



## **Deck Plate Leadership Series**

### **Improving Unit Engagement**

**USCG Leadership Competency:** Leading Others: Team Building

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Describe the six ways to improve unit engagement
- Assess what stage the flotilla or division is at.

**Time Required:** 25 – 30 minutes

**Facilitator Activities:** Present slides, providing amplifying information from material below. Facilitate discussion with last slide – Where are We as a Flotilla? Slides can be copied three-to-a-page with line for notes if projector is not available.

**An engaged unit is a highly effective team. Unit engagement is one of the toughest challenges faced by Flotilla and Division commanders today.**

**Overview Information for the Facilitator:**

In this block of membership training we will be looking at ways to improve unit engagement. Often 10-20% of the membership is active and carries the other 80-90%. We need to work to reverse these percentages.

An engaged unit is a highly effective team. Unit engagement is one of the toughest challenges faced by Flotilla and Division commanders today. As time passes, it can be difficult to keep your unit motivated and determined to go the extra mile. Members can quickly become complacent and end up doing the bare minimum to get by. It is crucial to keep your members motivated and satisfied, with plenty of opportunities for development and upward mobility.

1. **Be a leader they can believe in and lead by example.** Caring managers that take a strong interest in their members are much more likely to have a satisfied and engaged team. Concentrate on building strong relationships with your team members and show interest in both their Auxiliary and personal lives. Learn what is important to them. Make a special point to engage those with the Auxiliary longer than five years, as this is when engagement is most likely to decline or stagnate. Recognize individual contributions and offer incentives to top performers that exceed expectations.
2. **Empower your employees.** Give your members the ability to make decisions and offer input in order to keep their engagement and job satisfaction high. Provide them with the necessary resources to go above and beyond their responsibilities. Create a sense of



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ownership so that employees have direct control over their projects and can take pride in a job well done. Provide growth opportunities to keep your team motivated to work hard and focused on upward mobility.

3. **Build a positive work environment.** Create a Flotilla/Division culture that promotes positivity and give your unit opportunities to interact with each other on a personal level, have fun, and blow off steam. Show respect to work life balance. Members are more likely to work hard and go the extra mile if they know you respect their personal time and health.
4. **Build confidence in your members.** Be hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise.” Take the time to recognize hard work and achievements of all magnitudes to keep members motivated and on the right track.
5. **Give feedback.** Feedback is more important now than ever, as younger generations thrive on input regarding how they can improve. Provide opportunities for coaching and training to teach members new skills and identify where hidden talents may lie. Mentorship and shadowing programs can be a valuable tool for younger unit members as well.
6. **Measure member engagement.** Dynamics within your Flotilla/Division are sure to change over time. You will need to gather metrics on member engagement, as you will most likely need to adjust your strategy at some point. Surveys and in person interviews are both great ways to get a better understanding of engagement levels at your unit. Make sure that your team members are comfortable enough with you to be honest about challenges they may be facing. Honesty should be rewarded and members need to know they are in an environment where they are safe from repercussions. This is a continuous process, so make sure to keep checking in with members and adjust your strategy accordingly.

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