

Leadership Competencies

• Communications

Communication is the exchange of information and ideas from one person to another. Effective communications occur when others understand exactly what you are trying to tell them and when you understand exactly what they are trying to tell you. You communicate to direct, influence, coordinate, encourage, supervise, train, teach, coach, and counsel. You need to be able to understand and think through a problem and translate that idea in a clear, concise, measured fashion. Your message should be easy to understand, serve the purpose, and be appropriate for your audience.

• Supervision

You must control, direct, evaluate, coordinate, and plan the efforts of subordinates so that you can ensure the task is accomplished. Supervision ensures the efficient use of material and equipment and the effectiveness of operational procedures. It includes establishing goals and evaluating skills. Supervising lets you know if your orders are understood and shows your interest in sailors and the mission. Remember that oversupervision causes resentment and undersupervision causes frustration. By considering your shipmates' competence, motivation, and commitment to perform a task, you can judge the amount of supervision needed.

• Teaching and Counseling

Teaching and counseling refers to improving performance by overcoming problems, increasing knowledge, or gaining new perspective and skills. Teaching your sailors is the only way you can truly prepare them to succeed and survive in combat. You must take a direct hand in your sailors' professional and personal development. Counseling is especially important in the Navy. Because of the Navy's mission, leaders must be concerned with the entire scope of a sailor's well-being. Personal counseling should adopt a problem-solving rather than an advising approach. You also need the judgment to refer a situation to your leader, the chaplain, or a service

agency if it is beyond your ability to handle. You will, of course, follow up on this action. Performance counseling focuses on a sailor's behavior as it relates to duty performance.

• Team development

You must create strong bonds between you and your shipmates so that your command functions as a team. Since combat is a team activity, cohesive teams are a requirement for victory. You must take care of your sailors and conserve and build their spirit, endurance, skill, and confidence to face the inevitable hardships and sacrifices of combat. The effectiveness of a cohesive, disciplined unit is built on bonds of mutual trust, respect, and confidence. Good leaders recognize how peers, seniors, and subordinates work together to produce successes. Team development is significant in training and orienting sailors to new tasks and units. You can help new sailors become committed members of the organization if you work hard at making them members of your team.

• Technical and tactical proficiency

You must know your job. You must be able to train your sailors, maintain and employ your equipment, and provide combat power to help win battles. You will gain technical proficiency in formal Navy training programs, self-study, and on-the-job experience. You have to know your job so that you can train your sailors, employ your weapons systems, and help your leader employ your weapon systems. Tactical competence requires you to know warfighting doctrine so that you can understand your leader's intent and help win battles by understanding the mission, enemy, environment, personnel, and time available. Technical proficiency and tactical proficiency are difficult to separate.

• Decision-making

Decision-making refers to skills you need to make choices and solve problems. Your goal is to make high-quality decisions your sailors accept and execute quickly. Further, it is impor-

tant that decisions be made at the lowest organizational level where information is sufficient. Like planning, decision-making is an excellent way for you to develop your leadership team. Include subordinates in the decision-making process if time is available and if they share your goals and have information that will help produce high-quality decisions.

- **Planning**

Planning is intended to support a course of action so that an organization can meet an objective. It involves forecasting, setting goals and objectives, developing strategies, establishing priorities, delegating, sequencing and timing, organizing, budgeting, and standardizing procedures. Sailors like to have order in their lives, so they depend on you to keep them informed and to plan training and operations to ensure success. Including your subordinate leaders in the planning process is an excellent way for you to develop your leadership team. Remember, one of your tasks is to prepare your subordinates to replace you, if necessary.

- **Use of available systems**

You must be familiar with techniques, methods, and tools that will give you and your sailors the edge. Use of available systems liter-

ally means that you know how to use computers, analytical techniques, and other modern technological means that are available to manage information and to help you and your sailors better perform the mission. This competency may vary dependent upon your leadership position. You must recognize, however, that understanding computer technological advances is important. You must use every available system or technique that will benefit the planning, execution, and assessment of training.

- **Professional ethics**

Military ethics include loyalty to the nation, the Navy, and your unit; duty; selfless service; and integrity. This leadership competency relates to your responsibility to behave in a manner consistent with the professional Navy ethic and to set the example for your subordinates.

As a leader, you must learn to be sensitive to the ethical elements of situations you face, as well as to your orders, plans, and policies. You must learn to use an informed, rational, decision-making process to reason through and resolve ethical dilemmas and then teach your subordinates to do the same.

Adapted from Department of the Army, FM 22-100
Military Leadership, Appendix A

“The American Bluejacket can do anything, anytime, anywhere, provided he is led by an equally capable officer.”

– Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz