

# **Tiered Readiness of Executive Action for Aircraft Support: Mission Requirement Targets for Exceptional Upgrade/Repair Shop Service**

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Everyone has to start somewhere, and not everyone starts their first shop with all the bells & whistles. Let's face it: You can't have "Hangar Bay Heaven" without the aircraft base to support it, yet most of us dream about having the top shop in all of DoD. Let's explain the building blocks you need to become a top shop. New shop executives have a whole host of things to think or worry about. They simply don't know what they don't know. They're out there overwhelmed with pressure, and it's easy to see why.

When you're caught in the day-to-day processes of running your shop, it can be very difficult to know exactly where to focus your energy. Do I invest in equipment so I can perform more services? Should I hire more staff, or just better train the people I already have? Will I ever become the best I can be & have more time to spend in the mess hall? Instead of getting yourself bogged down in the smaller details, think of your shop as progressing to higher levels of success over time.

While maybe you never have seen a high-functioning shop firsthand, you know how it should work: first, the most basic necessities — a basic set-up, a staff and the equipment to perform services — and the top being everything you could ever dream for your units success. At the top are more lucrative job work orders & the satisfaction of being a leader in what you do.

## ***Tier I: Aircraft Product Support "Starter Shop"***

Think back to when you first started doing repairs for DoD. You had a dream, a small shop full of basic equipment and a staff consisting of hardworking jacks-of-all-trades. The shop itself was minimally functional — with little to no organisation beyond what was in the head of the executive, no standard operating procedures to speak of and you, as the executive, were required to be there for the shop to even function.

Shop executives simply are trying to make it through the day, both running the shop and acting as the key component of day-to-day calls to action. To get past this stage, you have to take responsibility as the executive to provide your shop with the tools to succeed.

At this point, the executive has to change. This means properly training/building your staff & upgrading your equipment.

One of the biggest problems is when you hire people, you need more aircraft to feed the new staff and still be able to get the promotion that you're expect from DoD for all your hard work.

The executive of the starter shop must align their shop for success before they can truly transform services provided to DoD. This is the base Level. Your infrastructure, your staff, your equipment & yourself are all you have to start with.

### ***Tier II: Aircraft Product Support “Semi-Functioning Shop”***

Now you’ve got a basic idea of how to run a shop beyond just turning wrenches. Your equipment is decent, though not always up-to-date, and your technicians generally have clearly defined roles to fill. Maybe you’ve even begun implementation of some basic strategies to meet mission requirements & increase your aircraft count.

This is the second level. You’ve made improvements to your foundations — your equipment, staff and yourself — and have begun exploring some new ventures, like staff focused entirely on getting new jobs. The progress is exhilarating, but things are not as they should be. You’re still the major contributor to production in the shop, and you need to be there, because things definitely fall apart when you’re not around.

You find yourself wishing you could focus on the bigger picture of the shop rather than the daily grind. Your focus is doing the best you can this week. The good news is that transcending the day-to-day pit hole is entirely possible. You’ll need to push your technicians to be the best they can be by developing their skills individually. A powerful, productive staff will lay the groundwork for reaching the next level of readiness.

### ***Tier III: Aircraft Product Support “Functioning Shop”***

At this point, your shop is just fine. The equipment is good, the technicians are trained and skilled and you’re setting monthly goals for meeting mission requirements. The best part is that while you should be in the shop, you can afford to regularly take time out to focus on the big picture. Many executives feel comfortable when their operation hits this level, perhaps even satisfied. But the best executives know there’s always room for improvement.

The key at this step is to develop your standard operating procedures. You want to perfect these and follow them to the letter for reproducing the same result every time, reducing callbacks and increasing success in moving aircraft through your shop. This keeps the workload off you so you can concentrate on the things that will take you to the next level. Many shops reach this point but never move past it.

### ***Tier IV: Aircraft Product Support “Efficient Shop”***

You’re almost at the top now! The efficient shop is probably what you’ve always dreamed of. You’ve got the best equipment, your technicians are now beginning to help each other and they follow the documented procedures that make your shop the best DoD has to offer. Your role as an executive has shifted from being directly inside the line of operations to providing direction

and guidance to your staff. This is where your leadership skills are tested under pressure.

You've been doing OK so far, but you have to take a serious step back in order to keep everything under control. You no longer can carry the weight of the shop on your shoulders and you have to trust your staff to do the right thing. Have you done a good job of hiring the right people who share your vision & values? If not, then you simply can't move to the next level.

Now you're looking at success rates for the entire year, and you've established a long-term requirements plan to keep aircraft count consistent. Many shop owners stop here without ever "completing" the accent to being the Best of the Best. The next step, if you're daring enough to take it, is to continue to set goals for your shop. You've got clear ideas of what you want to accomplish each day, week, month & year. If you can consistently hit these goals, then you have built yourself a top shop.

### ***Tier V: Aircraft Product Support "Top Shop"***

The top shop has perfected the art of aircraft service, support & repair. The shop, in one word, is autonomous. Technicians help each other, your administrator is fully empowered and everyone finds themselves accountable for their own success. Excellence is the standard by which your staff measures themselves and their peers.

Your shop is able to thrive with or without you, and now your role is to provide a common goal and vision for your shop. This is the only way you can make it to this level. The mission requirements plan has developed into campaign designed to tackle those difficult times, and you've put together a comprehensive plan charting a course for Aircraft Product Support that will not fall apart when stressed to the Limit by ambitious DoD standards.