

Leadership Principles

- **BE TECHNICALLY AND TACTICALLY PROFICIENT.** Before you can lead, you must be able to do the job; the first principle is to know your job.

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As a leader, you must demonstrate your ability to accomplish the mission, and to do this you must be capable of answering questions and demonstrating competence in your job. Tactical and technical proficiency can be learned through study and from on-the-job training. Whatever methods you employ, you must strive for excellence.

Your subordinates' respect will be your reward.

Leadership Principles

- **KNOW YOURSELF AND SEEK SELF IMPROVEMENT.** This principle of leadership should be developed by the use of leadership traits. Evaluate yourself by using the leadership traits and determine your strengths and weaknesses. Work to improve your weaknesses and use your strengths.

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You can improve yourself in many ways - through reading, observing, and doing. However, before you can improve you must know where your weaknesses lie. Conduct a critical self-analysis; ask your peers or seniors for an honest evaluation of your leadership. The intent is to identify your weaknesses, so you must openly accept this criticism. Remember, this is a continuing process – we can all find areas for improvement throughout our lives.

Leadership Principles

- **KNOW YOUR PEOPLE AND LOOK OUT FOR THEIR WELFARE.** This is one of the most important of the principles. You should know your people and how they react to different situations.

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This knowledge can save lives. A worker who is nervous or lacks self-confidence should never be put in a situation where time-critical decisions must be made. Knowledge of your subordinates' personalities will enable you, as the leader, to decide how to best handle each person and determine when close supervision is needed. You must also strive to improve these deficiencies as someday they may be required to operate under minimal supervision.

Leadership Principles

- **KEEP YOUR SUBORDINATES INFORMED.** People are by nature inquisitive. To promote efficiency and morale, as a leader you should inform the people in your unit of all happenings and give reasons why things are to be done.

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This, of course, is done when time and security permit. Informing your subordinates of the situation makes them feel that they are a part of the team. Informed workers perform better and, if knowledgeable of the situation, they can carry on without your personal supervision. The key to giving out information is to be sure that your subordinates have enough information to do their job intelligently and to inspire their initiative, enthusiasm, loyalty, and convictions.

Leadership Principles

- **SET THE EXAMPLE.** As a leader your duty is to set the standards for your subordinates by personal example.

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As a leader progresses through the ranks, all too often he takes on the attitude of "do as I say, not as I do." This is the wrong attitude! Your appearance, attitude, physical fitness - your personal example - are all observed by your subordinates. If your personal standards are high, then you can rightfully demand the same of your subordinates. If your personal standards are not high you are setting a double standard for your subordinates, and you will rapidly lose their respect and confidence.

Remember, your people are a direct reflection of you. Leadership is taught by example.

Leadership Principles

- **ENSURE THAT THE TASK IS UNDERSTOOD, SUPERVISED, AND ACCOMPLISHED.** Before you can expect your subordinates to perform, they must know first what is expected of them. You must communicate your instructions in a clear, concise manner. *Inspect what you expect!*
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Talk at a level that your subordinates are sure to understand, but not at a level so low that would insult their intelligence. Before your people start a task, allow them a chance to ask questions or seek advice. Supervision is essential. Without supervision you cannot know if the assigned task is being properly accomplished.

Do not over-supervise. This will sap the initiative right out of your subordinates. Give them a task and purpose, then allow them to figure out the exact details on how to meet your intent.

You must find the necessary balance of supervision and independent action required for each person and each subordinate team.

Leadership Principles

- **TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE AS A TEAM.**
Every waking hour your subordinates should be trained and schooled, challenged and tested, corrected and encouraged with perfection and teamwork as a goal.

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People are judged in many ways -- perfection in drill, in dress, in physical fitness, in bearing and demeanor, shooting, self-improvement, by everything that relates to their performance. No excuse can be made for a leader's failure to train their subordinates to the highest standard in all aspects of their profession. Train with a purpose and emphasize the essential element of teamwork. The sharing of hardships, dangers, and hard work strengthens a unit, improves morale and esprit, and molds a feeling of unbounded loyalty -- this is the basis for what makes people overcome adversity; it is the foundation for bravery, for advancing under fire.

Leadership Principles

- **MAKE SOUND AND TIMELY DECISIONS.** The leader must be able to rapidly estimate a situation and make a sound decision based on that estimation. Hesitation or a reluctance to make a decision leads subordinates to lose confidence in your abilities as a leader.

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If you cannot rapidly process information and make sound decisions, your subordinates will lose confidence in you. In turn, this loss of confidence creates confusion and hesitation within the unit. This will allow the enemy to seize the initiative. Sometimes, inaction is actually worse than action, when the 80% solution may have been enough to remain a step ahead of the enemy.

Once you make a decision and discover it is the wrong one, don't hesitate to revise your decision. Subordinates respect the leader who corrects mistakes immediately instead of trying to bluff through a poor decision.

Leadership Principles

- **DEVELOP A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AMONG YOUR SUBORDINATES.** Assigning tasks and delegating the authority to accomplish tasks promotes mutual confidence and respect between the leader and subordinates.

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Another way to show your subordinates that you are interested in their welfare is to give them the opportunity for professional development. It encourages initiative and wholehearted cooperation in the accomplishment of unit tasks. When you properly delegate authority, you demonstrate faith in your people and increase their desire for greater responsibilities. If you fail to delegate authority, you indicate a lack of leadership, and your subordinates may take it to be a lack of trust in their abilities.

Leadership Principles

- **EMPLOY YOUR UNIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CAPABILITIES.** Successful completion of a task depends upon how well you know your unit's capabilities.

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If the task assigned is one that your unit has not been trained to do, failure is very likely to result. Failures lower your unit's morale and self-esteem. You wouldn't send a cook section to perform maintenance on a vehicle nor would you send three people to do the job of ten. Seek out challenging tasks for your unit, but be sure that your unit is prepared for and has the ability to successfully complete the mission.

Leadership Principles

- **SEEK RESPONSIBILITY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS.** For professional development, you must actively seek out challenging assignments. Seeking responsibilities also means that you take the responsibility for your actions. You are responsible for all your unit does or fails to do.
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Regardless of the actions of your subordinates, the responsibility for their decisions and actions fall on you. You must issue all orders in your name. Stick by your convictions and do what you think is right; but accept justified and constructive criticism. Never remove or demote a subordinate for a failure that is the result of your own mistake.

You should always be working towards that next higher rank, through professional studies and increased responsibilities. You must counter-balance initiative and sound judgment during this process – don't bite off more than you can chew. Just like you want to employ your unit within its capabilities, you must also employ yourself within your capabilities. This does not mean you should avoid your areas of weakness, but it does mean that you must possess the requisite knowledge and skills to complete the mission. If you do not possess these skills and take on the job anyway, then you are not looking out for the welfare of your subordinates or placing the unit's interest above your own.