

Michael Durant

Master Pilot, Inspiration for the Movie *Black Hawk Down*

In The Company Of Heroes. The story of *Black Hawk Down* is a tense one, but Durant turned his experiences into a powerful story of survival and motivation. He talks vividly about his experience as a soldier and as a hostage and what it has taught him about being an American and a leader. Durant takes the unique lessons he learned and turns them into compelling insights for personal and professional growth and shows companies and individuals how they can succeed through better planning, motivation, and adaptation despite the obstacles they may encounter. An inspirational speaker, he illustrates the power of teamwork, leadership, and change through awe-inspiring stories, captivating visuals, and heart-racing accounts of life in the line of fire.

Leadership, Organizational Effectiveness, Applying Lessons Learned, & Surviving Adversity. Durant offers a fast-paced look at US Special Operations. He includes a brief overview of this unique organization and a discussion of the fundamental elements that put the individuals in it at the very top of their game. Emphasis is placed on organizational effectiveness and the role of leaders in taking responsibility for both the short term and long-term success of any organization. In addition to leadership, other key areas of emphasis include providing the proper resources, processes and procedures, training, planning, and continuous assessment at both the organizational and individual level. The UN mission in Somalia is used as a case study to highlight how integral each of these areas is to the success of any undertaking. Lessons learned are discussed, as well as an overview of which of these lessons can be applied to other organizations. As the sole survivor of the firefight at crash site two during the infamous Blackhawk Down mission, Durant also has the unique first-hand insight into the personal challenges involved in preparing for and surviving the extreme. His personal story of survival highlights the discussion. Following the presentation, the audience is encouraged to participate in an optional question and answer session, and with prior coordination, Durant can easily place more emphasis on any aspect of the presentation to support a specific focus or theme.