

CO Thoughts...

1. Told the XO, DHs, CPO Mess and Crew they were the "Best" (even if they weren't) and kept telling them that. Told outside organizations (ATG, ISIC, SERMC) that the crew was the best I've ever seen. Kept repeating it and repeating it until everyone believed it, especially the crew. BUT...you have to back it up on the first inspection/assist visit, and if you do, it becomes easy after that.
2. Came in late and went home early (if I could...LOA and ULTRA were different stories). Allows the XO and DHs to start the day off well and end the day well, without having to worry about the CO. When I did stay late, the XO and DHs knew they weren't obligated to stay just because I was.
3. DID NOT MICROMANAGE! BUT...paid attention to the details on the big stuff.
 - Inspection check-lists.
 - Underway and Exercise Preps.
 - Material Condition.
 - Navigation! Navigation!
 - Bridge work (CPAs, tracks, SOE, where's the oiler?, etc)
 - Underway watch bills
 - Qualifications
4. Limited meetings. Waste of time. But, kept the door open and demanded the DHs come and see me everyday to ask questions, voice concerns, get guidance, etc. Read and understood Departmental 8's and required answers to questions. Held DH meetings well in advance of big events (C2X, ULTRA, BALTOPs, Deployment, etc) to provide guidance and priorities.
5. Identified Strengths and Weaknesses of those who worked for me. Played the strengths and redistributed the duties based on weaknesses (have to do in a way that the individual with the weakness doesn't feel he/she got fired). i.e. If your XO can't write and your OPS can, have OPS do all the writing. Try to never, ever fire anyone, especially a DH, if you can avoid it. Not good for the ship. But sometimes you just have to...
6. Take care of the crew (does not mean coddle). Give them things if you can (the week off with no leave charged at Thanksgiving). Attend all re-enlistments, get them promoted first, get them qualified, get them education, know their name, and if you don't, call them "Buddy or Pal"...make it personal. Expect perfection and when they give it to you, give them something in return. Back them up during Inspections and go to the mat for them (don't be afraid to poke an inspector in the eye, but do it somewhat nicely). Make the crew not want to ever, ever let you down. Even if you lose with an inspector, DO NOT EVER take it out on the crew or crew member.
7. Make the routine, routine. One of the most important items. Get your paper work done on time (in box should always be empty). Make sure the crew knows the schedule. Talk about the schedule. Ensure chits are completed within 72 hrs...a No doesn't get better with time,

and creates stress at home. Ensure DITS and Zoners are done always (even if it's hard). Follow the POD/POW.

8. Walk the ship at least twice a day...talk with the crew. Ask questions about what they are working on.

9. Demand that if the gage is supposed to read 50 to 55 psi, that it does. 49.5 is not good enough and 55.5 is too much. Identify, Document and Correct material discrepancies.

10. Ensure your ship looks better than any other ship. No running rust, perfect paint, frapped lines, clean pier, etc. Do not Field Day the ship...it will be the dirtiest ship you've served on. Do "A Little Bit All The Time!" Make them believe it works.

11. Knew MY job...Surface Warfare...learned everything I could about Engineering, Weapons, OPS, Admin, etc. Read all message traffic, read Early Bird, watched CNN/FOX, did other stuff than Navy. Ensured the crew knew I was a "Warfighter" and "Ship Driver" above everything else. Wanted the crew to have a CO they could be proud of and brag about. A crew loves to brag about their CO if they can...they would much rather do that than bitch about how crappy he/she is.

12. Have a personality. I bitched about having to wear anything other than coveralls. Do more than just talk business with the DHs and XO. Just shoot the shit with them about anything. Tell sea stories.

13. Have an easily understandable Command Philosophy and talk about it all the time. Then talk about it some more. Make sure you follow your own command philosophy...no double standards.

14. Write a BZ message to anyone who helps you out and info their Boss. Chances are you will need them again, and if you do that, they'll flock back to your ship.

15. Give the crew awards...if you aren't feeling like you're giving too many away, then you are definitely not giving enough.

16. Communicate with your Boss at least once a week. Tell him what you've done, what you're doing, and what you are going to do. Keep it to one email screen if you can. If you screw up, tell him. But, don't tell him every little thing. When you do good, tell him. Don't ever blame your predecessor to your Boss.

17. Hold the crew accountable, don't Mast them for every little infraction. Give them chances, then kill them. Treat them like Adults...it's funny, they'll start acting like Adults. If you treat them like Children, they'll act like Children.

18. Get inside everyone's decision cycle...those who work for you, those you work for, and those who can affect your life (CNSL, ATG, ISIC, etc). Don't ever let anyone decide your or your ship's fate.

19. Take calculated chances...remember firing on the drone during BALTOPS with N00 on board! It cemented the ship's reputation with him, but understand the consequences if you screw up!

20. Remember...as the CO goes, so goes the ship.

21. Don't change things just for the sake of changing them. There might be things you'd like to do different, but if it's working, leave it alone...focus on the things that must be changed. Take advice from XO, DH and CPO mess...pick their solution every now and then, even if it's not your solution...gives them buy in.

22. Meet with the CPOs all the time! Don't just meet with them to yell at them or ask for something. Sometimes go down and tell them they are doing a great job (even if they are not). Make them want to invite you for coffee. If you see one walking past your door, call them in, ask them advice on something, shoot the shit with them.

23. Do crazy things...like Pirate Gear for a day. Steamed back from deployment in gym gear the entire way!

24. Be a human being, but never forget you're the CO...make sure they don't forget that either. Don't be "friends" with anyone. But, be "friendly" with everyone.

25. Make the crew fix their gear...don't rely on SERMC or tech assists. When they do, brag about them. The next guy will want to fix something for you.

26. End every meeting or ass chewing with a positive note. Focus on what they are doing right! Compare what they are doing right with what they just did wrong.