



Charting the course to
Command
Excellence

Foreword

When I look at our best commands I see what has made our Navy great. These commands maintain a superior state of combat readiness and are known for their mission accomplishment. They have high retention and a strong safety record.

This success always comes from the people working together in a command. They have a sense of the command's mission and are committed to the command's goals. High morale, pride, and teamwork are evident at every level.

It takes many different elements to achieve command excellence. For the first time the Navy has conducted a controlled study of our superior commands to identify those elements. The results presented here provide a detailed guide to the people, their relationships and activities that make the difference between an average command and a truly superior one.

We should all recognize most of the elements presented here. Although the surprises may be few, the impact can be substantial. We need to share more of the best with the rest of the Navy. It is time to reaffirm not only our commitment to personal excellence, but also our commitment to command excellence.

C. A. H. TROST
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Introduction

From Rags to Riches

We begin our discussion of command effectiveness with the story of an aviation squadron that was known as "the joke of the air wing." On its previous deployment, it had lost an aircraft, was out flown by its sister squadron, and was completely demoralized by the end of the cruise. The squadron consistently failed to meet its flight schedule, and there were days when it wasn't even on the air plan to fly. The squadron had been assigned older planes, and the crew often used this as an excuse for their poor performance.

The crew said the CO was inconsistent; they never knew if he would feel the same way about something tomorrow as he did today. They also felt that he kept planes on the ground that had only minor defects because he had an exaggerated fear of making mistakes. He often looked over the junior officers' shoulders to make sure they were not doing anything to make him look bad. Maintenance was shoddy: personnel were not motivated, the squadron kept firing or losing maintenance chiefs and it had failed its last few corrosion control audits. Everything in admin was slowed down because the CO had to approve all the paperwork that went out of the squadron. The XO was often not informed of the CO's actions and not included in his decision making. For example, the CO frequently went directly to the department heads. As one newly arrived officer said: "When I saw how things were, I thought I had really messed up in accepting the job here."

If you were to place bets on the future of this squadron, you would surely not predict stardom. But what is remarkable about this story is that in one year's time, this squadron accomplished a dramatic turnaround and won the Battle E. How was it done?

This text describes what this squadron and many other commands have done to achieve command excellence. In the Conclusion, we will see how the turnaround of this squadron was accomplished. First, however, we will examine the essential ingredients of success - the nuts and bolts of command excellence.





Getting Some Answers

What makes some commands superior to others? And if this is known, how can we use this knowledge to improve the performance of any command? It was the desire to answer these questions that led the Leadership Division of the U.S. Navy to conduct a comprehensive study to find out what distinguishes superior naval commands from average commands. In addition, since 1978 the Navy had based its Leadership and Management Education and Training (LMET) courses on the competencies that distinguish superior from average individual performers. However, the realization that a collection of superstars does not necessarily result in superior unit performance also led the Navy to investigate what produces command effectiveness. This two-year study is now complete. *Charting the Course to Command Excellence* is a summary of the results.

To understand what it takes to be an outstanding command, the Navy compared 21 operational units (12 superior and 9 average) from the three warfare communities (air, surface, submarine) in the Atlantic and Pacific fleets. Data was gathered through interviews with over 750 individuals, surveys, observation of command activities, and examination of command records and documents.

To be regarded as superior, a command had to have:

- Won the Battle E or been a runner-up
- Won the departmental E
- Passed major operational readiness inspections or exercises
- Maintained retention levels equal to or above the fleet average
- Maintained a strong safety record
- Earned a general reputation as outstanding, confirmed by flag officers in the chain of command

Figure 1 shows the organizational framework used to understand how a Navy command functions. In this model, a command is viewed as being a social system made up of interrelated parts and existing within a larger environment that impacts the command and vice versa. Each command has certain inputs, like personnel, materiel and money, and inputs are transformed within the command

The three key elements responsible for what happens within a command are the people, the relationships, and the important activities performed. In a command, the people in a command success, we looked at characteristics of groups within the command, the relationship, as well as the command to the environment. The activities examined were planning, maintaining, communicating, and training and



standing what command are the relationships, and that must be examining how the contribute to its the behavior and individuals and command. We the relationships the command, the the CO-XO the relationship of external environ- examined were standards, building esprit de development.

The interaction of these components - people, relationships, and activities - produces intermediate and final outputs. Intermediate outcomes are characteristics of individuals or groups, such as their motivation and values, which contribute to the ultimate outcomes - how the command as a whole performs. The measures of these final outputs are the criteria used in the study to distinguish superior from average-performing commands, such as combat readiness and mission accomplishment.

Figure 2 shows all of the characteristics of an effective command that were identified by the study. These are grouped under the categories of People, Relationships, and Activities.

A major reason why we believe it is important to communicate the results of this study to as wide an audience as possible is that this model of command effectiveness is not someone's armchair or pet theory about excellence in leadership. Rather, it is based on facts from many different sources and identifies the actual differences between superior and average commands, not what someone *thinks* the differences are or should be.

Model for Command Excellence

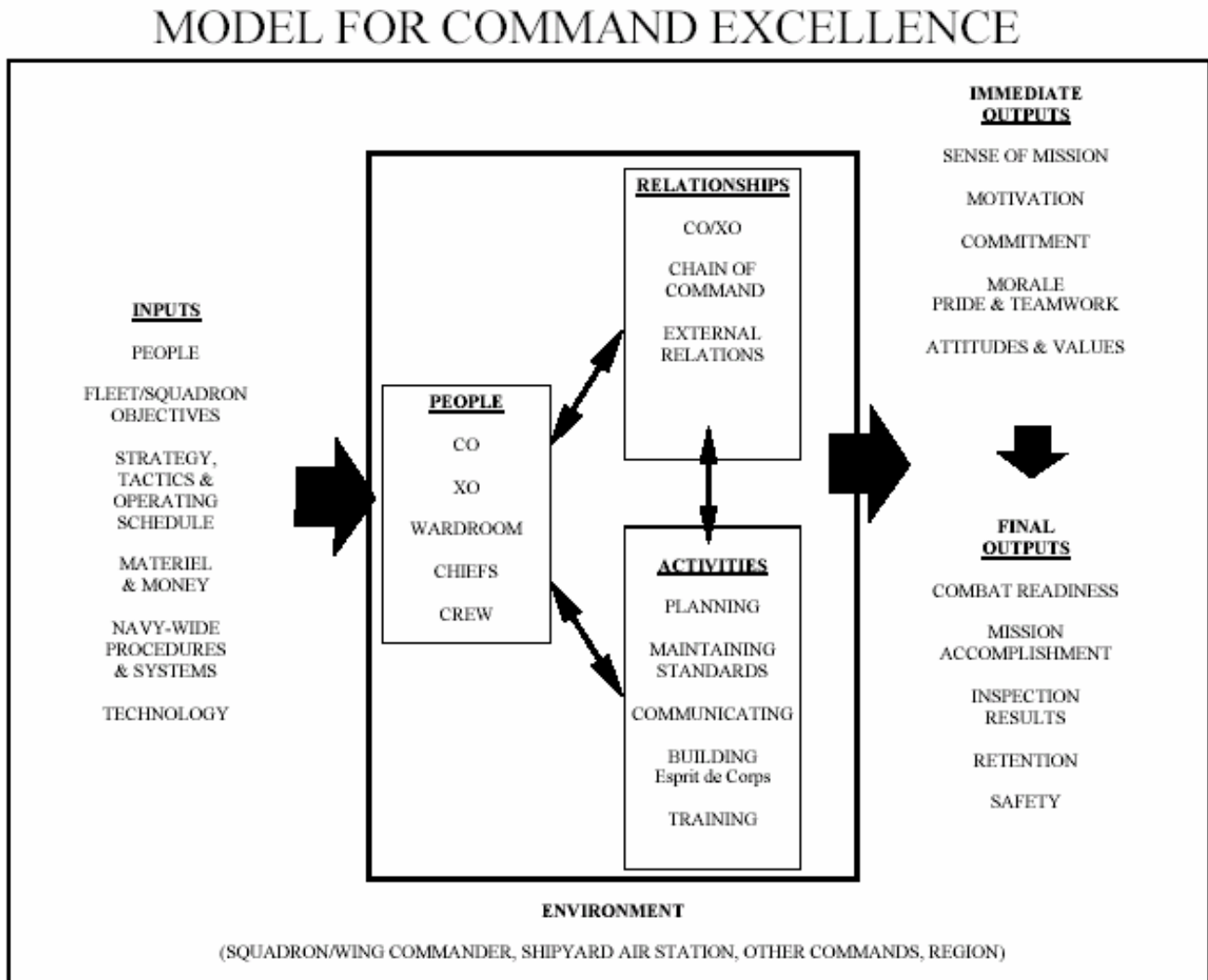


Figure 1

Command Excellence Characteristics

PEOPLE

CO Characteristics

Targets Key Issues
Gets Crew to Support Command Philosophy
Develops XO
Staffs to Optimize Performance
Gets Out and About
Builds Esprit de Corps
Keeps His Cool
Develops Strong Wardroom
Values Chiefs Quarters
Ensures Training Is Effective
Builds Positive External Relationships
Influences Successfully

XO Characteristics

Drives Administrative System
Is Active in Planning
Is Key to Unit Staffing
Gets Out and About
Ensures Standards are Enforced

WARDROOM Characteristics

Is Cohesive
Matches CO-XO Leadership
Raises Concerns with CO and XO
Takes Initiative
Does Detailed Planning
Takes Responsibility for Work-Group Performance

CHIEFS QUARTERS Characteristics

Acts for Command-Wide Excellence
Leads Divisions Actively
Enforces Standards
Supports and Develops Division Officers
Is Cohesive
Has a Strong Leader

CREW Characteristics

Committed to Command Goals
Lives Up to Standards
Respects the Chain of Command
Takes Ownership for Their Work Areas
Is motivated

RELATIONSHIPS

CO/XO Relationship

CO Is in Charge
XO Stands behind CO's Philosophy and Policies
CO and XO Have Well-defined and Complementary Roles
CO and XO Communicate Frequently
CO and XO Respect Each Other's Abilities

Chain of Command

The Chain of Command Is Respected, but Flexible
Information Flows Up and Down the Chain of Command
Responsibility Is Delegated

External Relationships

Command Builds Networks with Outsiders
Command Advocates for Its Interests
Command Promotes a Positive Image

ACTIVITIES

Planning

Planning Is a Regularly Scheduled Activity
Planning Occurs at All Levels
Planning Is Long-Range
Plans Are Specific
Plans Are Publicized
Systems Are Put in Place to Implement Plans
Command Makes Every Effort to Stick to the Plan

Maintaining Standards

Standards Are Clear and Consistent
Standards Are Realistic and High
Standards Are Continuously Monitored
Positive and Negative Feedback Is Frequently Given
Performance Problems Are Handled Quickly and Appropriately
All Levels Participate in Enforcing Standards

Communications

Communication Occurs Frequently
People Listen to Each Other
Explanations Are Given Often
Communications Flow Up, Down, and Across the Chain of Command
Officers and Chiefs Get Out and About
Personal Issues Are Discussed

Esprit de Corps

Positive Regard and Expectations Occur at All Levels
Teamwork Is Promoted
Morale Is Monitored
Rewards and Recognition Are Given Frequently
Command Integrates Incoming Crew Quickly
Command Focuses on Successes
Command Encourages Social Activities and Having Fun
Symbolic Activities Used to Promote Esprit de Corps

Training and Development

Value of Training Is Recognized
Training Is Kept Realistic and Practical
Training Programs Are Monitored and Evaluated
All Levels Participate in Training and Development
Command Emphasizes Professional Development and Career Planning

COMMAND

EXCELLENCE

CHARACTERISTICS

People

The people in a command are the most important determinant of success. Our study looked at the contribution that each level in a command makes in achieving top-flight performance. Not surprisingly, the CO and the relationship between the CO and the XO have the greatest impact on the character of a command and its destiny. However, each level has a special and critical role to play, and it is up to the CO and the XO to orchestrate the entire command to produce superior performance. Here's how each level functions in a superior command.

THE COMMANDING OFFICER

The CO in a superior command:

- Targets Key Issues
- Gets Crew to Support Command Philosophy
- Develops XO
- Staffs to Optimize Performance
- Gets Out and About
- Builds Esprit de Corps
- Keeps His Cool
- Develops Strong Wardroom
- Values Chiefs Quarters
- Ensures Training Is Effective
- Builds Positive External Relationships
- Influences Successfully

Superior commanding officers focus on the big picture. They set priorities, establish policy, and develop long-range plans. They target only a few key issues at a time. In explaining his priorities, one CO says: "I regularly have captain's call with all paygrades so I can reinforce any points that I want to emphasize. I always talk about combat readiness, safety, and cleanliness. And whenever I ask them what my priorities are, they always tell me, "Combat readiness,



safety, and cleanliness." Once they identify the critical needs of the command and chart a direction, these COs accomplish the command's mission by inspiring others and working through them.

This means that superior COs recognize the importance of their relationships with other people, and they concentrate on developing those relationships within and outside the command.

In dealing with the executive officer, superior COs are concerned not only with immediate issues but with overall progress: they look upon the XO as an assistant, but they know that this assistant is a future CO. Together, they discuss plans and review courses of action, and the CO is especially careful to keep the XO informed of command decisions. Whenever possible, the CO delegates, leaving room for the XO to function independently.

In the same way, the best COs develop their department heads and division officers, delegating work and meeting frequently for planning and review. They monitor morale and try to create a climate of mutual support. They take an interest in the well-being of their officers and express a willingness to talk about significant personal problems. They pay special attention to first-year officers, making sure they start out on a strong career footing. With more experienced officers, they provide opportunities for professional development and encouragement to move up through the chain of command.

Superior commanding officers are also sensitive to the role of chiefs and the chiefs quarters: it is the chiefs, they say, who "run the ship," who have that combination of management know-how and hands-on experience needed to keep the command's systems running smoothly and crew members working efficiently. As one CO put it, "The chiefs are the eyes and ears of the squadron. They're here all the time and know what's going on. I'd be a fool not to listen to them." These COs expect their chiefs to be involved in all phases of running the command, and they make sure the chief's role is respected.

Top COs know how to balance overlapping demands. They show great interest in and concern for their subordinates, yet they refuse to micromanage, to be constantly looking over people's shoulders to see what they're up to. By frequently getting out and about, these COs can express their interest in their personnel and get a feel for how things are going in their command. One CO states: "I've got a personal goal of seeing three people a day and just walking around and asking people, 'How's it going?'"

Much of leadership and management is influence, and superior COs are masters of influence. They know how to get people to do what they want them to do *and* to like it. A common trait of these COs is that they keep their cool; they are not screamers. But they do have a repertoire of influence strategies that they choose according to the situation and personalities involved. At one time, they may use reason and facts; at another, a judicious display of emotion and a loud voice. These COs know how to push the right buttons to get their people to make sacrifices and work exceptionally hard.

These COs have high standards, too. They want to be the best and they want their personnel to take pride in themselves, in the command, and in the U.S. Navy. They realize that without high morale, teamwork, and pride,

they cannot achieve and maintain top-flight performance. They also know that achieving their high standards requires high quality training, so they insist on training that is both realistic and practical.

Top COs know how to develop a superior command and how to convey the image of that success to important outsiders. They develop networks that provide essential data and support; they get help from their squadron or wing staff when preparing for inspections; and they aggressively seek out the most qualified personnel, necessary resources, and good schedules. As a result, they are often more successful than average commands in getting these things.

Not all the COs in outstanding units write out their command philosophy, but it is clear that they all have such a philosophy, that they are successful at communicating it, and that they persuade the crew to buy into it. They tell people how they want the command to operate and they set an example themselves. This results in high morale, commitment, and trust.

"I think we did well on the ORSE because the entire ship wanted to do well. I don't sense in our crew a big separation between the nukes, the weapons guys, and the forward guys. We've tried hard to bring that about, because I'm afraid of it, and I've seen it on many other ships. I talk to every new guy that reports on board and that's one of the big themes I hit.

"I also hold officer training after every evening meal. I do that to make sure that everybody in the wardroom sees everybody else at least once a day. It also gives us time to talk about the whole ship with everyone present. The officers aren't ever allowed to think of themselves as being separate from each other. I think that carries on down to everybody else, too. I also do it because that way more of them will stay up there and watch the movie, eat popcorn, relax, and get to know each other. "

- Commanding Officer
(Submarine)



"I absolutely refuse to do less than my best, no matter what that may be. And I try to instill that in my men. To me, pride is the key to everything.

"I also believe being a positive person is important - for example, being positive that this squadron will succeed. My ops officer told me he had a note that I wrote last year that said, 'This year we will win the Battle E.' Well, by God, this year we won the Battle E!"

- Commanding Officer (Air)



THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The XO in a superior command:

- Drives Administrative System
- Is Active in Planning
- Is Key to Unit Staffing
- Gets Out and About
- Ensures Standards Are Enforced

Superior commands view the XO as the CO's right hand. It is the XO who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the command. XOs traditionally have responsibility for administration and personnel. And in superior units, XOs drive the administrative system. They emphasize efficiency, knowing that if paperwork is not done properly and on time, performance and morale will suffer. They develop routines and systems to make sure this does not happen.

But these are not "paperwork" XOs. Like the COs of superior commands, they frequently walk about. Describing his daily routine, one XO explains: "I try to get out every day and look at what is going on in the control room. I might check and see what the missile program watch is for today, stop and look at a set of logs, or watch a guy do his hourly cleaning. I find it very useful. It lets the crew know that the command is interested. They like to know that we are not just growing mushrooms on them."

These XOs are especially active in planning. They meet frequently to plan; they delegate people to gather information; they find out what's coming down the road; and they hold people accountable for implementing plans.

XOs in superior commands are active in all aspects of unit staffing, including performance appraisal, manpower utilization, and retention. They encourage and participate in recruiting the best people. For example, one XO was able to work a deal with another squadron to get them to release an outstanding maintenance chief early. The chief would then be available when the XO's command needed him. In another case, an XO swapped one of his chiefs for one in another squadron that his command wanted.

Because they oversee the daily operations of the command, these XOs are instrumental in monitoring and enforcing standards. They often have regular and exacting inspections, and if they find that something is not shipshape, they take corrective action immediately.

"We have the best retention program I've ever seen. We have a Retention Score Board outside the Ready Room, and posted on it are cards with the person's name and the results of all his retention interviews. The first interview is done by either the CO or XO about 8 months prior to his EAOS. After that, either a department head or division officer talks with the guy a few more times. The final interview is again done by the CO or XO. So basically, just about every month before he's supposed to leave, somebody is talking to him. The Command Career Counselor manages the program, but I help him out if I need to by making sure people conduct their interviews."

- Executive Officer (Air)



"When I arrived, some people had not submitted evaluations in over 14 months. So, I instituted a program to process evaluations, and in 4 weeks we got caught up. Then we implemented a matrix, which is basically a 60-day continuum with people's names down one side and action dates across the top. On Day 1, the blank evaluation forms with people's names on them are submitted to the division officers for an initial cut. On Day 15, that initial cut is submitted to the department head. On Day 30, the initial cut comes back to me from the department head. On Day 35, the evaluations go back to the department heads, and on Day 40 they are returned to me for the last time. At this point they are submitted to the ship's office for typing during the last 20 days so that at Day 60, the date they are due, they are available for signing."

- Executive Officer (Air)

THE WARDROOM

The wardroom in a superior command:

- Is Cohesive
- Matches CO-XO Leadership
- Raises Concerns with CO and XO
- Takes Initiative
- Does Detailed Planning
- Takes Responsibility for Work-Group Performance

The wardroom is the interface between the senior officers of the command, who make the policy, and the senior enlisted, who carry out the tasks of the command. The wardroom is responsible for developing and implementing plans that achieve the goals set by the CO and XO. In top commands, the department heads and division officers make sure these plans are specific, deciding who is to do what, when, and how. They gather information from chiefs and other relevant sources, and are careful to coordinate their department's or division's activities with other work going on.



This means that the wardroom must work as a team with the CO and XO. In superior commands there is more congruence between the wardroom and the CO-XO on command philosophy and leadership style than in average commands. Everyone is headed in the same direction. They identify with the goals set by the CO and XO and with how the CO and XO wish to accomplish them.

Officers of superior commands take initiative in several ways. They try to find new and better ways to do their jobs, and when they see that something needs to be done, they do it without waiting to be told. They are often willing to do more than they are required to do in order to achieve the command's mission. And they readily ask for guidance or information from the CO or XO if they believe these are

necessary to accomplish their jobs or to develop themselves professionally. They also raise command issues with senior officers before those issues turn into serious problems.

One of the greatest strengths of wardrooms of superior commands is their sense of responsibility for the performance of their subordinates. This leads them to try to anticipate problems before they occur, to take responsibility when a problem does occur that they should have prevented, and to hold their personnel accountable for meeting the command's standards. There is a strong sense of ownership and pride.

Finally, superior wardrooms support division officers, who, although they outrank enlisted personnel, are among the youngest people in a command and are relatively inexperienced when it comes to hands-on technical knowledge and management know how. Thus, department heads must do their own jobs and also attend to the needs of their junior officers.

THE CHIEFS QUARTERS

The chiefs quarters in a superior command:

- Acts for Command-wide Effectiveness
- Leads Divisions Actively
- Enforces Standards
- Supports and Develops Division Officers
- Is Cohesive
- Has a Strong Leader



"The backbone of the Navy" is how one old adage sums up the importance of the chiefs quarters. Superior commands are especially quick to acknowledge the chief petty officer's special role and contribution. The uniqueness of that role is a function both of the position the chief occupies in the organizational structure and of the job qualifications that must be satisfied before the position is attained. Chiefs have considerable managerial and technical expertise and are the linchpin between officers and enlisted.

For there to be a strong chiefs quarters, the chiefs must feel that they are valued and that they have the authority and responsibility to do the job the way they think it ought to be done. In superior commands, the chiefs feel that their special leadership role is sanctioned and appreciated by the rest of the command, especially the CO. In these commands, the chiefs are included in all major activities, particularly planning. Their input is sought and readily given. If they believe that something won't work or that there is a better way to do it, they speak up.

Chiefs in superior commands lead by taking responsibility for their division. They motivate their subordinates, counsel them, defend them when unjustly criticized, monitor and enforce standards, give positive and negative feedback, communicate essential information, solicit input, monitor morale, and take initiative to propose new solutions and to do things before being told.

The chiefs play a key role in the enforcement of standards. Because they are out and about, they see for themselves whether job performance and military bearing meet the Navy's and the command's requirements. When work is done well, they offer recognition and rewards; when it is done poorly, they act to correct it. They also know the importance of modeling the kind of behavior they expect their people to display. If they expect their personnel to work long hours to get something done, they work the same hours right along with them.



Their concerns extend beyond their immediate areas, however. Chiefs in superior commands act for command-wide effectiveness, promoting the success of the unit as a whole. Although they have a strong sense of ownership and take responsibility for their division's activities, they are able to look beyond the job at hand: when other departments or divisions need assistance, chiefs in superior commands are willing to help.

The superior chiefs quarters usually has a strong leader who plays the role of standard-bearer for the command, creates enthusiasm, offers encouragement, and drives others to excel. It is usually someone whom the other chiefs perceive as fair, who stands up for their interests and those of the crew, who listens with an open mind, and who has demonstrated a high degree of technical proficiency.

In superior commands, the chiefs quarters functions as a tight-knit team. The chiefs coordinate well, seek inputs from each other, help with personal problems, identify with the command's philosophy and goals, and treat each other with professional respect.

Finally, this ability to perceive larger goals and to work toward them as a team extends to their relationships with division officers. Chiefs in superior commands are sensitive to the difficulties that arise for division officers, who lack experience and technical know-how but must nevertheless take their place as leaders within the chain of command. A superior chiefs quarters supports and advises these new officers fully and tactfully.

THE CREW

The chiefs quarters in a superior command:

- Acts for Command-wide Effectiveness
- Leads Divisions Actively
- Enforces Standards
- Supports and Develops Division Officers
- Is Cohesive
- Has a Strong Leader

It is the crew, led by the officers and chiefs, who must ultimately accomplish the command's mission. The crew is where "the keel meets the water." Without a top-performing crew, no command can be successful.



COs of superior commands are particularly adept at molding their crew into a highly unified, spirited, fighting team with a laser-like focus: accomplishing the command's mission. When asked, these crews can not only clearly describe the command's philosophy and goals, but they also voice wholehearted support of the CO and his approach. Because the CO, XO, officers, and chiefs frequently explain what they want done and why, the crew knows what is expected of them and feels a part of the team. The result is enthusiasm, motivation, and pride in the command. These crews often praise their CO with the ultimate accolade: "I'd go to war with him." In average commands, the crew may not be sure of the command's philosophy or may withhold their total support of it.

The crew in superior commands also live up to the high standards demanded by their officers and chiefs. They know that when they succeed, they will be recognized and rewarded; equally well, they know that when they make mistakes, they will be told and corrective action taken. Their commitment to upholding the command's standards generates a strong sense of responsibility for their individual work areas. They act on the principle that if you're going to do something, then do it right, and do it right the first time.

Crew members of superior commands realize that success depends on a team effort. They don't act or do their jobs in disregard of the rest of the command. They communicate frequently, coordinate activities, and help each other out when necessary. In addition, they are careful about following the chain of command. They know that violating it disrupts teamwork, creates confusion, hurts morale, and hinders leadership.



Relationships

A command is not just a collection of people. Rather, people interact in patterns, some informal and some formal. In each command, people come to relate to each other in recurring and distinctive ways. The quality of these relationships impacts command effectiveness.

Our study found that there are three key relationships that influence a command's success: the CO-XO relationship, the chain of command, and how the command, particularly the CO, manages the external environment. How well the CO and XO work together as a team affects all aspects of the command's performance. How well a command follows and uses the chain of command and delegates responsibility also determines how successful it will be. And since every command is dependent on outside individuals, groups, and organizations for its success, how a command manages this dependence also contributes to its success or failure. All of these relationships are different in superior commands from relationships in average commands.

THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The relationship between the CO and XO in a superior command is characterized by:

- CO Is in Charge
- XO Stands Behind CO's Philosophy and Policies
- CO and XO Have Well-defined and Complementary Roles
- CO and XO Communicate Frequently
- CO and XO Respect Each Other's Abilities

the CO leads and the XO follows: there is never any doubt about who is calling the shots.

In superior commands, the XO actively supports the CO's policies, philosophy, and procedures. This does not mean that there is always perfect agreement. Differences, though, are dealt with in private. The XO may try to convince the CO to change his mind. But once the decision is made, the XO fully supports it; he does not attempt to undermine the CO in any way. As they say in one aviation squadron, "Fight in private; support in public."

The COs and XOs of superior commands accept that their roles are different and that they must work together to accomplish the command's mission. The CO has the big picture; the XO, the nitty-gritty. Thus, the CO establishes policy and procedures and holds the XO responsible for implementation. Duties and responsibilities need not be the same from command to command in the same community: in fact, each CO emphasizes different areas. What is essential, though, is that these roles be clearly defined and mutually agreed to.

Most COs in superior commands meet regularly with their executive officers to discuss long-range plans, tell them about upcoming activities, and get their ideas on preparing for these activities. The XOs, in turn, keep the CO informed about how plans are being carried out and do not hesitate to raise concerns requiring the CO's attention.

"The XO and I are a one-two punch, a real team. As commanding officer I am tasked with the combat readiness of the ship. My job is to make this the best ship in the Fleet. The majority of my energy is directed to planning ahead and thinking ahead. I talk with the squadron staff, talk with other COs, and attend various operational-type meetings off the ship. I'm not directly involved with the wheel turning, or the minute-to-minute situation aboard the ship. In contrast, the majority of the executive officer's time is. His focus is within the ship.

"I describe our relationship as a 'dynamic duo.' Our philosophy has got to be the same. When I'm off doing one thing, the XO is off doing other things. I have to have complete trust and confidence in his ability to do those things in a manner which supports our philosophy. He is not just my executive officer - he is the chief administrator on board the ship. He is second in command of this ship. My job, secondary to the combat readiness of the ship, is to train him and provide him with the opportunity to be a commanding officer."

Commanding Officer (Surface)

The ability of the CO and XO to work together is vitally important because their relationship impacts all aspects of the command. In superior commands the CO and XO work as a team and live up to Napoleon's dictum that "Nothing in war is as important as an undivided command." Although the CO and XO work together,

One XO recalls his first meeting with his CO: "I remember sitting in his room when we first met and talking about his goals. I had certain goals, and I wanted to mesh my philosophy with his and to get his input on the type of relationship he wanted us to have." In this meeting the CO reports that he told the XO: "I don't want you to be a paperwork XO. I want you to be an operations XO. I want you involved in the ship's operations - to run the training program and to watch the navigation team. I also want you to start training yourself to be a CO."

- Executive Officer (Surface)

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The crew in a superior command:

- Is Committed to Command Goals
- Lives Up To Standards
- Respects the Chain Of Command
- Takes Ownership for Their Work Areas
- Is Motivated
- Works As A Team



The chain of command is the formal organizational structure for each Navy command. It specifies who reports to whom, how work is divided up, and how communication is supposed to flow. Despite the similarities on paper for each command, our study found that the chain of command works differently in superior commands than in average commands. For one thing, although the chain of command is respected, it is also flexible. It's never allowed to become an obstacle to effective leadership and decision making. In a crisis, for example, someone in the chain of command may be bypassed, but in this case the person is immediately notified either before or after whatever action is taken.

In general there is a frequent and orderly flow of information up and down the chain of command from level to level. Although there is a temptation to bypass the division officers because of their inexperience, this does not occur in superior commands. These commands also welcome new ideas from all levels, including junior enlisted personnel. They see this give-and-take as a sign of interest and as enabling the best ideas to surface. If something is going wrong, they want to know about it.

Superior commands also delegate much more responsibility than average commands. The CO focuses on the big picture and delegates its implementation to the XO. The XO then develops a working plan and holds the ward-room responsible for carrying it out. Each level delegates as much decision making as possible to the level below and holds it accountable. As one CO (Air) put it: "I believe in leadership at the lowest level we can put it. If we can solve things in the division, it's dumb to go to the department. If we can solve it in the department, it's dumb to go to the XO. I like the lowest possible denominator to make the decision and then act on it."



"I tell all new crew members what I am here for in my role as command master chief: 'Stop me any time you've got a problem. However, keep in mind that I'm going to send you back to your chain of command if you haven't gone through them first.' We emphasize chain of command. And we don't only emphasize that to the people who are trying to work something up the chain of command. We emphasize to the top of the chain of command that you'd better be listening to what they're saying down below."
 - Master Chief Petty Officer (Surface)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

A superior command:

- Builds Networks with Outsiders
- Advocates for Its Interests with Outsiders
- Promotes a Positive Image

Every Navy command exists in a larger environment that vitally affects its performance. This environment includes the commodore, squadron or wing commander and staff, tenders, the shipyard, contractors, detailers, other commands, and the local community. Superior commands manage this environment; average commands are managed by it.

Superior commands establish and cultivate a web of relationships with significant people or groups in the external environment and use these relationships to accomplish their goals. This requires a mindset that views the larger environment as full of opportunities and resources rather than obstacles.

These commands are not shy about advocating for their interests. They know how to work the system to get what they want. For example, they use contacts to recruit good people, arrange for technical assists from the squadron, get good schedules for inspections, get needed training opportunities, and get materials and services from the shipyard or outside contractors. When they feel they are not getting a fair shake, they speak up.

By having frequent contact with those they are dependent upon, these commands are able to avoid unwarranted interference from above. If a command does not do this, it becomes like a ship without a rudder - at the mercy of external forces.

Superior commands believe they are the best, and they want other people to know it. They go out of their way to promote a positive image. For example, they make sure all message traffic leaving their command is free of errors, their military bearing is sharp, and their spaces are clean. They know that their commands will be judged on such things. As one CO says, "If you demonstrate your inability to do your job, you get an awful lot of help in doing it. That's not the way I want to do business; I want to keep this command off people's hit list."



Activities

Every organization must perform certain activities to survive and accomplish its goals. Our study indicated that there are five activities critical for command effectiveness: Planning, Maintaining Standards, Building Esprit de Corps, Communication, and Training and Development. How a command carries out these activities determines how successful it will be. Here we explain how superior commands perform these key activities.

PLANNING

In a superior command:

- Planning is a Regularly Scheduled Activity
- Planning Occurs at All Levels
- Planning is Long Range
- Plans Are Specific
- Plans Are Publicized
- Systems Are Put in Place to Implement Plans
- Command Makes Every Effort to Stick to The Plan

Superior commands do a lot of planning, and they do it well. As one CO put it, "If you plan ahead, you can accomplish anything." These commands look far ahead and prepare for contingencies, whereas average commands often complain of crisis management, of continually having to put out fires.

Planning is regularly scheduled in superior commands. The XO on one submarine meets weekly with his department heads to plan the next week's training. The CO of one surface ship described how his wardroom had planning sessions every evening from 1800 to 1830, months before an important mission. For major events, such as deployments or inspections, he holds special planning meetings.



Superior units plan by getting input from a variety of sources - the people with technical expertise, those who will carry out the plans, and those affected by them. After the CO explains what needs to be done, it is up to the XO to formulate the plan and make sure it is implemented. The XO delegates planning tasks to the department heads, who in turn involve their division officers and chiefs. The chiefs get input from their LPOs and work center supervisors. This creates high commitment and decreases the likelihood of crisis management, since there is more widespread anticipation of obstacles.

Superior commands do a lot of long-range planning. They usually map things out from six to twelve months in advance. This requires obtaining information on upcoming events, which, in turn, requires good communication and coordination with outside groups. A good relationship with the squadron or shipyard, for example, makes putting together a realistic schedule that much easier. Thus, long-term planning and a good relationship with the external environment go hand in hand.

For plans to be effective, they need to be specific and well publicized. In general, the result of planning meetings in superior commands is a statement of who will do what, when they will do it, and what the desired outcome is. In average commands, plans are less well-defined. After plans are formulated, superior commands make a special effort to publicize them, primarily through the POD. One XO on a superior ship passes out monthly calendars listing the unit's major events. Each page represents a day and includes extra space for notes. He encourages his personnel to share the calendars with their families.

Superior commands also do not constantly reinvent the wheel; they develop systems and routines for performing tasks in the most effective manner. One XO uses a matrix planning form to make sure that evaluations are completed on time. On another ship, the retention program requires that officers from the CO down to division officer meet each month with a designated individual, starting eight months before the officer's planned departure.

After making the effort to create a plan, superior commands make a considerable effort to stick to it. They can be flexible if necessary, but they appreciate having a plan that people know they can count on.



"To plan for our off-load, we had regular meetings with the people involved, probably two or three weeks in advance. We put out our own LOI even though the ship had one. And we assigned responsibilities. One of the most important things I've learned is that you have to assign responsibilities in writing. The other thing is accountability. You've got to tell people, 'This is what your job is,' and clarify desired outcomes. There's too *much* of a tendency to say, 'We'll just work it out when we get there.' We had a preliminary meeting and asked: 'What sorts of things do we need to be concerned about~ What will be problem areas~ Who's going to take care of this~ Who's going to take care of that?' From there it was just a progression of meetings as things went along."

- Commanding Officer (Air)



MAINTAINING STANDARDS

In a superior command:

- Standards are Clear and Consistent
- Standards are Realistic and High
- Standards are Continuously Monitored
- Positive and Negative Feedback Is Frequently Given
- Performance Problems Are Handled Quickly and Appropriately
- All Levels Participate in Enforcing Standards

Superior commands pay special attention to establishing, communicating, and enforcing standards in job performance, dress and protocol, and above all, mission accomplishment.

Top commands do not accept average performance. They want to be the best, and they know that this requires high standards. Part of their desire is competitive - wanting to beat another squadron in the consecutive number of sorties off the carrier, or getting more missile hits in a target shoot, for example. But their primary motive is to do things right and to do them right the first time. These commands



know that mistakes may come back to haunt them in the form of malfunctions, safety problems, low inspection scores, or just inability to accomplish their mission.

Although superior commands aim high, their standards are realistic. Based on an accurate assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, they set goals that are challenging but attainable. On one average sub the crew believed standards were so high it was difficult to become qualified. They felt the CO was never satisfied with their performance. In top commands there is no mystery about standards, or about the consequences of meeting or not meeting them. People see their superiors practice what they preach. Standards are enforced fairly; the same standard is applied to all.

Superior commands monitor progress closely and stay on guard for possible problems. This is done informally through getting out and about as well as through formal programs. At the suggestion of one of his chiefs, one CO started a qualifications delinquent program, in which the LPOs decide among themselves which crew members are delinquent. These names are then listed in the POD, and the crew members are required to muster on Saturdays for two hours of additional training. The muster is done by the duty chief or the chief of the watch. The involvement of the chiefs generates a high level of commitment to enforcing the command's standards.

A striking characteristic of superior units is the preponderance of positive feedback. The officers and senior enlisted go out of their way to find something positive to say about their personnel's performance. They act on the assumption that they will get better results by focusing on what has been done right instead of continually harping on what is wrong.

Superior commands do give negative feedback when justified. In fact, in superior commands, telling people when they are not doing things right is almost an obligation. People are promptly told when they are not performing well. People speak up, even to their superiors, when they think things are not up to standards.

Average commands tend to tell people they have screwed up, without offering help to correct the problem. People are often left hanging; it is not made clear to them what they must do to progress from unacceptable to acceptable or excellent performance. The way negative feedback is given in average commands also sometimes leaves a person feeling resentful or humiliated. Superior commands are more adept at giving negative feedback in a way that creates a positive climate and motivates individuals to change their behavior.

"When we started out, we had a hard time passing wing inspections for corrosion control. We barely skinned by on precruise, but had progressed to the point of getting two excellents and three out standings on the mid-cruise. But I wasn't satisfied with that, so we revamped and refined, including rewriting the entire quality assurance program in accordance with the maintenance manual. I assigned each person a task and was available to them if they had problems. On the postcruise inspection, we got five outstandings. So we went from just barely satisfactory to a solid outstanding."

- Chief Petty Officer (Air)

When superior commands become aware of poor performance, they act quickly and fairly. Feedback and counseling are given. When that doesn't work, the individual may be moved out of the job into another one that is more suitable. And in superior commands, disciplinary actions are viewed by the crew as fair and consistent. In average commands, there are more complaints in these areas.

Finally, in top commands, enforcing standards is an all-hands activity, and its importance permeates the command. It isn't just left to the CO or XO. The junior enlisted, as well as officers and chiefs, act to live up to the command's high standards and to help others live up to these standards. Average commands lack such command-wide commitment.



"There are certain facts of life that exist in this command so that there's no doubt, no equivocation in anyone's mind about the end result. If you are overweight, you are not going to be advanced. Everybody knows it. No matter who you are, from XO down to seaman recruit, you aren't going to get ahead until you meet weight standards. That's in accordance with Navy directives, but in many commands it's overlooked. Here, it does not happen that way, and everybody knows it."

Commanding Officer (Surface)

"A situation had come to me at captain's mast in which two third class petty officers got in a fight in one of the shops. I looked over at this guy who was a witness and who was telling me what had happened, and I said, 'Who are you?' He said he was a second-class petty officer, and I said, 'You're a second-class petty officer and you let this go on down there?' He didn't have anything to say. He didn't attempt to step in and say, 'I'm senior, and we're going to stop this' or 'You in that corner, you in that corner.' Nothing. No comment. So I stopped the proceedings, sent him back outside, had him given his rights, and convened XOI on him. That's the way I feel about it. If it's your job, do it. Don't pass it on to somebody else."

Commanding Officer (Air)

COMMUNICATION

In a superior command:

- Communication Occurs Frequently
- People Listen to Each Other
- Explanations Are Given Often
- Communication Flows Up, Down, and Across the Chain of Command
- Officers and Chiefs Get Out and About
- Personal Issues are Discussed

Superior commands communicate frequently and effectively. As one chief put it, "We talk a lot to each other." This includes communicating about what needs to be done and why; getting input; sending memos; getting information from outside groups; counseling; resolving conflicts; and a thousand and one other things. In particular, the people in charge give frequent explanations to those below them about what is coming up and what is expected of them. A lot of important communication is informal and occurs when the officers and chiefs are walking about. In doing this they can answer an individual's questions, chat about personal matters, and see if there are any small problems that could later turn into big ones.

These commands make sure the right people get the right message at the right time. They do this through face-to-face

conversations, meetings, the IMC, memos, quarters, captain's call, night orders, newsletters, and posters. The POD is a central means of communication. It is clear, complete, and accurate, and often contains reminders of long-range events. It also is issued early enough the day before to help people plan for the next day. People know they can rely on the POD to find out what is happening. In some average commands, the POD is guilty until proven innocent: people feel that they have to double-check to ensure that scheduled evolutions will really happen.

Top commands also realize the importance of listening. People in these units know they do not have all the answers and realize that listening improves morale and decision making. The command senior chief in one superior aviation squadron explained his approach: "People aren't afraid to come to me with anything. That's essential because if you go around scaring people off, you have shot yourself right out of the saddle. I have to be able to get them to listen to me and me to listen to them. You can't possibly put out policies without ears." Most COs and XOs of superior commands have open door policies, but some go even further. The CO of one top command does not wait for people to approach him; he schedules several request masts each week and tries to see one or two people every day. Aware that most of the personnel who want to see him have complaints, he says he does a lot of listening before suggesting a course of action.

For communication to be successful throughout the command, each level must receive and transmit messages quickly and accurately. In superior commands, communication flows freely and clearly up, down, and across the various levels. Again, this starts at the top, with the CO effectively communicating what's wanted. Each level then passes the baton to the one below it. But these commands know it is just as important that communication flow up the chain of command as down. Starting with the CO, the norm is established that if someone sees a problem, thinks there's a better way to do something, or has a question, then the command wants to hear it.

Communication is also effective across departments and divisions. Aware of the tendency for splits to develop; superior commands make sure people are communicating and coordinating with each other. One submarine, preparing for an ORSE, makes checklists of what needs to be done and then has people from other departments review the lists. This requires the different departments to work together and help each other out.





The importance of helping people overcome personal problems is realized by these top commands. They see the command as a family where everyone's welfare is important. And they know that if people are worried about marital, financial, or health problems, this will detract from their energy and ability to do the job. So they not only take the time to talk about such issues, but are sensitive to clues that someone may be struggling with a personal matter. They take pride in turning someone around - helping someone who was considered incorrigible and molding him into a star performer. This is most common with the chiefs, who often counsel their people on personal issues. However, they do not sacrifice accomplishing the command's goals for the sake of soul-saving.

"Instead of just having officer call, we have officer-CPO call. In that way we get the information out to more people. So at the division level there will be two guys, the division officer and the CPO, who know the information and the reasons for what we're doing. This goes back to my philosophy that the more people who know what is happening, the better. I believe that if someone knows why we're doing something and when, then even if he doesn't like it, he'll do it. If you tell somebody, 'Do this because I said to do it,' very likely he'll throw his hands up and say, 'Sure.' And maybe he'll do it.

"I remember how I felt when I was a junior officer and didn't get much information. I had to support the boat's policies as a division officer, and I wasn't really sure why I was supporting them. I want my division officers and CPOs to know the background information so that they'll know why they're supporting this command's policies."

Executive Officer (Submarine)



BUILDING ESPRIT DE CORPS

In a superior command:

- Positive Regard and Expectations Occur at All Levels
- Teamwork is Promoted
- Morale is Monitored
- Rewards and Recognition Are Given Frequently
- Command Integrates Incoming Crew Quickly
- Command Focuses on Successes
- Command Encourages Social Activities and Having Fun
- Symbolic Activities Used to Promote Esprit de Corps



Superior and average commands differ notably in esprit de corps. In superior commands our research teams were greeted warmly and enthusiastically. People at all levels welcomed us. If we appeared lost, they offered help. People looked lively, sharp, and relaxed. There was a sense of electricity in the command that was invigorating and purposeful. In these commands, we often received informal invitations to go to sea. Pride in the command was obvious. In average commands, things seemed more disorganized and the mood was flat. People in the command seemed drained by the command climate.

Examining esprit de corps more closely, we found that superior commands have high morale, great pride, and operate as a tight-knit team with a strong sense of being a family.

The leaders in top commands care about their personnel, value their contributions, and have confidence in their ability to excel. And attitudes to themselves - they think. These leaders treat people in ways that succeed, they'll do deserve that trust.

Superior commands to work together in their and in the command as a with the CO and XO team. This requires communicate frequently, they coordinate with resources fairly, and their contributions.

These commands vital to top performance When they see signs of a morale problem, they act quickly to remedy it. Much of the monitoring of morale is done by getting out and about. The chiefs play a special role in monitoring morale because they are in such close contact with the crew. This prompts the CO and XO in top commands frequently to consult with the chiefs on the morale of the command.

Top commands are particularly adept at using recognition and rewards for motivating their personnel and keeping morale high. These range from informal praise in a conversation, to a mention in the POD, recognition at captain's call, letters of achievement and commendation, all the way up to Navy medals. In addition, special liberty is often used as a reward for long, hard work. The use of recognition and rewards occurs less frequently in average commands.

Superior commands also pay special attention to integrating incoming crew members into the command. This involves explaining what's expected, showing them around and introducing them to other people, and generally trying to make them feel at home. These commands send new personnel a welcome aboard letter before they arrive, and some even write to their families to tell them about the command. In one command, the person's name is stenciled above the bunk before the person arrives. COs and XOs of superior commands try to meet with all new members as soon as possible. Besides getting acquainted, they explain how they want things to run. These commands try to leave nothing to chance in integrating new members. In average commands, things are less systematic: new crew members are left more on their own to get oriented and up to speed.



they don't keep these they tell their people what are convinced that if you show you trust them to everything they can to

work hard at getting people departments and divisions whole. It starts at the top, advocating working as a getting people to clarifying roles, making sure each other, allocating praising groups equally for

know that high morale is and they monitor it closely.

The best commands know that 'all work and no play' makes a less effective command. So they organize and encourage participation in social activities like picnics, ball games, and parties. They also try to include the families of their personnel as much as possible through such events as special briefings for families before deployment, family nights, awards ceremonies, and invitations to social activities. One CO was fond of quoting his favorite saying to his command: "If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right."

Emphasizing their tradition of success is also an important way to build pride and morale. Many of these commands proudly display photograph albums or other memorabilia of past accomplishments. They also develop distinctive rituals. In one squadron, for example, at the first quarters for new arrivals, the CO ceremoniously takes off the person's old ball-cap, replaces it with one bearing the new command's insignia, shakes hands, and welcomes the person to the squadron. These commands also enthusiastically sell and wear T-shirts, belt buckles, caps, and other symbols of their pride in the command.



My job is to motivate the crew. The easiest way to do that would be for me to walk in the door and start kicking ass from minute one until the day I leave - under the assumption that they might not have liked me but they will never forget me. When you do that you destroy the morale of the crew. You wind up treating the other chiefs like seamen, whom they naturally resent, and guys start shipping over just to get off the boat. In that situation, you get false respect because it's based on fear. However, that's not the way I do business.

I try to motivate these guys by getting them to perceive themselves as winners, and they are winners. If they believe they are winners, they will be winners! I also try to get them to believe they are part of a team, that they are all part of a family.

- Chief of the Boat (Submarine)

The CO in an aviation squadron had a chief who was denied a promotion to maintenance chief. When he asked the other chiefs why, they candidly told him his weaknesses. As a result, he felt he was of no value to the command, and asked the CO for a transfer. The CO explains:

"He was real down on himself. But I felt I would be doing him a disservice to say he did not have these problems. So I told him, 'Chief, you are right. You do have these problems. But what we have to do is outline a plan for you to overcome them. You're not going to escape these problems by transferring to another command. And I will not approve a transfer because I like you too much and you do a great job for us.

"After that, I called all of the chiefs together except him and said: 'I want you to know my policy firsthand. I don't object to your telling Chief So-and-So about his problems. But let me tell you one thing: from today forth your total goal in life is to make him the best chief petty officer in this squadron. If you don't help him overcome his problem, then you are not doing your job as a fellow chief petty officer.' Nobody said anything. I then said: 'We have identified Chief So-and-So's problems, and he feels badly about them. What we must do now is build him up. I want you to support him and strengthen him and help him overcome his weaknesses.' And boy, they did! He has just turned out super!"

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In a superior command:

- Value of Training Is Recognized
- Training Is Kept Realistic and Practical
- Training Programs are Monitored and Evaluated
- All Levels Participate in Training and Development
- Command Emphasizes Professional Development and Career Planning

The Navy's technical systems are sophisticated, the technology constantly changes, and its strategic and tactical operations are fraught with danger. Superior commands realize that these demands require frequent and high-quality training.

These commands never forget that the ultimate purpose of training is to accomplish their mission and be constantly ready for combat. In average commands, training often becomes a repetitive exercise with the focus on getting a high inspection score. Superior commands, on the other hand, always link training to the command's overall goals. This orientation and the limitation on time and resources mean they insist that training be realistic and practical.

There is a training mindset in these commands. They continually scan the horizon for training opportunities. For example, an aviation squadron had a choice between competing in a fighter derby against other squadrons or flying for the President's inaugural ceremony. The CO chose the derby because he recognized the training opportunities. Instead of using his most experienced pilots - a common practice that would have guaranteed a high score - he and the XO decided to use the junior pilots to allow them to get more experience in air combat maneuvering. And to help develop the junior officers, both he and the XO did not fly, although they had the most experience in the command.

In general, superior commands make sure training is effective by carefully planning training activities, providing the necessary resources for training, and by not tolerating gundecking. They also closely monitor training. For example, the CO and XO periodically attend to make sure training is accurate and relevant.

Special emphasis is placed on becoming qualified on time, and individuals face a penalty if they do not become qualified on schedule. However, in these commands all sorts of help are made available to a person, including informal counseling and formal training and schooling, to help the person become qualified. All levels in top commands are involved in training and development. Officers help train each other, while the chiefs are continually active in all phases of training enlisted personnel. The chiefs, being more experienced, also informally train the division officers. Overall, then, in superior commands the attitude is that people are willing to help each other learn. They realize that the more proficient each person is, the better the overall performance.

Training is also seen as key to professional development and achieving career goals. So both officers and chiefs help their personnel in identifying their short- and long-term professional goals and in getting the training needed to reach them. In particular, COs are involved in supporting advancement and retention programs, frequently counseling people themselves. They especially try to sell their personnel on a Navy career and reenlistment. In these superior commands, the CO's support of these efforts is also evidenced by handpicking the command career counselor to make sure this person has the necessary commitment and interpersonal skills to excel at this important job.



*"There's a grass-roots interest in training here. The men see the benefit of a sound training and qualification program. We have a chief who is the training petty officer, and he keeps track of the quals status and schedules the boards when an individual completes all of his checkouts on systems and compartments and whatnot. Even when you get all the way down to the second-class petty officer, they see the value of training. They keep our standards real high. They love to make it hard on each other in the boards without being jerks. They want to make sure that when a guy qualifies, he's got the stuff. And that's paid off for us. We fly under both the gold and silver dolphins."
Executive Officer (Submarine)*

Conclusion

We end our discussion of the Navy's command effectiveness study by referring to the dramatic turnaround of the aviation squadron cited at the beginning of this text. Even a casual study of this turnaround indicates that it was accomplished by actions similar to those identified as characteristics of superior commands.

The turnaround started when the XO became the new CO. His first act was to discuss with his new XO how they wanted the command to operate. They agreed that "the number one goal was to fly those airplanes and to establish a winning attitude - to prove to the crew that they were not losers." To achieve this goal, they pushed the crew to give their maximum effort. One of the first things the CO did was to recruit as many top performers as he could, especially one water-walking maintenance chief. To combat the prevalent "don't give a damn" attitude, the CO insisted on high professional standards in all activities, such as making sure the crew came to briefings on time and prepared. In addition, a mandatory training program for all aircrew was started. The CO and XO led the way by their own actions, living up to the new standards of excellence. Often, for example, they flew planes that under the old CO would have stayed on the ground because of minor defects.

Before long, the squadron was meeting its sortie obligations and outflying its sister squadron. On deployment, it set a new record for continuous sorties. The crew began to take pride in being members of the squadron. After that, the string of successes just snowballed. Other personnel were now asking to be sent to the command. Within a year, this squadron won two departmental E's, the safety S, and the Battle E. And they did all this with the same old aircraft.

Here, then, is a vivid example of the potential benefits to a command from applying the results of the Navy's command effectiveness study. In general, these findings can be used to improve a command's performance in a variety of ways. They can help you to:

- diagnose the causes of command problems
- prepare an action plan to solve them
- target your efforts to save time and energy
- anticipate obstacles and benefits of intended actions
- generate new and better ways to do things
- decide what works best for you
- be inspired to achieve new heights of leadership

In presenting the findings of the command effectiveness study, we are not suggesting that there is one right way to lead or that command excellence is simply a matter of following a blueprint. Instead, we recommend using the findings of the study as a guide. For example, the characteristics of command effectiveness could be used like a checklist to assess the functioning of a command. As for improving a command's performance, we know empirically that these are critical characteristics that distinguish superior commands from average ones. Making a change at one of these focal points will improve your command's effectiveness. And because the command is a system, with each part connected to the others, an improvement in anyone area will have a ripple effect throughout the system, enhancing the effectiveness of the command as a whole.

We hope you will be interested in reading further about the command effectiveness study. We recommend *Command Effectiveness in the United States Navy: Final Report*, which explains the study and its findings in more detail. If you are a CO, XO, PCO, or PXO, there is *Command Excellence: What It Takes To Be The Best!* This is a text written to help senior officers apply the findings of the study to their commands.

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