

Try the TEAM principle

We must wake up and pay close attention to what our ex-service members are saying. The results of a recent Department of Defense study would strike a chord with every military leader. The top reasons for service members leaving the military in 2000 were lack of confidence in leaders, lack of job challenge, lack of responsibility and lack of recognition. Leaders do not scrutinize these concerns and institute basic leadership fundamentals can reduce significantly the voluntary separations of our service members.

How can leaders persuade someone to continue to serve? Before answering this question, we must understand that leadership is both an art and a science. The art of leadership eludes definition, but we can study leadership by exploring the actions of great military leaders such as Marine Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Puller, who possessed

unquestionable integrity and the personal respect of his Marines. Not every leader will have the charisma of Gen. Puller, the force of character of Gen. George Patton, the relentless brilliance of Adm. Ernest J. King, or the singular achievements of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. Any leader, however, can apply the scientific aspects of leadership.

Those leaders who continuously train, empower, acknowledge and mentor (something I have coined the TEAM principle) best exhibit an understanding of the scientific aspect of leadership. I learned the value of the TEAM principle in 1997 when I was given two weeks to prepare a junior crew of Marines for a major exercise and combat evaluation. A leader blessed with natural charisma of a forceful personality instinctively can motivate his subordinates; but the rest of us can be equally effective through training, empow-

ering, acknowledging, and mentoring our subordinates. Furthermore, application of the TEAM principle can address many of the concerns that create disillusionment among many of today's service members.

Today's leaders must foster a climate of continuous training. In an environment where responsibilities have been increasing while the number of personnel have been decreasing, many leaders have grown reluctant to send subordinates on temporary assigned duty for training. Too often they rationalize their actions by saying that the individual is far too valuable to the command to be lost for such an extended time. In spite of the perceived value to the organization, subordinates will become disillusioned if not given opportunities to grow by attending schools. Although directed to do so in Marine Corps doctrine, most Marine leaders do not provide enough training, ultimately resulting in a Marine's failure to progress. *Fleet Marine Force Manual-1* identifies

Guest Commentary

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TEAM from 2A

the importance of training and the relationship of training to war fighting:

Training is the key to combat effectiveness. Commanders at each echelon must allot subordinates sufficient time and freedom to conduct the training necessary to achieve proficiency at their levels.

Service members will not become proficient solely through schools, exercises and professional military education.

They must continuously study their military occupational specialties. Leaders must foster a climate of constant learning to promote growth and job satisfaction.

Not only is training subordinates the right thing to do, but it also produces benefits such as increased proficiency, knowledge, confidence, moral and challenge.

The second most mentioned reason for service members leaving the military last year was that their jobs were not challenging enough.

If leaders take the time to train subordinates then hold them accountable for new tasks and responsibilities, the result will be an added challenge to the subordinate's job.

In addition, when leaders encourage professional growth, job satisfaction increases, which motivates subordinates to remain in service.

Failure to train subordinates, on the other hand, can result in terrible consequences such as their inability to accomplish what is expected of them. World War II German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel believed that "the best form of welfare for the troops is first-class training, for this saves unnecessary casualties."

Subordinates cannot be challenged or given greater responsibilities until properly trained.

I applied the training aspect of the TEAM principle during an exercise in 1997 by building a

training guide with a test on each function the Marines were to perform during a combat evaluation.

A computer program also was built to simulate the exercise, which the detachment completed several times.

Not only did this challenge the Marines, but everyone agreed that the simulation and training guide were major factors in the detachment's ultimate success in achieving a near-perfect grade.

Leaders must ensure that the training is useful, relevant, and applicable to a subordinate's growth and job proficiency. If leaders take the time to design such training, subordinates will respond to the challenge.

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