

Sailor Gram

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Brilliant on the Basics – SAILOR

“Assign a Mentor”

Command Leadership Question: *Do you have an established Mentorship Program?* The foundation for success in any command can be attributed to this major component of the Brilliant on the Basics upon which every successful career is sustained. Mentorship can encourage an environment of teamwork and training that ensures mission success and the professional and personal growth of all Sailors.

Assigning a MENTOR

Mentorship is an important component of the Brilliant on the Basics. It has proven to be a cornerstone for the Navy’s best Petty Officers, Chiefs, and Officers. The guidance and lessons passed along through mentorship have been stated by senior leaders, officer and enlisted, as the key to their professional and personal success.

There are two types of mentorship, formal and informal. **Formal** is the assigning of a mentor through a command program. **Informal** is a natural occurrence that develops as junior Sailors learn through a formal program to reach out to those they desire to emulate. Formal mentoring is effective because it is professionally structured and monitored.

Formal. Establishing a command instruction for a formal program can provide basic guidance and expectations that enable leadership growth and development while creating a culture of Shipmates helping Shipmates. Providing this guidance also ensures that routine engagements occur to ensure success of the program that includes monthly monitoring and evaluation.

Studies have shown that people who are mentored are more likely to have longevity in the military, advance quicker, and have fewer disciplinary issues. This is very apparent in our successful leaders today who have grown through engagements with mentors. Communication is a key component in a successful mentor program and a mentor-protégé relationship. In order to appreciate this method of mentoring, the protégé must trust that their aspirations are valued, not only at the command level but with the person with whom they seek guidance.

Informal mentorship is a selection process made by either mentor or protégé. This usually occurs through respect for the leadership observed, or the potential that is seen through work ethic and determination to excel. When a subordinate observes another Sailor displaying traits they admire, they are more likely to seek guidance from that Sailor. The same can be said for a senior person who observes a hard working individual with a desire to learn. This method is one of respect and integrity, where Honor, Courage, and Commitment must prevail to eliminate the potential for inappropriate relationships.

The passing of the customs and traditions of the Navy has been coined under leadership, but it is through mentorship that a civilian is groomed into being a successful Sailor. Whether through a formal or an informal relationship, being a positive role model in someone’s career carries a great deal of weight in how that individual finds his or her place in the military. Who are you training to stand your watch?

I have had and continue to have many mentors in my life and my career. Each has helped to shape me as a person and a Sailor. My ability to give back today through my service has been enabled by many great leaders and mentors of which I am very grateful. – FLTCM(SW/AW/SCW) Benning

- COs, XO’s and CMC’s must live and breathe the six basic principles of leadership delineated in Brilliant on the Basics.
- Navy Ethos states: Integrity is the foundation of our conduct; respect for others is fundamental to our character; decisive leadership is crucial to our success.