

The Leadership News

A quarterly newsletter on leadership and diversity in the Coast Guard

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Survey Uncovers Top Two Coast Guard Strengths

by Lt. Cmdr. Greg Stump, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WTL)

A yearlong project involving 145 Coast Guard units and The Gallup Organization achieved a milestone in June. At that time, the project was transferred from Gallup and headquarters (Leadership and Professional Development Division) to the 145 field commands and staff elements that volunteered to participate in the project. The project consisted of Gallup's 12-question employee satisfaction survey (which Gallup dubs Q12™) and subsequent training on data interpretation and data use at the unit and workgroup levels.

By the end of June, all units received their data, and 11 Gallup train-the-trainer sessions were completed. Managers and trainers from participating units and several quality performance consultants attended the 8-hour sessions, which were held at 11 sites coast to coast. Training topics included Q12™ methodology, Coast Guard data, data interpretation and most significantly, a 12-month action plan blueprint for the unit and workgroup levels.

This article presents the most basic Coast Guard-wide data. You may review additional Q12™ data by visiting the leadership Web site (www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm, click "Q12 Survey").

A total of 145 commands or staff elements, comprising a group of 11,000 people, volunteered to take part in the Q12™ when the solicitation process began in November 2001. In total, 7,600 civilians, active duty personnel, reservists, auxiliaries, contractors and Public Health Service members completed the survey. This extraordinarily high response rate, 72 percent, contributed to the success of the entire project.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The survey revealed two predominant strengths in the Coast Guard:

- **Mission** – the mission and purpose of the Coast Guard give people a sense that their jobs are important. This connection with the mission increases with employee longevity, an atypical finding within most organizations. Other service organizations (e.g., the Red Cross, hospitals, etc.) experience a strong feeling for the mission with new hires; however, this sentiment often decreases as employee tenure grows.
- **Personal Development** – the opportunity to learn and grow is the other Coast Guard strength identified by the Q12™. Coast Guard people believe they are

able to develop professionally and have opportunities for learning and growth on the job.

The survey also revealed the top two areas in need of improvement within the Coast Guard:

- **Lack of resources** – people believe that they don't have the materials and equipment they need to do their work right.
- **Waste of natural ability** – people believe that they don't have the opportunity to do what they do best every day.

Gallup presented the Coast Guard's data in various forms, some more complex than others. The following tables provide data that is basic and easy to understand.

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Specifically, the tables present the average score, provided by members of the listed groups, for all 12 questions. Responses for each question range from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The letter “n” signifies the number of respondents from each group.

Pay grade	E1-E3	E4-E7	E7-E10	CWO	O1-O3	O4-O6	Flag/SES*	GS1-GS9	GS10-GS15	Wage grade
n=	519	3,040	806	300	750	590	5	370	599	280
Average	3.41	3.49	3.55	3.61	3.66	3.82	3.93	3.71	3.61	3.47

Employee class	Active duty	Civilian	Reserve	Contractor	Public Health Service*	Auxiliary*
n=	5,519	1,354	466	215	46	5
Average	3.56	3.62	3.58	3.39	3.87	4.50

* Please note small sample sizes produce less reliable results.

The Coast Guard is currently reviewing the Q12™ project to determine if it will be offered again in fiscal year 2003. ☒

For more information about this topic, see the following Web sites:

Coast Guard headquarters Q12™ project: www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on “Q12 Survey”)

Series of Flag Voices on the Q12™ concepts: www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/flagvoice/firstbreakall.htm

Toll-free Diversity Phone Line Available

The diversity information phone line provides an informational source for all Coast Guard people with questions or concerns about workforce diversity issues. The phone line is staffed weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time). Voice mail accepts messages when the line is busy or not attended. All calls are returned.

Calling the diversity information phone line does not constitute bypassing the chain of command.

However, all personnel are encouraged to seek answers or resolve issues through the chain of command before calling. Whenever possible, callers will be assisted in solving problems by working with and through their chain of command. Callers may remain anonymous but must provide a means of contact if they leave a message that requires a response.

The phone number is 1-800-242-9513 or 202-267-6942. ☒

Leadership Training Underway

by Lt. Cmdr. Bill Kelly, CGC Spencer

Have your shipmates been frustrated because they couldn't get a seat at a Leadership and Management Course? I'll bet you've heard at least once or twice, "All those folks ashore get the quotas for schools, and we never get to go because we're always underway!" Well, our commanding officer, Cmdr. Chris Sinnett, heard that quote during several personnel departure briefs, and he decided it was time to set the CGC Spencer's leadership training initiative in motion. The Spencer dedicated a significant portion of underway training time toward leadership training, and it exceeded our expectations.

The Spencer made time during a November/December 2001 homeland security patrol to present the complete unit leadership program curriculum located on the Coast Guard's leadership Web site (www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm; click on "Leadership," then "Unit Leadership Program"). We used the lesson plans provided and adapted them for use on board. We solicited instructors from the wardroom and chiefs' mess, and we also hand-picked two first class petty officers to provide training. We started by

dedicating time to "training-the-trainers." Fortunately, we had a good cross section of training and curriculum development experience among our crew. Their preparatory work was critical to the success of the program.

The crew was trained in groups of 12-15 people for the majority of the courses. However, we were able to provide the ethics and hazing modules to a third of the crew at a time (groups of about 33 people) on the mess deck and helicopter hanger. Crew scheduling was a challenge, but the training officer worked with watch coordinators and department heads to ensure 97 percent of the crew attended 100 percent of the training.

Afterwards, we conducted a survey to assess the training's effectiveness and found that the crew valued the training, appreciated the commitment by the entire unit and wanted to continue the training on an annual basis. One other interesting note – this was our last patrol prior to Tailored Annual Cutter Training, and some thought we should dedicate time to extra general emergency and general quarters drills. What we learned was that leadership training

reaped definite benefits at TACT; our junior members became more interactive and their performance improved. The unit performed at an exceptionally high level, and the Spencer earned the Battle "E" for the first time in four years.

The bottom line – leadership training underway takes a significant, sustained effort and commitment by all. However, our crews deserve quality leadership training and the return on time invested is quick, observable and significant – it enhances performance in all other shipboard disciplines. ❖

Note from the Leadership Division Chief (G-WTL-2): Bravo. Debate continues on the effectiveness of leadership training. Some Coast Guard people wonder if leadership training is worth the time and effort. Others question if it should be secondary, in all cases, to technical training. The Spencer's experience, although only one example, shows the payoff when such a program is correctly implemented.

The Unit Leadership Program is on the Web at www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on "Leadership," then "Unit Leadership Program").

Two Coast Guard Women Stand Out for Their Distinguished Leadership

by Lt. j.g. Libby Rasmussen, Coast Guard Headquarters (G-WTL)

Two Coast Guard women were recognized for their outstanding leadership during the annual Women Officers Professional Association symposium August 1-2 in Washington, D.C. WOPA is a national organization supporting the professional development of its Navy, Marine and Coast Guard members. In 2001, WOPA established two Coast Guard leadership awards to be presented annually – one for officers and one for enlisted. This year, Lt. Charlene Downey was awarded the Capt. Dorothy Stratton Leadership Award, and Chief Petty Officer Stacey Dolly was awarded the Master Chief Petty Officer Pearl Faurie Leadership Award. Both awards were named for exceptional women leaders at the forefront of women's entry into the Coast Guard.

Lt. Charlene Downey was recognized for her outstanding leadership while assigned to Group Hampton Roads, Va., for the period of June 2001 to May 2002. Downey was the acting group commander on Sept. 11, 2001, when she provided immediate guidance to group officers-in-charge, prompting them to take direct action. Her response ensured the port of Hampton Roads was secure, and she was instrumental in laying the foundation for homeland security operations and making the port of Hampton Roads the model for ports throughout the country.

During Operation Noble Eagle, Downey inspired those under her direction to maintain operational readiness, awareness and productivity through extended deployments and long hours. Concerned for crew fatigue during this heightened period, she brought in reservists to supplement station and group personnel, allowing some relief to those permanently assigned.

Downey, a talented boat operator, managed hundreds of search and rescue cases, several of which were high-risk and required precise planning and execution. Most notable was her management of the response to a boat fire in the Chesapeake Bay in which four lives were saved.

Chief Petty Officer Stacey Dolly was recognized for her outstanding leadership while assigned to Training Center Cape May, N.J., for the period of June 2001 to May 2002. As a lead company commander, Dolly led companies of 120 recruits through an eight-week boot camp. From June 2001 to May 2002, Dolly graduated five recruit companies producing a total of 359 new seaman apprentices for the Coast Guard. This achievement had a positive impact on the entire Coast Guard by providing apprentices that are ready and able to serve their country with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Dolly was involved with numerous projects that had base-wide im-

pact at the training center. As a key player in the design and implementation of a new company commander school curriculum, her experience and expertise resulted in better training for new company commanders. Dolly exemplifies what the Coast Guard values most in its personnel. She demonstrates dynamic leadership qualities on a daily basis and inspires the cooperation and confidence of those around her. ☒

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Article Submissions

We need your articles on leadership and diversity issues and best practices. Article length should be 400 words or fewer.

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LEADERSHIP ESSAY

Developing Your Leadership Muscle

by MCPO William Michael, Pacific Area

“Stacy, I want you to pivot, fake and drive to the basket for a lay-up.” I have used this direction many times when coaching youth basketball. If you have ever played or watched basketball, it likely means something to you. However, if you are 7 years old and you’ve never played basketball, this command is barely your language, let alone understandable.

What does youth basketball have to do with leadership? In the above scenario, the coach of this 7-year-old will likely not get the desired result. The player simply doesn’t understand what is expected of her. To get the desired result, we have to go back to the day of practice. At practice, the players repeatedly do the correct motions over and over. Coach John Wooten of the UCLA Bruins coined the term, “muscle memory,” for this type of practice.

You use muscle memory for the routine tasks you do everyday – the way you tie your shoes is one example. Likewise, you must develop your leadership muscle memory from early on. In the Coast Guard, when we get new people at our unit,

we must begin their leadership training right away. The training should begin with a well thought out indoctrination plan (job qualification requirements, performance qualifications, etc.). This builds on a principle they began to learn in recruit training called followership. They must practice each task perfectly. If they develop a bad habit early on, it is extremely difficult to repair later. Dogging a hatch, passing a line, making a security round and acting as a boarding team member are all practiced skills. Trainees should learn to do them perfectly in the training environment, so in the heat of battle (fire, flooding, HIV boarding, etc.), the team can trust that the task is done right. The success of the mission and the safety of the crew depend on it.

It’s the same thing with leadership. The simple act of a fireman or seaman demonstrating how to correctly perform a task is the purest form of leadership! As that fireman or seaman advances, they pick up leadership and training habits from their supervisors. Supervisors must be vigilant in ensuring their people are teaching, training and leading ap-

propriately. Any evidence of inappropriateness must be stopped and corrected. The safety of the crew and mission success depends on it. If the trainer yells, badmouths or has a bad attitude, what do you think the trainee picks up on? If the trainee is always being yelled at for mistakes, will that line be tossed confidently in heavy weather? If the trainer is constantly badmouthing the Coast Guard, the unit and the command, will the new person have any confidence in the Coast Guard, the unit and the command? Probably not. In times of high stress, this can lead to disaster.

While you might say, “If leadership is so important to the Coast Guard, why does it begin its leadership training so late in the person’s career?” That’s passing the buck. You (officer in charge, chief of the boat, chief’s mess) are responsible ... it is your job. Formal training is helpful and can add sharpness to your leadership edge, but only if you have the knife ready to be sharpened. Start their leadership training early. Don’t just be an example, be a perfect example! ❖

15 Steps to Professional Development

“Spitting on Superman’s Cape” and Other Dos and Don’ts Throughout Your Career
by Capt. Richard Houck, Seventeenth Coast Guard District

1. Under promise, over deliver.

Never commit to something you cannot deliver. When negotiating deadlines or deliverables, be 100 percent confident that you will meet or exceed expectations. Deliver before your deadline. Do more than expected – include extra touches (executive summary, talking points, implementation plan, slick packaging, graphics of complex data, etc.).

2. Volunteer and search for good opportunities.

Throughout your career, you will be assigned many special projects, collateral duties and odd jobs. Be proactive and volunteer for collateral assignments where you can excel or from which you will grow and learn. Let your supervisors know that you are interested in special projects that will help you grow.

3. Ask for help. It is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Whatever your current task, someone else has already done a similar project and has learned from the inevitable mistakes. Find these people so they can help you avoid pitfalls and improve your project. Look outside your unit and the Coast Guard – experience may reside in a neighbor who works for another office, unit, agency or company.

4. Choose your battles wisely.

Remember the song about spitting on Superman’s cape. Nothing is more futile than fighting a lost cause. If you choose to fight for something, make it worth your effort.

Corollary: Choose your enemies wisely.

Inevitably, we all elect to make someone our enemy, either by taking an opposing position on an issue or just because we don’t like them. Either way, make sure that you are willing to have that person/organization as an enemy. Be ready to defend yourself next time you face off (which may be on your enemy’s turf and timeframe).

5. If it’s broken, fix it so it won’t break again.

When you find something broken (a process, system or piece of equipment), find out why it’s broken and fix it

so it won’t break again. Take the opportunity to dissect the process and find ways to improve it (facilitator training may help you better understand this process). Leave it in the best condition you can.

6. Know your strengths and talents.

Exploit them. Choose assignments where you will excel. Seek help from those who have different, but complementary talents. Design your workplace to exploit your strengths.

Corollary: Know your weaknesses.

Improve them through classes, reading, special assignments and challenges.

7. For ethical or difficult decisions, answer these three questions:

- Would I want my mom and dad to know what I did?
- What will I say to millions of viewers (and my neighbors) when “60 Minutes” questions me on my decision?
- Is this how I want to spend my tax dollars?

8. Meet every deadline.

Assignments don’t get easier or go away if you procrastinate. Late work is career suicide. If there is no possible way you can meet a deadline, let your supervisor know and renegotiate it as soon as you know it might be late.

9. As a supervisor, you are successful when your most important job is writing awards for your crew.

Your job is to ensure your subordinates excel and that they have whatever money, materials, time, training and direction they need to do their jobs. Help them achieve their goals by giving them opportunities to learn and grow.

10. Your bosses should have it easy.

Give them what they want ... before they know what it is. Make your bosses look good. If your bosses can take leave anytime they want, you’re succeeding. Unwanted surprises are bad. Pass bad news as soon as possible with a plan for mitigating the damage.

11. Establish a personal support system.

We all need emotional support, a safe place to blow off steam and be heard. Keep your personal life healthy, including spouse, children, friends and family. Don't be afraid to seek professional help early (marriage counseling is better than divorce proceedings). Good health, proper diet and routine exercise are requirements to be effective at work.

12. Aim as high as you can.

Even if you don't hit your target, you'll still be higher than most everyone else.

13. Establish personal goals and priorities.

Set your own daily, weekly, annual, tour, career and life goals. Set daily priorities that support your goals and answer the question, "What is the most important thing that I can do right now?"

14. Use retrospection and introspection liberally and regularly.

Sit back and ponder ... know your values, goals and mission. Be sure your work matches your beliefs.

15. Never use absolutes like "always" and "never."

It's much easier to eat your words or soften the blow when you use phrases like "it appears that" or "I don't understand how this will work."

Bonus Steps (Remember #1 – Under Promise, Over Deliver!)

- If you think you're good, try supervising in a volunteer organization.
- Read all about it. Keep learning and growing. Find new interests and skills.
- Find a mentor/be a mentor. They are invaluable for growth.
- If you're not having fun, something's wrong. Figure out why and correct this problem (which could involve changing your career but more often requires shifting your attitude).

- "Justice prevails" and "life is fair." Don't try to ensure justice is served. In the long run, everyone gets what they deserve (good and bad). Justice happens, even though you may not be aware of it.
- Learn to trust your intuition: It's usually right. Intuition is probably your most underused talent. When used, it will be your best sounding board and an early warning system.
- Innovate, initiate, explore, discover, question. Don't be afraid to jump into the fray. Feel free to tell the emperor that he has no clothes on (but don't tell anyone that their baby is ugly).
- When defeat is inevitable, cut your losses and perform damage control. You can't win 'em all. Know the losers. Admit defeat. Retreat to fight another day.
- Consensus decision making isn't necessarily unanimous. Consensus requires everyone to understand the reasons behind the decision; they can still disagree with the decision. If you ask people to vote on a decision, be ready to accept the majority's decision.
- Success is a result of hard and sometimes unpleasant work. Don't sit at home waiting for Lady Luck to knock on your door ... turn to and make your millions (or achieve whatever goal you have). ☒

Adm. Thomas Collins, Coast Guard commandant ...

... on leadership:

"Great leaders are great communicators. They set the right priorities, challenge existing conditions, create a workplace environment that rewards teamwork, practice what they preach, push accountability and authority, and put people first."

... on diversity:

"Diversity is terribly important. We need to be active in recruiting geographically and across different ethnic, cultural, racial and educational backgrounds."

Visit the Leadership and Diversity Web site for:

- Leadership Training Courses
- Commandant's Reading List
- Innovative Leadership Initiatives
- Unit Leadership Program
- Diversity Training Modules
- Career Central
- Mentoring Information & Guidance
- Individual Development Plan

www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm

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