

ACTION CENTRED LEADERSHIP AND ITS EVOLUTION WITH THE ROYAL NAVY

INTRODUCTION

The history of formal leadership training in the Royal Navy can be traced back to the establishment of a Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth in 1733 for boys who wished to be Royal Naval Officers. The academy as well as providing professors to teach mathematics and languages also included Naval Officers to oversee the boys in the military and leadership aspects of training.

Following this early establishment of an academy, the training of Naval Officers then moved to the Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), Dartmouth in 1905, where it remains to this date. Although, the training of Naval Officers' at Dartmouth dates back to 1863, when HMS BRITANNIA was moored in the River Dart and training was conducted on board. The training philosophy of BRNC has remained similar throughout this time and is encapsulated within its present Mission Statement:

"To train and educate Young Officers to meet the challenging standards of the front line"

The College has changed markedly over the last century, however, what has not changed is the ethos of the establishment. BRNC is there to develop young men and women from civilians into fit, professional and compassionate leaders, proud of themselves, the uniform they wear, and the traditions, they represent. Action Centred Leadership (ACL) is pivotal to this ethos and is taught to the new Royal Naval Officers, with practical opportunities to put into practice the theory and the transferable skills of the 3-circle theory afforded. The young officers are then able to leave the BRNC ready to become the next generation of front line Royal Naval Officers.

It was not until after the Second World War that the Royal Navy started to focus its' leadership training efforts towards the training of Non Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and Ratings, setting up units to formalise the leadership training of these personnel. Since then there has been a gradual increase in the amount of formal Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) training within the Service. This CLM training for NCOs and ratings is presently conducted at the Command Training Group (CTG), MWS COLLNGWOOD.

LEADERSHIP OF YOUNG OFFICERS AT BRITANNIA ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE (BRNC)

With a number of exceptions, BRNC train officers who have just joined the Royal Navy. The age of the Young Officers (YOs) varies from the youngest at 18, to the oldest in

excess of 40 years. This wide age differential is due to BRNC taking both schools leavers, University Graduates, and individuals, which have been selected, from the Ratings Corps for promotion to Commissioned Officer. The BRNC, Leadership mission statement is:

“To ensure Cadets realise the leadership potential identified at the Admiral Interview Board (AIB)”.

At BRNC, therefore, there is a vast range of knowledge and experience, which requires to be developed to meet the current requirements of the Fleet.

The first phase of the BRNC, New Entry (NE) training is known as the militarisation phase, where the YOs undertake two leadership modules, Basic Leadership Development (BLD) and the Assessed Command Exercise (ACE). It is during BLD that many of the YOs gain their first insight into the requirements of being a leader. The module consists of both theory and practical. In the theory the YOs discuss the reason why the Navy needs Commissioned Officers, and what they think will be expected of them when they join the Fleet. During one of the lessons this position is graphically illustrated by a scene from Saving Private Ryan, where after the troops landed on the beach, in the heat of an intense battle, a young recruit turns to the Lieutenant and says *“What now Sir?”* The intention of this theory is to give the YOs an insight into the need for a leader and the basic principles of leadership, before giving them the opportunity to apply this teaching within a practical environment in Command Assessed Tasks (CATs).

All leadership modules are very much designed to get the YOs thinking about the qualities required of a leader and how to develop the skills required to effectively lead a team. BRNC has moved away from the idea that leaders are born, and try to instil the idea that we all have innate leadership skills, but need to understand what these skills are in order to realise and develop them. The YOs also discuss how leadership is about getting things done, and that it is more than just achieving the job in hand; it has to do with training, preparation and organising for the future. Throughout these early stages the staff at BRNC explain how one of the most fundamental levels of leadership comes down to an individual’s personality and character.

The theory that a group of people with a common aim or task has various needs which must be met if they are to be successful is further discussed and broken down into the 3 areas of Action Centred Leadership (ACL) in that the leader must:

- a. Achieve the task.
- b. Build and develop the team.
- c. Develop the individual.

Moving into the Functional Leadership arena, Adair's Model of Task, Team and Individual helps to demonstrate what appears to be an extremely complex subject to some, but is in fact quite straightforward and mainly common sense. The Adair 3-circle model is used as a demonstration point and the YOs think about how the importance of each circle alters depending up on the task in-hand. This changing importance is illustrated by the use of examples i.e. a fire on board a ship within a Main Machinery Space (MMS). With the MMS example the Task becomes the most obvious priority for the Leader. However, when training is conducted for various scenarios, the welfare of the Individual along with the need to develop the Team becomes the Leader's main focuses.

The BRNC staff also draws out from the YOs that all of the 3 circles have an influence up on each other and that they are inter-related. Within the Service the Functional Leadership model has proven to be:

- a. Simple and easy to understand.
- b. Easily used by all individuals, covering a wide variety of backgrounds.
- c. The model works and has been proven to work: whether that being in combat in the Operations Room of a ship under attack, on the bridge while transiting in convey or during standard day-to-day routine tasks of maintaining the ship and her company.

The Functional Leadership process that the YOs are provided with is known within the BRNC as the 'Big Six'. This is a logical, common sense sequence that it can be applied to all situations, not just during the College's CATs. The Big Six are: Aim, Plan, Brief, Execute, Evaluate and finally Communicate.

As part of BLD and ACE, Leadership and Actions checklists are offered to the YOs. These checklists relate the leadership functions BRNC call the Big Six, directly relating to Adair's 3-circle model. These handouts have proved to be a useful and handy reminder of the steps involved with carrying out a task effectively.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING OF NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND RATINGS WITHIN THE ROYAL NAVY

The NCOs received some leadership development as part of their professional training from as early as 1741, but specific leadership training is a much more recent phenomenon, dating from the 1940s and formally at HMS ROYAL ARTHUR.

With the Royal Navy's uniquely long and successful history dating back through the days of the Spanish Armada, the Napoleonic campaigns and more recently the conflicts of the Falkland Islands, Baltic and Gulf wars. It has been the ability of Naval Officers, the NCOs and Ratings of the Service, which has inspired their subordinates to undertake feats of bravery and endurance in the face of danger.

The Royal Navy has always seen itself as an organisation with a wide and diverse range of people. It was the increase in Leadership and Management understanding in the 1950s and 1960s that led to realisation that more than just basic leadership and Naval skills were required. Since the early 1990s a more systematic understanding of the Leadership and Management skills is acknowledged of being required of potential 'leaders'. The three interactive circles of 'Action Centred Leadership' (ACL) theory then became the underlying bedrock, helping to forge a new beginning for the leaders within the Royal Navy both within the Officer and Ratings Corps.

For the Ratings Corp, the 1990s saw a significant development towards formal CLM training. This development included the move of the Royal Naval School of Leadership and Management (RNSLAM), HMS ROYAL ARTHUR to HMS EXCELLENT in the January of 1993. At this time there were two formal Leadership Courses, which ran in tandem: one for NCOs, mostly Petty Officers, and the other for Leading Rates. These courses were the Petty Officers' Leadership Course (POLC) (4-weeks in duration) and the Leading Ratings' Leadership Course (LRLC) (2-weeks in duration). Following the completion of formal training, a more effective and efficient 'leader' emerged from the main gates of HMS EXCELLENT. These 'leaders' were then ready and armed with the transferable skills with which to face the challenge of 'taking charge' and a will to inspire their people with a new found sense of direction. However, in the early days, the three-circle theory of ACL was not fully utilised within the wider remit of the Fleet. This shortcoming was quickly identified and a more active approach to ACL was then afforded, by revising the way in which ACL was taught and increasing the practical exercises that the students undertook. This renewed approach has enhanced and strengthened the understanding and utilisation that the students gains of ACL.

The Royal Navy's first fully integrated Maritime Warfare School (MWS), at HMS COLLINGWOOD was inaugurated on Tuesday 15 January 2002. This instigation marked a new era in naval leadership training of its' NCOs and Ratings; especially with the Royal Naval School of Leadership And Management (RNSLAM) moving from HMS EXCELLENT to HMS COLLINGWOOD and being renamed the Command Training Group (CTG). This move was the beginning of a very exciting, invigorating and challenging period for the Royal Navy as a whole and the MWS in particular. This was the next stage in the evolution of training the Royal Navy as a world class Navy "Ready to Fight and Win". The Royal Navy continued developing its' training techniques and continued to educate motivated individuals, instructing them in the invaluable skills of ACL in a more robust and dynamic way. Subsequently, this revised approach, enabled the future Royal Naval 'leaders' to be recognised as 'Superior Officers' in their own right, with them more able to undertake the challenges of the 21st Century. The foundation of the revised leadership teachings, emanating from the CLM doctrine taught at CTG, where the students are strongly encouraged to practice the principles of ACL.

One of the major elements of the Royal Navy's success will be its' advancing technology. However, if it were not for the quality, commitment, attitude and professionalism of the men and women of the Service this technology could not be put into practice. Therefore, without doubt, the Navy's strongest and most potent asset is its people.

THE COMMAND TRAINING GROUP

The Command Training Group (CTG) holds the Royal Navy's responsibility for conducting bespoke CLM training for all NCOs and Ratings within the Service. This training is primarily delivered through a 5-day outdoor team building course to the 'Phase 2' trainees with 8 to 14 weeks service and two Command Courses taught, varying in length from 2 to 4 weeks. However, leadership development is a continual process throughout an individual's career.

Phase 2 - Outdoor Leadership Training Course

This 5-day course is aimed at introducing and developing the team building potential of our most junior of ratings. The course offers these ratings instruction in the basic theoretical and practical aspects of team building and basic leadership. These Phase 2 trainees are given the opportunity to take charge of a small team conducting simple tasks under the supervision of the training staff.

By the end of this short introduction to leadership each trainee will have demonstrated their ability to: contribute to team performance, support the leader, contribute to defining the objectives and discussing the way forward prior to accepting the delegated task/s and achieving the aim. This course is the first opportunity that the Service has to identify the potential future leaders of the Royal Navy in delivering the CLM aspects of the Fleet.

Leading Ratings' Command Course

To train personnel to be effective Leading Rates by developing their leadership qualities, instilling a sense of purpose, improving self-confidence, developing effective communication and understanding the responsibilities of a Leading Rate.

The following subjects are covered: Action Centred Leadership, motivation & morale, stress, communication, delegation, naval discipline and punishment, first aid, duties and responsibilities, problem solving and brain-storming sessions, security and financial responsibility. Physical activities, which account for nearly 50% of the course, include team obstacle course runs, a 25-30 mile trek across country using map and compass, daily physical exercise, swimming tests, parade training, and Directed Command Tasks (utilising ACL). There are various discussion periods and problem solving exercises. Additionally, each student delivers two lectures of their own choice in order to develop the art of good communication and enhance personal confidence when 'out the front' of others.

Candidates on this course must be a Leading Rating or Able Rating selected for promotion, of any branch within the Royal Navy.

Students are continually assessed throughout training, with a comprehensive report, outlining course performance and future potential, is compiled by subject expert instructors and forwarded to a promotion board on completion of course.

Senior Ratings' Command Course

The primary aim of this course is to develop Senior Ratings (NCOs) to lead personnel in the Fleet.

The following subjects are covered: ACL and situational leadership, including 70% practical Management, communication exercises, motivation & morale, stress management, naval discipline regulations, first aid, duties and responsibilities, security, decision making and problem solving scenarios, general naval knowledge, parade training and lecturing. Physical activities, which account for a significant part of the course, include team obstacle course runs, a 30-40 mile problem solving trek across the Brecon Beacon mountain range utilising map and compass and Directed Command Tasks. There are various periods devoted to management discussions and brainstorming sessions. Additionally, each student delivers a formal assessed lecture to help develop the art of good communication and personal confidence.

Candidates are Leading Ratings passed for Petty Officer or above up to Acting Chief Petty Officer, of any branch within the Royal Navy.

Again students are continually assessed with a comprehensive report, outlining performance and future potential, it is compiled by subject expert instructors and forwarded to a promotion board on completion of course.

The Command Training Rationale of 'Getting Things Done'

CTG has developed the 'Getting Things Done' Model in order to give the CC students an understanding of how Command interacts with Leadership and Management in order to achieve the task. This model is then used extensively during all practical scenarios.

Command – The Authority

Command gives the individual the authority to direct military forces -

'In the defence context, authority is vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, co-ordination and control of military forces'.

Management – The Ability –

Management is the ability to achieve objectives with the resources available –

'In the defence context, management encompasses the ability of commanders to analyse situations, organise resources (human, material, financial and time), execute decisions and control activity through the systems and processes that control and maintain the activity of an organization'.

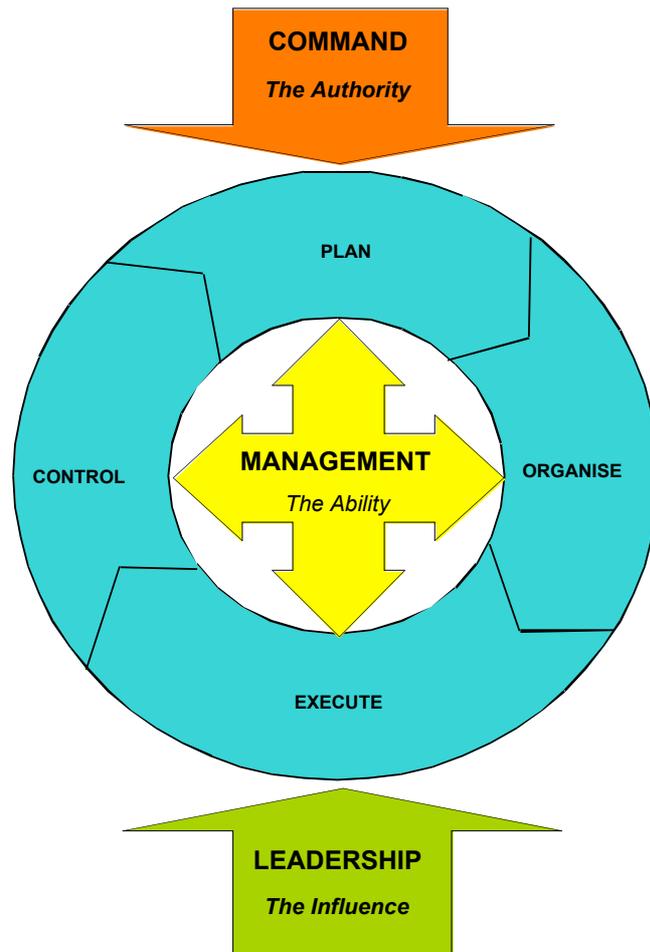
Leadership – The Influence –

Leadership is the influencing of others to willingly do what you wish them to do –

'In the defence context, leadership encompasses the cognitive skill, personal qualities, behaviour and military ethos required by commanders to inspire the commitment of others.'

The above comments are the mechanisms for:

'Getting Things Done'



Action Centred Leadership and Command Training within the Royal Navy

Despite the loss of Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar the British Fleet was still victorious. Why? Because Nelson had a clear aim and he inspired people to give their best efforts with all they undertook in every situation. Furthermore, he planned his strategy with his Senior Officers and Captains and they in turn were aware of what was required of them during the forthcoming battle. These Senior Officers were then encouraged to translate the broad outline of the Admiral's plan so that the officers and men in their individual units understood the battle concepts.

"No captain can do very wrong who places his ship alongside that of the enemy."

Vice Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson

Nelson's strategy clearly demonstrated that communication and the ability to disseminate policies and plans are a fundamental requirement when directing a force. Furthermore, Nelson was deeply committed and passionate about the Royal Navy, the people who served with him and his belief, enthusiasm and commitment permeated down through the squadrons to the ships' companies which he commanded, encouraging them to give maximum effort whilst sustaining morale.

The Royal Navy ethos of being "Ready to Fight and Win" is our inbuilt attitude to achieve the aim, through whatever shape of formal leadership training that has been undertaken by the individuals within the Service. Action Centred Leadership is a solid foundation of how the Royal Navy operates and manages to 'Get Things Done'. The Royal Navy also recognises what a potent and effective leadership tool ACL is and it is inherent in our leadership development programmes and our future 'leaders' leave the Command Training Group understanding what benefits it can offer.

Task Function

- a. Define the task.
- b. Make a plan - (Identify contingencies).
- c. Briefing the group - (Communication).
- d. Allocating work and resources - (Delegation).
- e. Controlling the quality and tempo of the work.
- f. Keeping informed of the progress in all areas.
- g. Checking team and individual performance against the plan.
- h. Adjusting the plan - (Remedial/Flexibility).
- i. Checking the aim has been achieved.

"There are costs and risks to a programme of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inactiveness"

John F Kennedy

Task Function

- a. Involve the team in planning.
- b. Ensure that team members know each other's task.
- c. Set team standards and priorities.
- d. Appoint sub-leaders and maintain discipline.
- e. Maintain team spirit.
- f. Ensure communication within the team.
- g. Encourage and keep the team informed of progress.
- h. Training and developing the team.

"It is that intangible force which will move a whole group of men to give their last ounce to achieve something without counting the cost to themselves; that makes them feel they are part of something greater than themselves"

Field Marshall Sir William Slim

Individual Function

- a. Attend to personal problems.
- b. Praise individuals.
- c. Encourage, reward and motivate.
- d. Provide a challenge.
- e. Recognize and use individual abilities.
- f. Respect others.
- g. Train and develop the individual.
- h. Every individual enjoys job satisfaction.

“You can buy a man’s time, you can buy his effort. But when you hand over his wage packet it contains nothing for enthusiasm, for self-respect or loyalty. These things the average man is ready to give freely in return for evidence that he personally counts, and the job he does is appreciated.”

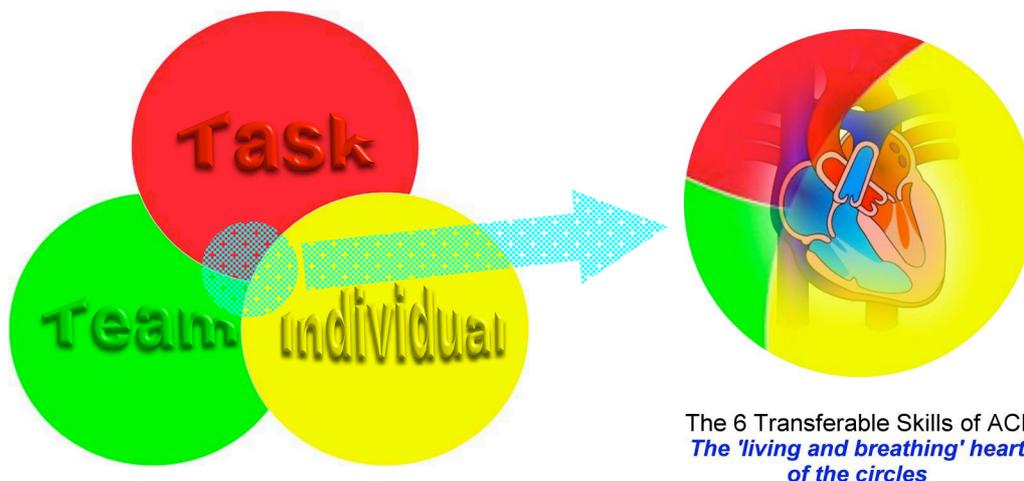
Sir Bertram Waring

The ‘Heart’ of the 3 circles – The 6 Functional skills of Action Centred Leadership

Military leadership is visionary; it is the projection of bearing, personality and character to inspire sailors to do what is required of them, sometimes in very adverse and dangerous situations. Skill in the techniques of leadership is the foremost quality in the teachings of Command, Leadership and Management within the Royal Navy and contributes very largely to the operational success throughout the world. There is no prescription for leadership and no prescribed style of leader – the Royal Navy does not promote robots. Military leadership is a combination of personal example, interpersonal skills, confidence, powers of persuasion and a compulsive will to achieve the aim. Military Leadership development aims to transform a potential ‘leader’, who has no or little concept of ‘taking charge’, into a confident, adaptable and robust person, having a thorough understanding of the needs of an individual and a balance of military qualities and professional skills. The successful military leader is an individual who understands his/her ‘full’ capabilities, has a belief and pride in the organisation they work for. They understand the environment in which they operate and, above all else, know the people that they are privileged to lead, understanding their subordinates needs.

Whatever formal leadership or management course is undertaken by Royal Naval Commissioned, Non Commissioned Officers or Ratings, the students which leave CTG do so with the knowledge that will allow them to implement the 3 circles of ACL. The 3-circle theory provides a structure, a base of knowledge, for the individuals to build upon within their own parent units. Additionally, with a clear understanding of the functional skills of ACL, that are the living, pulsing ‘heart’ of the circles, students become more effective and confident when placed in a position of authority.

The 3 circles are forever changing in size, depending on the situation, every minute of every hour, of every hour of every day. This all depends on the activity in hand, the team activity and the needs of the participating individuals. It is the 'Heart' of the 3 circles, where the circles overlap, which gives the circles vibrancy and a living entity.



At the CTG students are given many opportunities to put into practice the theories taught on course. These opportunities come in the form of Directed Command Tasks. Students are split into syndicates and a leader is nominated. The leader is then given an achievable task; additionally, certain restrictions about the task are explained and a set time frame is given. There are adequate resources available to enable the team to complete the task, but it is up to the leader to decide how to utilise these resources.

The leader is formally assessed on his/her performance and their understanding of ACL and how they transfer this knowledge from theoretical classroom to practical environment. Additionally, students are assessed on their personal bearing, enthusiasm, problem solving and decision making capabilities, as well as their overall ability in planning, organising, along with the execution of their strategy and control of each team member's efforts.

Understanding the transferable functions of ACL is an essential element to the success of any task and students are expected to:

- a. Define the Aim
- b. Plan.
- c. Brief.
- d. Execute.
- e. Evaluate.
- f. Communicate.



Furthermore, sincere encouragement and strong motivation are encouraged from the 'Leader' throughout all evolutions.

Defining the Aim

- a. Identify the task and constraints.
- b. Involve the team.
- c. Share commitments and values.
- d. Clarify individual aims.
- e. SAFETY implications.

The Planning

During the planning phase the 'Leader' must:

- a. Utilise the "SMART" principle: (Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic – Time Bound).
- b. Priorities - matching resources to the task.
- c. Listens to opinions.
- d. Consider options/contingencies.
- e. Assess the individual's skills/competencies.
- f. Delegate – individual strengths and weaknesses.
- g. Set targets and deadlines.

Briefing the plan

As the 'Leader' briefs their plan, they are to be:

- a. Clear and concise.
- b. Concrete solution.
- c. Ensure understanding from team members.
- d. Encourage questions.
- e. Time conscious.

The Execution

While the plan is being executed the 'Leader' will:

- a. Maintain standards.
- b. Quality control activities.
- c. Co-ordinate and control the team's efforts.
- d. Reconcile any conflicts.

Evaluation

As the plan is being executed, the 'Leader' will continuously evaluate the situation by:

- a. Maintaining progress.

- b. Reviewing the aim and objectives.
- c. Re-planing and Re-briefing as required.
- d. Recognize the success and learn from mistakes.

Communication

The remaining link within the 'Leader's' circuit is that of communication, where the 'Leader':

- a. Clarifies the purpose.
- b. May use a map, model or diagram to qualify the requirement.
- c. Accuracy.
- d. Logical.
- e. Structured.
- f. Sequential.

Action Centered Leadership and the Royal Navy

Action Centered Leadership and the functional, transferable skills, without doubt, work! They are one of the most valued assets in the teaching of Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) which allows the Royal Navy to train its personnel to understand the concepts of how we do our business, always "Ready to Fight and Win".

Within the Royal Navy, the title 'Superior Officer' is not awarded lightly; it is a position of responsibility and accountability. This title is afforded to individuals who are looked at by their superiors as people who can adapt to a situation, react in a crisis in adverse conditions and, above all, be decisive in action without hesitation.

The Royal Navy, MWS HMS COLLINGWOOD and the Command Training Group not only fully endorses the practices of ACL and its leadership ethos, it encourages the individuals within the Service to know how they can develop and how they can become more effective and efficient leaders.

Action Centred Leadership remains one of the most valued leadership tools within the development doctrine of the Command Training Group. ACL has encouraged great nautical leaders of the past and it still inspires Royal Naval Officers and Ratings instilling a sense of honour, integrity, pride, enthusiasm, along with a sense of belonging and the willingness to win.

"A leader is best when people scarcely know he exists. Not so good when they kindly obey and acclaim him. Worse when they despise him."

Fail to honour people, they fail to honour you. But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done and his aim fulfilled, they will say: 'We did this ourselves'."

Lao-Tzu, 5th century B.C. - Tao-Te Ching

From personal experience I have seen that from the military environment to commercial business sectors, Action Centered Leadership can be a very potent leadership tool that will help managers, of all levels, gain further credibility and confidence in their abilities - this in turn will inspire and influence their people in a far more positive and effective way; giving them a enlivened and reinvigorated sense of pride in the company they are a part of. If ACL is practiced well, and the Task, Team and Individual are all brought into the situational equation, the limits of any business are endless.

By Ex Chief Petty Officer Andrew Wadham
Leading Ratings' Command Course Instructor

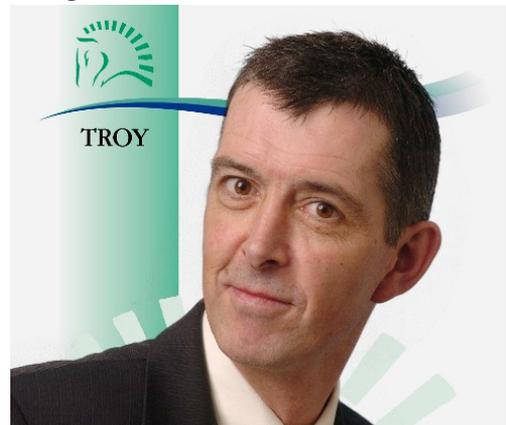
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Andrew Wadham Profile

A new recruit to the Troy Solutions Ltd - Training and Development team, Andrew is an energetic and professional team player with significant experience and a very sound track record in the teachings of Command, Leadership and Management. Andrew learned his skills at the Royal Navy School of Leadership and Management and the Command Training Group (CTG).

Joining the Royal Navy in 1979, Andrew's main role was as a Marine Engineering; however, he combined this with his secondary 'mantle' as a Chief Leadership Instructor at the CTG at HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Hampshire, where he helped train future 'Superior Officers' in all aspects of Command, Leadership and Management. These aspects of military training, coupled with the pivotal and vital concepts of Action Centred Leadership, were used to forge the leadership qualities of Royal Naval personnel. Prior to joining Troy Solutions, Andrew served as a Leadership Instructor for a cumulative time of 7 years in the Royal Navy.



Adept at coupling dynamism with very effective communication skills at all levels, Andrew possesses the ability to assimilate and disseminate information very confidently at all levels, always achieving results that are of the high standards. He leads by personal example, applying sound interpersonal and motivational skills and qualities.