
**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
THE BASIC SCHOOL
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019**

**OFFICERSHIP
FOUNDATIONS
B1X0856
STUDENT HANDOUT**

Officership Foundations

Introduction Officership foundations focuses on developing foundations for your authority as an officer of Marines and the leadership ability you should possess in order to successfully lead your Marines.

Importance Leading Marines is one of the privileges of holding a commission in the US Marine Corps. Marine officers are responsible to their Marines to give them the best leadership possible. Officership foundations give you the tools to improve your leadership abilities.

In This Lesson Some of the topics covered in this lesson can give you an edge on understanding and analyzing leadership ability. This lesson helps you identify your own strengths and weaknesses and gives you techniques to improve them.

This lesson covers the following topics:

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Learning ObjectivesTerminal Learning Objectives

MCCS-LDR-1015 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, describe the Marine Corps Leadership Principles to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2101 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, know yourself and seek self-improvement to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2102 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, be technically and tactically proficient to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2103 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, develop a sense of responsibility among your subordinates to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2104 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, make sound and timely decisions to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2105 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, set the example to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2106 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, know your Marines and look out for their welfare

MCCS-CORE-2107 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, keep your Marines informed to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2108 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, seek responsibility and take responsibility for your action to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2109 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, ensure assigned tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2110 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, train your Marines as a team to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2111 While serving as a Marine Corps officer, employ your command in accordance with its capabilities to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

Enabling Learning Objectives

MCCS-CORE-2101a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, be physically and mentally tough to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2102a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, be a warfighter to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2104a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, decide, communicate and act to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2105a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, maintain exemplary character to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2105b While serving as a leader of Marines, apply the Marine Corps leadership traits to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2106a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, be devoted to leading Marines 24/7 to support the mission of the Marine Corps and maintain combat readiness.

MCCS-CORE-2108a While serving as a Marine Corps officer, describe the meaning of the commission to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.

Meaning of the Commission

According to Webster's Dictionary, a commission is a formal written warrant granting the power to perform various acts or duties. The Marine officer commission is the source document that speaks about the character of the person holding it as well as the responsibility that the person will hold.

Special Trust and Confidence

"[S]pecial trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of..." implies a presumption of worthiness and honor. It also implies that the person has the proper motivation to hold the position given.

Charge and Require

"[S]trictly charge and require...personnel of lesser rank to render obedience as is due an officer of this grade and position..." recognizes you will have leadership responsibilities. It also implies that we need good order and discipline.

Observe and Follow

"[O]bserve and follow such orders...given by the President...or other superior officers..." lets you know you are part of the chain of command. It also specifies that the President of the United States is the Commander in Chief. It also implies that you will become a good follower.

Pleasure of the President

"...[D]uring the pleasure of the President..." An appointment or commission has to be earned; there is no inherent right to have a commission. It is a privileged position.

Leadership Traits

Leadership traits are tools that Marines use to judge leadership ability. It is a metric that helps us identify our strengths and weaknesses and improve ourselves as leaders. The traits listed here are defined in the Glossary of Terms and Acronyms at the back of this lesson.

Bearing

Bearing is looking, acting, and speaking like a leader whether or not these manifestations indicate your true feelings. Some signs of these traits are clear and plain speech, an erect gait, and impeccable personal appearance.

Courage

Knowing and standing for what is right, even in the face of popular disfavor is often the leader's responsibility.

Leadership Traits (Continued)

Decisiveness	Decisiveness guides a person to accumulate all available facts in a circumstance, weigh the facts, choose and announce an alternative which seems best. Often a decision made promptly is better than a potentially exact one made at the expense of more time. Decisiveness is a bias for action.
Dependability	Dependability permits a senior to assign a task to a junior with the understanding that it will be accomplished with minimum supervision. This understanding includes the assumption that the initiative will be taken on small matters not covered by instructions.
Endurance	Endurance—withstanding pain during a conditioning hike, physical training event, etc.—is an example of improving stamina, which is crucial in the development of leadership. Leaders are responsible for leading their units in physical endeavors and for motivating them as well.
Enthusiasm	Displaying interest in a task and optimism that the task can be successfully completed greatly enhances the likelihood that the task will be successfully finished.
Initiative	Since officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) often work without close supervision, emphasis is placed on being a self-starter.
Integrity	A Marine's word is his/her bond. Nothing less than complete honesty in all of your dealings with subordinates, peers, superiors, and others is acceptable.
Judgment	Sound judgment is important because leaders must be able to quickly decide upon a correct course of action in order to gain the respect of their subordinates. Poor judgment often costs lives and time.
Justice	Displaying fairness and impartiality is critical in order to gain the trust and respect of people, particularly when exercising the responsibility as a leader.
Knowledge	Learning about current developments in military and naval science and world affairs is important for your growth and development.

Leadership Traits (Continued)

Loyalty	The motto of our Corps is “Semper Fidelis!” You owe unswerving loyalty up and down the chain of command, to seniors, subordinates, and peers.
Tact	Consistently treating peers, seniors, subordinates and others with respect and courtesy is a sign of maturity. This deference must be extended in all conditions regardless of your true feelings.
Unselfishness	Looking out for the needs of your subordinates before your own is the essence of leadership. Do not confuse this with putting these matters ahead of the accomplishment of the mission.

Leadership Principles

Leadership principles are ideas that help build on leadership traits by giving guidance on how to apply those traits when dealing with Marines and each unit.

Be technically and tactically proficient.	Before you can lead, you must be able to do the job; the first principle is to know your job. As a Marine, you must demonstrate your ability to accomplish the mission and be capable of answering questions and demonstrating competence in your military occupational specialty (MOS). Respect is the reward of the Marine who shows competence. Tactical and technical competence can be learned from books and from on-the-job training.
Know yourself and seek self-improvement.	This principle of leadership is developed through the use of leadership traits. Evaluate yourself using the leadership traits to determine your strengths and weaknesses. Work to improve your weaknesses and use your strengths. Having an accurate and clear understanding of yourself and a comprehension of group behavior helps you determine the best way to deal with any given situation. With some Marines and in certain situations, the firm, hard stand may be the most effective; however, in other situations, the “big brother” approach may work better. You can improve yourself in many ways such as reading, observing, and doing frequent self-assessments. Ask your friends and seniors for an honest evaluation of your leadership to help you identify your weaknesses and strengths.

Leadership Principles (Continued)

Know your Marines and look out for their welfare.

One of the most important principles, you should know your Marines and how they react to different situations. This knowledge can save lives. A Marine who is nervous or lacks self-confidence should never be put in a situation where an important, instant decision must be made. Knowledge of your Marines' personalities will enable you, as the leader, to decide how to best handle each Marine and determine when close supervision is needed.

Keep your Marines informed.

Marines are inquisitive by nature. To promote efficiency and morale, you should inform your Marines of all happenings and give reasons why things are to be done. This, of course, is done when time and security permit. Informing your Marines of the situation makes them feel that they are part of the team and not just a cog in a wheel. Informed Marines perform better and, if knowledgeable of the situation, they can carry on without your personal supervision. The purpose of giving out information is to be sure that your Marines have enough information to do their job intelligently and to inspire their initiative, enthusiasm, loyalty, and convictions.

Set the example.

As Marines progress through the ranks by promotion, all too often they take the attitude of "do as I say, not as I do." Nothing turns Marines off faster! As a Marine leader, your duty is to set the standards for your Marines by personal example. The Marines in your unit all watch your appearance, attitude, physical fitness, and personal example. If your personal standards are high, then you can rightfully demand the same of your Marines. If your personal standards are not high, you are setting a double standard for your Marines and will rapidly lose their respect and confidence. Remember, your Marines reflect your image! Leadership is taught by example.

Leadership Principles (Continued)

Ensure the task is understood, supervised, and accomplished.

This principle is necessary in the exercise of command. Before you can expect your Marines to perform, they must know first what is expected of them. You must communicate your instructions in a clear, concise manner. Talk at a level that your Marines are sure to understand but not at a level so low that would insult their intelligence. Before your Marines start a task, allow them a chance to ask questions or seek advice. Supervision is essential; without it, you cannot know if the assigned task is being properly accomplished. Subordinates view too much supervision as harassment; it effectively decreases their initiative. Allow subordinates to use their own techniques and then periodically check their progress.

Train your Marines as a team.

Every waking hour Marines should be trained and schooled, challenged and tested, and corrected and encouraged with perfection and teamwork as a goal. When not at war, Marines are judged in peacetime roles—perfection in drill, marksmanship, dress, bearing and demeanor. However, nothing in which they are judged is as important as their performance. No excuse can be made for the failure of leaders to train their Marines to the highest state of tactical proficiency, physical conditioning, and performance in the skills of the profession of arms. Train with a purpose and emphasize the essential elements of teamwork and realism.

The sharing of hardships, dangers, and hard work strengthens a unit, reduces problems, develops teamwork, and improves morale and esprit de corps, which molds a feeling of unbounded loyalty. This is the basis for what makes Marines fight in combat; it is the foundation for bravery, for advancing under fire. Troops do not complain about tough realistic training—they seek it and brag about it.

Teamwork is the key to successful operations. Teamwork is essential from the smallest unit to the entire Marine Corps. As a Marine officer, you must insist on teamwork from your Marines. Train, play, and operate as a team. Be sure the all Marines know their position and responsibilities within the team framework.

Leadership Principles (Continued)

Make sound and timely decisions.

The leader must be able to rapidly estimate a situation and make a sound decision based on that estimation. Hesitation or reluctance to make a decision leads subordinates to lose confidence in your abilities as a leader. Loss of confidence in turn creates confusion and hesitation within the unit.

Once you make a decision and discover it is the wrong one, do not hesitate to revise your decision. Marines respect the leader who corrects mistakes immediately instead of trying to bluff through a poor decision.

Develop a sense of responsibility in your subordinates.

Another way to show your Marines that you are interested in their welfare is to give them the opportunity for professional development. Assigning tasks and delegating the authority to accomplish tasks promotes mutual confidence and respect between the leader and subordinates. It also encourages the subordinates to exercise initiative and to give wholehearted cooperation in the accomplishment of unit tasks. When you properly delegate authority, you demonstrate faith in your Marines and increase their desire for greater responsibilities. If you fail to delegate authority, you indicate your lack of trust and confidence in your subordinates and their abilities.

Employ your unit in accordance with its capabilities.

Successful completion of a task depends upon how well you know your unit's capabilities. If the task assigned is one that your unit has not been trained to do, failure is very likely to result. Failure lowers your unit's morale and self-esteem. You would not send a motor transport operator to operate a TOW missile, nor would you send three Marines to do the job of ten. Seek out challenging tasks for your unit, but be sure your unit is prepared for and has the ability to successfully complete the mission.

Leadership Principles (Continued)

Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions.

For professional development, you must actively seek out challenging assignments. You must use initiative and sound judgment when trying to accomplish jobs that are not required by your grade. Seeking responsibilities also means that you take the responsibility for your actions. You are responsible for all your unit does or fails to do. Regardless of the actions of your subordinates, the responsibility for all decisions and its application falls on you as the unit leader. You must issue all orders in your name. Stick by your convictions and do what you think is right. Accept justified and constructive criticism. Never remove or demote a subordinate for a failure that is the result of your own mistake.

Horizontal Themes of Officership

The mission of TBS is to “*train and educate newly commissioned or appointed officers in the high standards of professional knowledge, esprit de corps, and leadership required to prepare them for duty as company grade officers in the operating forces, with particular emphasis on the duties, responsibilities, and warfighting skills required of a rifle platoon commander.*” To do this, TBS focuses on five critical areas:

- **A Man or Woman of Exemplary Character**
- **Devoted to Leading Marines 24 / 7**
- **Decides, Communicates, and Acts**
- **Warfighter**
- **Mentally and Physically Tough**

Horizontal Themes of Officership (continued)

Man or Woman of Exemplary Character

- Has a clear understanding that a Marine commission brings with it “special trust and confidence” and the highest expectations of the American people
- Devoted to our Corps values of honor, courage, and commitment
- Possesses a moral compass that unerringly points to “do the right thing” – an ethical warrior

Devoted to Leading Marines 24/7

- Embraces the “exceptional and unremitting” responsibility to one’s Marines and their families
- Inspires and instills confidence in his/her Marines during times of adversity
- Sets the example in all things and at all times
- Adheres to and enforces standards regardless of time of day, location, or duty status
- Treats all Marines and Sailors with dignity and respect
- Dedicated to a lifetime of study and learning about the profession of arms

Decides Communicates and Acts

- Can think critically and arrive at an acceptable decision based on sound tactical thinking within their commander’s intent
- Communicates clearly both orally and in writing in tactical and administrative situations with emphasis on issuing clear, meaningful orders and guidance
- Has a bias for action – seizes the initiative and acts instead of waiting for the perfect sight picture or direction from higher
- Once action is initiated, acts with boldness and determination

Warfighter

- A competent combat leader, grounded in basic infantry skills, and characterized by sound judgment and aggressiveness in execution
- Educated in the fundamentals of maneuver warfare, tactics, combined arms, and time-tested principles of battle
- Maintains an offensive mindset throughout – proactive not reactive

Mentally and Physically Tough

- Imbued with a warrior spirit and able to thrive in a complex and chaotic environment and persevere despite the obstacles to mission accomplishment
 - Possesses the self-discipline and will to push past preconceived limits
-

Summary

Leadership traits and principles are metrics that allow the student officer to analyze his/her leadership abilities and work to improve them. The goal of being able to provide good leadership to subordinates is never-ending and we should strive to *Know ourselves and seek self-improvement*.

References

Reference Number or Author	Reference Title
BSO P5000.2E	TBS Academic Regulations
MCDP 1	Warfighting Armed Forces Officer Marine Corps Manual The Marine Officer's Guide

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Term or Acronym	Definition or Identification
Bearing	The outward manifestation of personality or attitude.
Courage	Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.
Decisiveness	Having the power or quality of deciding.
Dependability	Capable of being relied upon; worthy of trust.
Endurance	The ability to withstand hardship or adversity; especially the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity.
Enthusiasm	An occupation, activity, or pursuit in which such interest is shown.
Initiative	Energy or aptitude displayed in initiation of action.
Integrity	Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.
Judgment	The ability to weight facts and possible solutions on which to base sound decisions.
Justice	The quality of being just; righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness.
Knowledge	Acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation; general erudition. A familiarity or conversance, as with a particular subject or branch of learning.
Loyalty	The quality of faithfulness to commitments or organizations.
MOS	Military occupational specialty
NCO	Noncommissioned officer

