

Chris Fussell

President at McChrystal Group, Best-selling Author, Leadership Expert, and Former US Navy SEAL Officer

Chris Fussell is a former Navy SEAL Officer and President of McChrystal Group, an advisory services firm that improves the performance of organizations by building highly adaptable teams capable of solving the world's most complex leadership challenges. In addition to being a bestselling author, he regularly does media interviews, gives keynote speeches, and presents to business leaders at roundtables and panels. Chris is the author of the *Wall Street Journal* best-selling book *One Mission: How Leaders Build a Team of Teams*, a follow-up to the *New York Times* best-seller, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement in a Complex World*, which he co-authored alongside General McChrystal. *One Mission* aims to equip organizations with a game plan for building agile and powerful team of teams that are completely aligned and moving toward the same goals.

Special Operations background. Fussell was commissioned as a Naval Officer in 1997 and spent the next 15 years on US Navy SEAL Teams, leading SEAL elements in combat zones around the globe. From war-torn Kosovo to counter-terrorism operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to highly specialized efforts in the troubled areas of the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, Fussell experienced the modern evolution of the US military's Special Operations community from a siloed bureaucracy struggling to keep up in a turbulent environment into an agile and effective network for counterterrorism.

In his career as a Navy SEAL, Fussell served first on SEAL Teams Two and Eight, then in the Naval Special Warfare Development Group. During his time on the SEAL teams, he conducted and planned hundreds of operations against high-value targets all around the world. He was then selected to serve as Aide-de-Camp to then-Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal during General McChrystal's final year commanding the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), where they served a year together in Iraq. As McChrystal's right-hand man, Fussell was an integral part of a team that made possible the Special Operations community's transformation into a successful, agile network.

To combat Al Qaeda in Iraq, McChrystal, and his team set out to create a flexible organization that could adapt to threats on the ground in real-time, much like its highly networked foe. McChrystal's approach was to blend operations with intelligence to create a force that shared information and collaborated cross-functionally, breaking down the silos and tribal culture that previously existed. As Aide-de-Camp, Fussell was responsible for executing this new system daily. He set up and ran Special Operations' new communication and leadership systems, such as the daily Operations & Intelligence meeting that involved thousands of participants sharing information and experiences in real-time, across the world.

Network theory expert. In running JSOC's new communication forums, Fussell developed his expertise in building fusion cells and knowledge centers. After returning from Iraq, he wanted to explore the academic angle underpinning this shift he had witnessed in warfare in order to understand the theory behind what he and his colleagues had done in practice. Fussell went on to study Irregular Warfare from the Naval Postgraduate School, earning a master's degree and receiving the Pat Tillman Award as the highest peer-rated Special Operations Officer in the program. His thesis work expanded upon his JSOC experience with fusion cells, focusing on the interagency collaboration and intelligence sharing processes that drove effective, cross-silo collaboration during the peak of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Advising the private sector. In 2012, Fussell left the Naval Special Warfare Development Group in order to join McChrystal Group, an advisory services firm founded by General McChrystal. Fussell's experiences as General McChrystal's right-hand man at JSOC, his intensive academic study of network theory and practical experiences running fusion cells made him the ideal fit for driving the company's efforts to bring their operating model to clients. Fussell now leads McChrystal Group — leveraging a staff of former special operators, military officers, business practitioners, and leadership development experts — to train leaders and teams to adapt and succeed in complex operating environments.

Non-profits and boards. Outside of McChrystal Group, Fussell serves as a Senior Fellow for National Security at New America, a Washington, D.C.-based non-partisan think tank dedicated to understanding the next generation of challenges facing the United States. He is also actively involved in several non-profits dedicated to helping veterans and their families and holds a seat on the Board of Directors for the Navy SEAL Foundation. Fussell is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Media appearances, articles, and podcast. Fussell has been interviewed by several of the most prestigious outlets and publications, including MSNBC, *FastCompany*, and *Big Think*. He also has contributed articles to *Harvard Business Review*, *Fortune Magazine's* Leadership Network, *The Atlantic*, and *The New York Times*, and hosted the “No Turning Back” podcast alongside General McChrystal — exploring the future of leadership and teams with the world’s most consequential leaders.

Engaging speaker. Fussell’s blend of Special Operations experience, deep academic study, and private sector consulting make him a unique speaker and leading voice on building world-class communication systems that foster cross-functional collaboration in any organization.

In an engaging speech that can be tailored to all levels of an organization, Fussell weaves his disparate experiences together and presents a compelling tale for audiences, laying out the blueprint for how any company can break down silos and promote cross-functional collaboration. His experiences setting up cutting-edge communication systems in both the military and in large, globalized private-sector companies demonstrate the universality of the lessons he learned.

Organizations of all kinds all around the world are struggling to stay afloat in today’s turbulent environment, and Fussell’s approach holds the key to success. Listeners will be inspired to change how their company communicates and operates.

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