



5351  
16 May 2011

## MEMORANDUM

From: P. M. McMillin, CAPT  
Civil Engineering Unit Oakland

Reply to: LT McPherson  
Attn of: 510-535-7254

To: COMDT (CG-133)

Subj: 2011 SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN CONTEST

Ref: (a) ALCOAST 104/11

1. I am pleased to nominate the men and women of CIVIL ENGINEERING UNIT OAKLAND (CEU-O) and the MISSION READINESS PRODUCT LINE (MRPL) for the 2011 Spotlight on Leadership Campaign Contest. Our campaign was initiated by four junior officers who called themselves the 'Leadership Product Line' (LPL). It was a genuinely grassroots effort which combined novel technology with old fashion peer leadership to gauge our office's feelings on leadership. The resulting eye-catching posters provided insight into the collective understanding of the competencies and served as catalysts for ongoing discussions about leadership in our lives.
2. The campaign was elegant in its simplicity and compelling in its execution. It consisted of an online survey about the leadership competencies, word cloud depictions of the survey results, analysis of the word clouds, and numerous discussions combined with an all-hands presentation.
  - a. First, Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) was used to query the office about the four campaign leadership competencies: followership, respect for others, process improvement, and partnering. Questions were deliberately open ended and did not allude to the Commandant's definitions. A fifth question was added about the meaning of the term 'MRPL' (CEU Oakland's proposed unit name after modernization). The LPL used their personal networks and lobbying to bolster the final response rate to an impressive 60%. Answers were completely anonymous which generated more open and honest feedback.
  - b. Next, survey results were fed into Wordle, a word cloud generator ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)). Word clouds are innovative graphics which use word sizing to show word use frequency. Wordle excludes common words (e.g. it, and, the) and provides a number of other display options. The LPL selected a simple theme for contest deliverables and for office posting.
  - c. After the word clouds were generated, each member of the LPL was assigned a word cloud and the results for one survey question for deeper analysis. They looked for interesting themes, outliers and overall alignment with the Commandant's definitions of the leadership competencies. Short write-ups were crafted and inserted below the corresponding word cloud to create five posters.
  - d. The five posters were distributed via email and the LPL presented the campaign and survey results at an all-hands meeting. This sparked numerous ad-hoc discussions and email exchanges which in turn fed further refinements of the poster write-ups.
  - e. Finally, the five posters (enclosures 1-5) will be framed and mounted in the office where they will continue to act as discussion pieces to keep the topic of leadership in our minds.

16 May 2011

3. The results and insights derived from the leadership campaign ran the full spectrum of understanding and opinion. They varied from respondent to respondent and from question to question. The final posters representing the collective opinion of the office are described herein:

a. The responses for *followership* and *respecting for others* were the most aligned with the Commandant's competency definitions. Key words within the word clouds and the in-depth analysis of the survey results revealed strong beliefs that being a good follower and respecting others are part and parcel to being a leader. Incidentally, the *respect for other* discussion complemented the training on the repeal of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

b. The responses for *process improvement* were less aligned with the Commandant's definitions. Though not immediately apparent from the word cloud, the survey results revealed a focus more on process efficiency than process improvement. The difference being that process efficiency may look to improve and evolve the current process while process improvement aims to leverage innovation to make a leap to a new and better process.

c. The responses for *partnering* were also less aligned with the Commandant's definitions. The survey result revealed that many respondents understood partnering to mean working well with others parts of our office and other parts of the Coast Guard. While this is critical to the success of our operation, it missed the point that external partnerships with other agencies and industry groups are valuable tools to improve how we do business.

d. The question about *MRPL* was added to address ambiguity about how modernization was impacting our office. Given the importance of modernization to the service's senior leaders there is a natural emphasis on the change. The responses confirmed the local ambiguity and revealed that while a subset of the office works on standing up the nationally focused MRPL, the rest of the office continues to execute projects in support of units on the west coast. An effort was made to capture and clarify the current and planned changes but ultimately it is known that, like modernization, change management and communication will be ongoing.

4. Beyond the results, the processes used by the LPL demonstrated a high level of creativity and applicability to large and geographically separated commands. I thoroughly enjoyed how our campaign was initiated by four non-supervisory officers. Their use of an anonymous survey and personal cheerleading effectively sparked participation from members of the office who may otherwise have passed on the opportunity. The posters displayed the results in an innovative and eye-catching way and taught us all about word clouds in the process. Even the tongue in cheek labeling as the LPL leveraged current lingo recognition and served as a nice nod to our service's modernization efforts.

5. I am exceptionally proud of the Leadership Product Line for initiating and carrying out CEU Oakland's participation in the leadership campaign. It was a fun event and an insightful experience for many of the members and leaders in our office.

#

- Enclosure: (1) Word Cloud Poster - What does 'followership' mean to our office?  
(2) Word Cloud Poster - What does 'respect for others' mean to our office?  
(3) Word Cloud Poster - What does 'process improvement' mean to our office?  
(4) Word Cloud Poster - What does 'partnering' mean to our office?  
(5) Word Cloud Poster - What does 'Mission Readiness Product Line' mean to our office?









