand how to move from decision to execution.

- **Confirm the Leader's Intent:** Verbally confirm the decision and the end-state.
- **Assign and Accept Tasks:** Explicitly state who owns what actions. Leave no ambiguity.
- **Establish the Follow-Up:** Set the next update or checkpoint. Close the communication loop and reinforce accountability.

Example: *“My team will execute COA Alpha. I will brief the new timeline and provide an update at stand up tomorrow. I’ll include any re-attacks we need to tee up for discussion.”*



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