Leadership Development

Ten Ways to Get the Best Out of Your Squadron

Unlike a business and military organization where everyone answers up the line and the CEO has the last say, in the US Power Squadrons the membership determines the course we will follow.

A few years ago, the organizational charts used in Operations Training were changed to show the members at the top, the Districts and Squadrons in the middle and the National Bridge at the bottom.
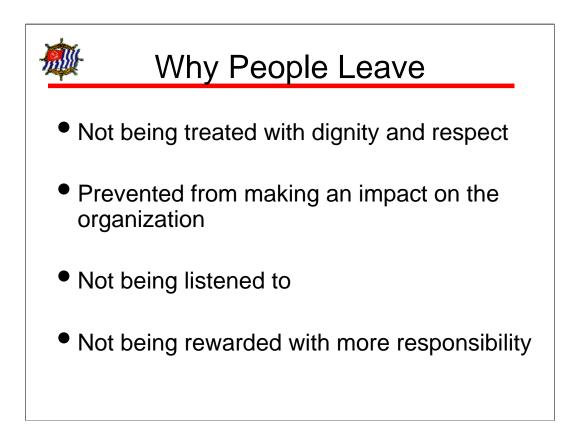
As leaders and potential leaders in USPS, we need to remember that _we serve at the favor of the membership._

So how can we become leaders who get the best out of our squadron or committee? Here are some strategies that have proven to be successful in other organizations.
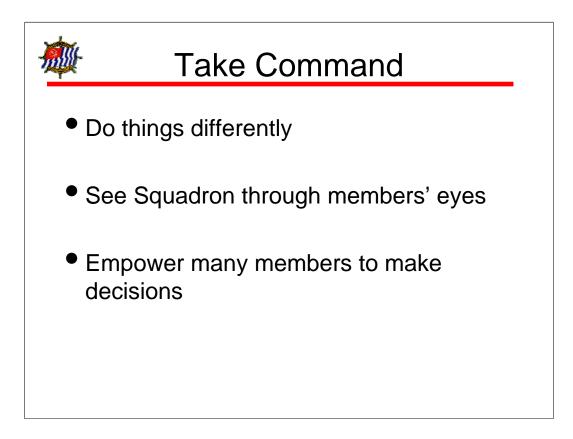
10 Ways

1. Take Command
2. Lead by Example
3. Listen Aggressively
4. Communicate Purpose & Meaning
5. Create a Climate of Trust
6. Look for Results not Salutes
7. Take Calculated Risks
8. Go Beyond Standard Procedure
9. Build up Your People
10. Generate Unity

1. Take Command

2. Lead by Example

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Why People Leave

- Not being treated with dignity and respect

- Prevented from making an impact on the organization

- Not being listened to

- Not being rewarded with more responsibility

"What are some of the reasons people leave organizations?" ?

• Not being treated with dignity & respect

• Prevented from making an impact on organization

• Not being listened to

• Not being rewarded with more responsibility

Take Command

- Do things differently

- See Squadron through members' eyes

- Empower many members to make decisions

Number 1: Take Command

•As leaders or potential leaders we need to do things differently than in the past.

•Perhaps there were too many micro-managers in the past.

> We need to be able to take command but also see the squadron through the eyes of the membership.

> Only then can we find out what's really wrong and then, with the help of our members fix it.

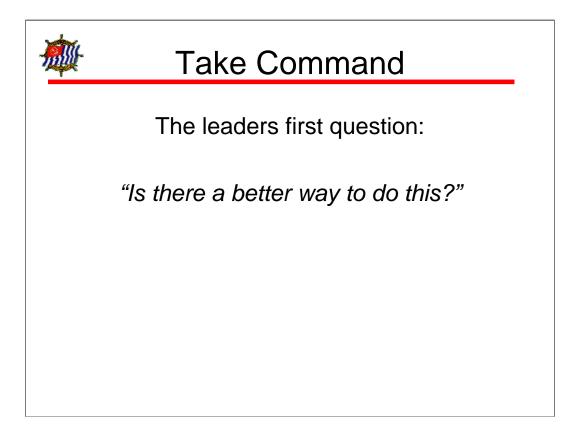•The Squadron Commander can't possibly do everything that is required during his or her watch.

> Therefore, it is necessary to empower many members to make decisions that will result in meeting the squadron's goals.

> Empowering means defining the parameters in which people are allowed to operate and then setting them free.

> Whenever possible, the leader should delegate and facilitate versus direct the unit.

> It's his job to create the climate that enables members to unleash their potential.
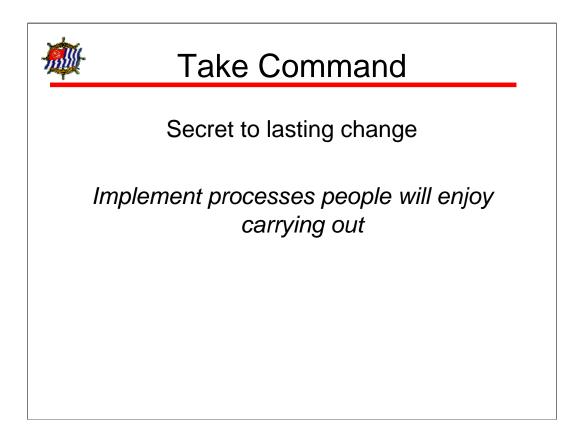
> Given the right environment, there are few limits to what people can achieve.

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Take Command

The leaders first question:

"Is there a better way to do this?"

While the leader needs to set goals and objectives, it is the people who will collectively attain them. Contrary to tradition, there may be a better way to do things and the members are the ones who have the insights on how best to do them.

The leader's first question should be "Is there a better way to do this?

Then when a new way of doing things is recommended, it should be supported (as long as it does not conflict with Squadron, District, and National bylaws and the goals of USPS).

Take Command

Secret to lasting change

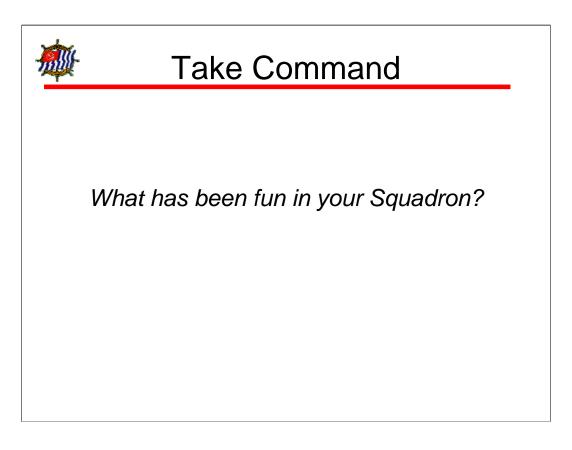*Implement processes people will enjoy carrying out*

So how can change be effected and maintained to improve USPS?

The secret to lasting change is to implement processes that people will enjoy carrying out.

So we need to encourage members to find better ways to do their jobs and also to have fun doing them.

And sometimes, we ought to have fun for fun's sake.

Take Command

What has been fun in your Squadron?

What has been fun in your squadron?

Perhaps it's the new pot luck dinners you have for monthly meetings. Perhaps it the chili cookoffs or weekend raft-ups.
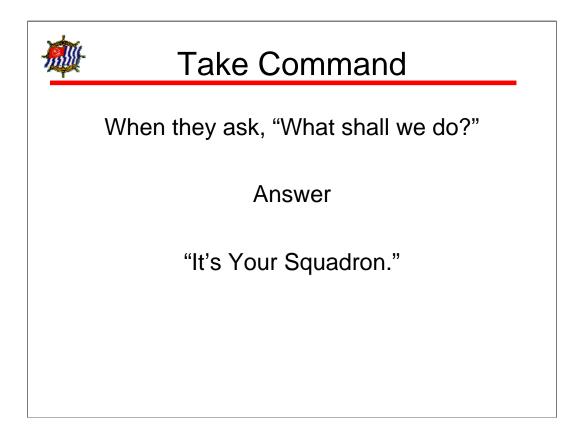
Has someone suggested a new event? Why not try it?

How can we have more fun teaching the Public Boating Course?

Is there a better way to teach advanced grades and electives?

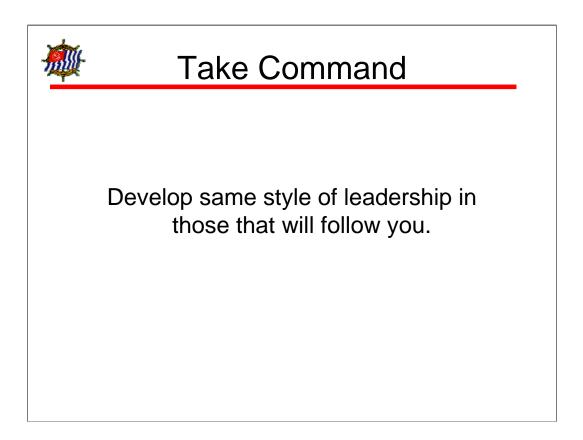Is there a better venue for your classes? How about times of the week?

Not everything that you try will be successful, but if your membership sees that you support their efforts and do not punish their mistakes they will come up with more and better ideas in the months ahead.

Take Command

When they ask, "What shall we do?"

Answer

"It's Your Squadron."

Why not set a goal for your squadron or committee to be the best in USPS?

When members ask "What should we do?",

Why not answer them "It's your squadron." "You tell me what we should be doing."

Take Command

Develop same style of leadership in
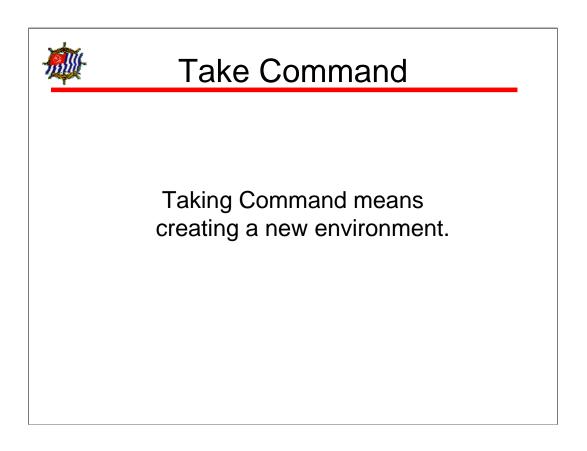those that will follow you.

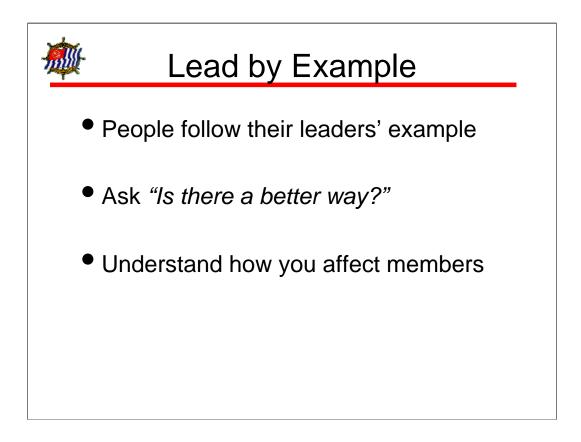The job of squadron commander is normally a one-year assignment.

In a way that's not enough time because the commander only begins to create the environment needed to encourage change.

In my year as commander our squadron received several awards. But those were the result of the efforts and leadership of my predecessor.

So it becomes important for current leaders to develop the same style of leadership in those who will follow.

Take Command

Taking Command means
creating a new environment.

Taking command in the new USPS means creating a new environment where members are collaborators who flourish in a relaxed discipline of creativity, humor and pride.

Lead by Example

- People follow their leaders' example

- Ask *"Is there a better way?"*

- Understand how you affect members

2. Lead by Example

•Squadron commanders can not accomplish their goals by ordering it done. People follow their leader's example. If they see you not attend a certain event they think it is not important for them to attend. If they see you not follow a USPS policy, they think it is all right for them to break it too.
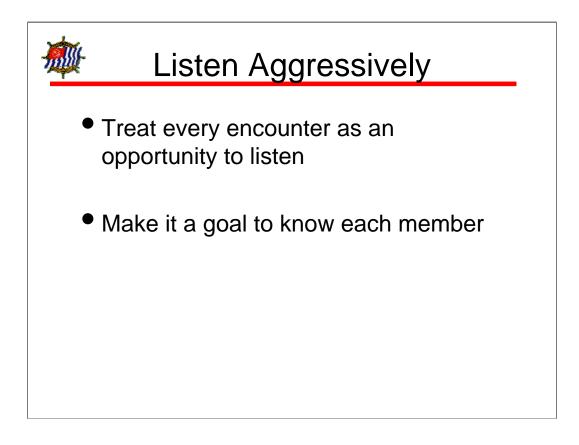
If you always ask, "Why do we have to do it that way? "Is there a better way?"

> Your members will get the message and start developing better ways before coming to you.

Leaders need to understand how profoundly they affect the people around them, how their optimism or pessimism are equally infectious, how directly they affect the tone and spirit of people around them.

> Have you ever entered your boss's office and he did not even look up from what he was reading? How did that make you feel? Have you ever had your idea shot down by your boss or squadron commander? How did that make you feel?

> On the other hand, we all know people in USPS whose enthusiasm and positive attitude is infectious. There seems to be nothing they can't get accomplished and they make everyone around them feel the same way.

Listen Aggressively

- Treat every encounter as an opportunity to listen

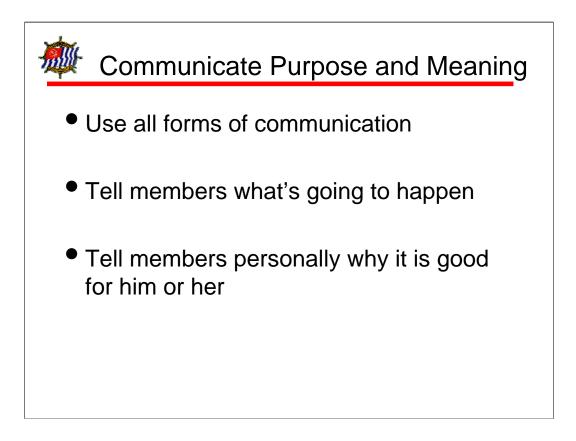- Make it a goal to know each member

3. Listen Aggressively

•Being a good listener is not part of our culture. In fact, we are taught to be independent thinkers and doers from an early age. But, to get the most out of our squadron we need to be really listening to our members. Why not make it your personal goal to treat every encounter with a member as an opportunity to listen to them?

•Why not make it your goal to see the squadron through the eyes of its members?

Why not make it your goal to get to know each member? Why did he or she join? What talents do they have that could benefit the squadron? What do they like the most about your squadron? What do they like the least? What suggestions do they have to improve?

The better we know our members the more we can become their supporters in improving our organization.

When we know our members we can interest them in positions where they can best use their talents and abilities.

Communicate Purpose and Meaning

- Use all forms of communication

- Tell members what's going to happen

- Tell members personally why it is good for him or her

4. Communicate Purpose and Meaning

•Communications is very important to fostering the right climate. The changing world requires that we change USPS to keep in step.
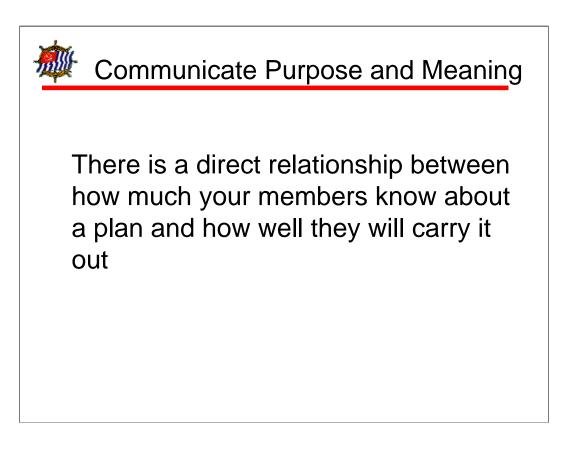
> Leaders must constantly be using all forms of communication – email, newsletters, web site postings, and talks at dinner meetings - to keep in touch with members.

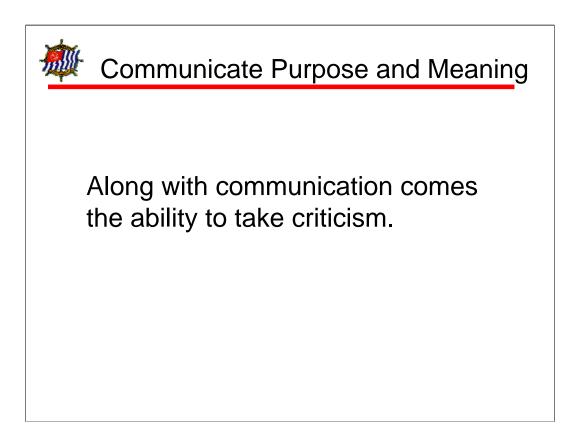•Change frightens people and their fears thrive in silence.

> The antidote is obvious. Keep talking.

> Tell members what is going to happen, new procedures, new jobs, and new events.

•Tell everyone personally what's going to happen and why it is good for him or her.

Communicate Purpose and Meaning

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Communicate Purpose and Meaning

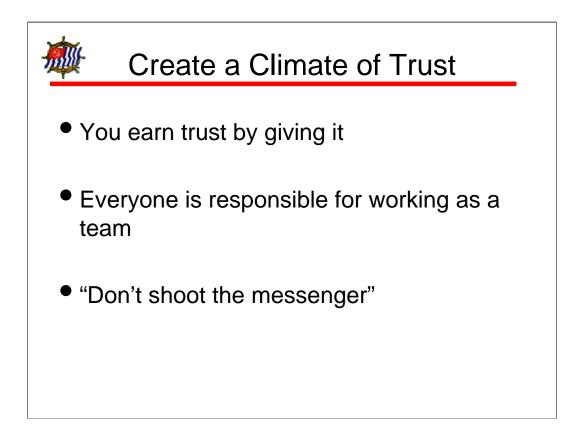Along with communication comes the ability to take criticism.

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We should be doing a post review of all our major activities.

Members should be made to feel free to criticize and give constructive suggestions.

Squadron commanders need to leave their egos at the door and listen to all members.

Once they see that you are able to take criticism and that you listen to suggestions they will feel free to make more in the future.

Create a Climate of Trust

- You earn trust by giving it

- Everyone is responsible for working as a team

- "Don't shoot the messenger"

5. Create a climate of trust

The best way to keep the squadron on course for success is to give the members all the responsibility they can handle and then stand back and let them do their jobs.

You have to earn trust and you earn it by giving it.

•Is there distrust in your squadron? Is the Education Department fighting with Admin? Is boating activities feuding with meetings?
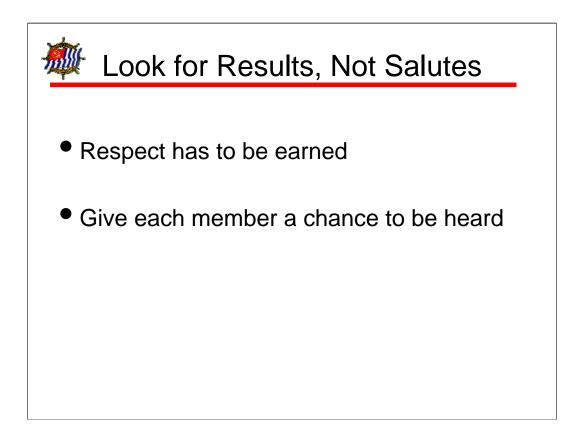
The only way to create a strong squadron is to make it clear that everyone is responsible for working as a team.

When committee chairs start working together to achieve the goals of the squadron their members will communicate better and figure out ways to help each other.

•We have all heard the phrase "Don't shoot the messenger."

An important aspect of trust is creating an atmosphere where members are not afraid to tell leaders when things are not working.

The only way to focus the squadron's energies on achieving your goals is to ensure that problems are identified and corrected as early as possible.

Look for Results, Not Salutes

- Respect has to be earned

- Give each member a chance to be heard

6. Look for results, not salutes

•The USPS organization structure is similar to the Navy. In the Navy sailors are expected to salute the Captain and other officers whenever they go by.

> Some Squadron Commanders treat members as if they were sailors. They expect them to show respect for their position.
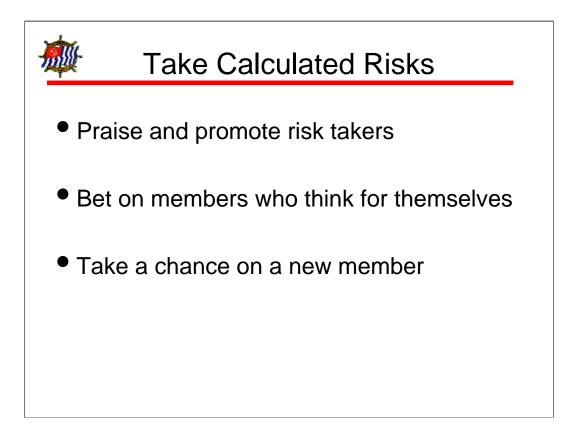
> But respect is something that has to be earned.

•We started this talk by pointing out that we officers serve at the pleasure of the membership.

> Therefore we should work with all members, regardless of position, to further the goals and objectives of the squadron.

> Given the chance to be heard, every member has an idea or two that may well be the one to make your squadron the best in USPS.

> When leaders believe they are above their people, when they announce their decisions after little or no consultation, when they make it clear that their decisions are not to be questioned, things are ripe for disaster.
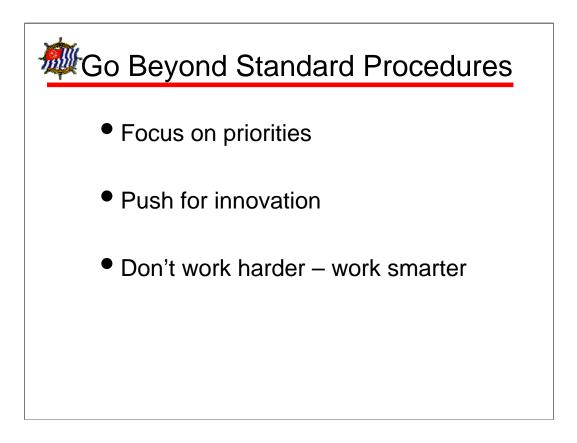
Take Calculated Risks

- Praise and promote risk takers

- Bet on members who think for themselves

- Take a chance on a new member

7. Take calculated risks

•A squadron that aims to stay alive should make sure to praise and promote risk takers even if they fail once in a while.

> Show me someone who has never made a mistake and I will show you someone who is not doing anything to improve your squadron.

•Bet on members who think for themselves.

•Take a chance on a new member who has suggestions for improvement.

Go Beyond Standard Procedures

- Focus on priorities

- Push for innovation

- Don't work harder – work smarter

8. Go beyond Standard Procedure

While USPS has the Operations Manual that describes in detail how the organization is to be run, you will rarely get outstanding results simply by following Standard Operating Procedure.

> In this time of dwindling membership, squadrons at risk especially need to keep their priorities in focus. For them, increasing membership is a key priority and this can be accomplished at least in part by holding Public Boating courses. Some other activities expected of squadrons can be minimized or eliminated.

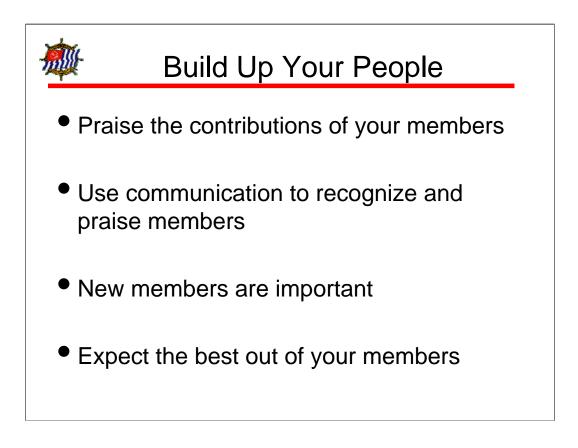Good leaders know when to push the envelope for innovation.

> If your squadron has a novel approach that is not according to SOP don't be afraid to suggest its implementation.

> Improvements in USPS only come about because someone was willing to try a new approach.

•Don't work harder. Work Smarter. There are many examples of this in USPS. Look at how much easier it is to keep track of membership with DB2000? Remember what it was like for squadron treasures before we had direct billing?

> One of the most well kept secrets of USPS is the enormous amount of material available to assist members in whatever area they are assigned.

> Squadron Commanders should ensure that members are aware of their job descriptions and the availability of manuals and computer programs to assist them.

Build Up Your People

- Praise the contributions of your members

- Use communication to recognize and praise members

- New members are important

- Expect the best out of your members

9. Build Up Your people

•Positive, personal reinforcement is essential to effective leadership.

> Take every opportunity to praise the contributions of your members. The pay we get in USPS, besides a merit mark once each year, is the satisfaction for a job well done and the thanks we get from fellow members.

•Use every method of communication to recognize and praise your members.

> Mention them in newsletter articles. Send thank you notes via email or snail mail. But most importantly, take the time to personally thank them.
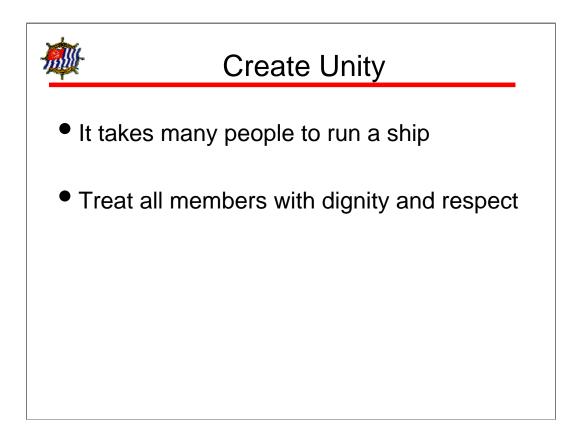
> Whenever possible praise them in public so that other members can see that you are truly appreciative of performance.

> Recognize all contributions no matter how small. The member who sweeps the floor and puts away the chairs after a meeting is just as important as the member who led the meeting is.

•New members are important. Treat them well.

> One area that we need to become much better at in many squadrons is how we welcome and include new members into our activities.

•Expect the best out of your members and you will get it!

Create Unity

- It takes many people to run a ship

- Treat all members with dignity and respect
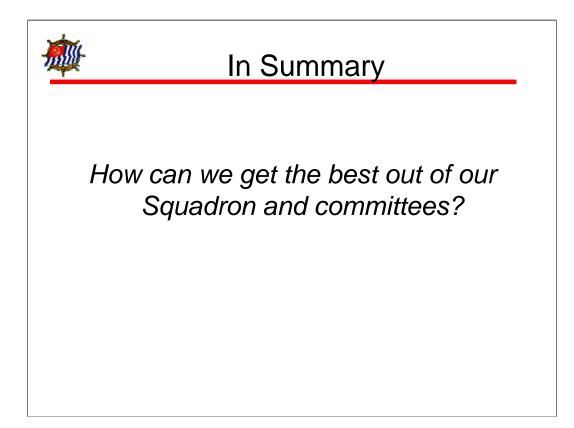
10. Create Unity

•In some ways the squadron in USPS is just like a ship. It takes many people to run a ship and the only way to get the most out of the ship is for everyone to be working together.

> The task of the leader is to assemble the best team possible, train it, then figure out the best way to get members to work together for the good of the organization.

•Our squadrons are composed of people from many cultures, occupations and ethnic backgrounds.
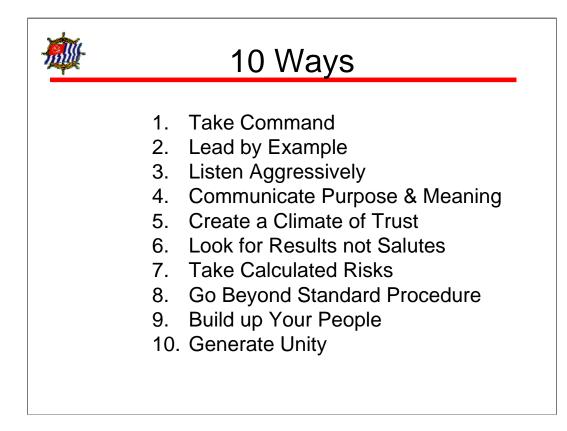
> Leaders should treat all members with dignity and respect.

> We need to make all members want to belong to our club ready to give their best to a fair-dealing organization that clearly values them no matter their background.
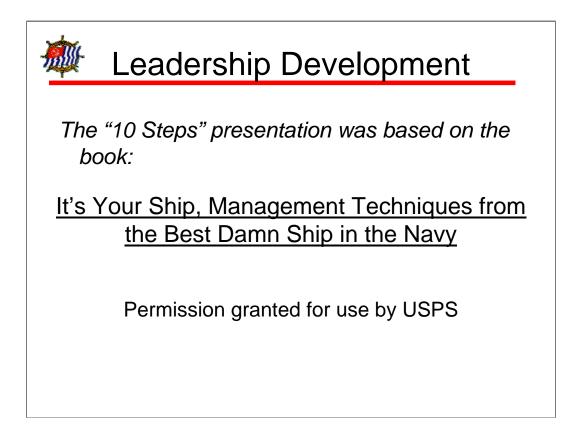
In Summary

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Leadership Development

The "10 Steps" presentation was based on the book:

<u>It's Your Ship, Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy</u>

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Note: This presentation is based on the book:

"It's Your Ship, Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy," by Captain D. Michael Abrashoff, former commander, USS Benfold, Warner Business Books, New York, 2002

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