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Snapshot Size-Up #133

LEADERS TEACH

Some people like to debate whether leaders are made or born. The most likely answer would be that some true leaders are born, but most are made – “self-made”. A smart fire officer will concentrate on developing the leadership qualities and traits that are necessary for success.

In this diagram, I list the 13 leadership traits that firefighters – and the public – look for in a fire service leader. Officers, and firefighters in general who regularly demonstrate these leadership traits, will earn the respect and confidence of their peers. The acronym **LEADERS TEACH** can be used to remember these traits – *Loyal, Educated, Adaptable, Determined, Enthusiastic, Reliable, Selfless, Tough, Empathetic, Assertive, Courageous, and Honorable*. The 13th trait is the acronym itself. *Leaders Teach* what they know to others. They understand that the majority of quality leaders within their organization will not come from the top, but from the middle of the organization.

As important as it is to understand what makes a good leader, it's equally as important to understand why so many fail in leadership positions. On the right side of the diagram is a quick list of some traits associated with poor leadership. They are: *Lack of passion, Unclear vision, Poor communication skills, Risk aversion, Callous, Unethical, Poor self-management, Incompetent, Plays the victim, Tears others down, Micromanager, First to take the credit, Last to take the blame*.

When someone in an authoritative position displays poor leadership traits, the mission they are trying to accomplish is doomed to fail. A fire service officer will never earn the respect of his or her crew unless they develop the qualities that align with those of great leaders.

For more on Leadership Traits, check out our officer development section at www.FireOpsOnline.com.



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