

# Commander Michael Abrashoff

Commander Michael Abrashoff, turned around the operations of *USS Benfold* in twenty months (1996/97). His methods were **not complex**, yet his results were **astounding**:

- ✓ He saved the Navy \$1.4 million on the ships budget.
- ✓ The ship's combat readiness indicators were the highest in the history of the Pacific Fleet.
- ✓ The promotion rate of the people serving under him was two and a half times the Navy average.
- ✓ The pre-deployment training cycle, which usually takes a total of fifty-two days, was completed by his crew in just **nineteen** days.
- ✓ Only two crew members left the ship for health reasons (Previous Commander – thirty-one).
- ✓ No crew members were dishonourably discharged (Previous Commander – twenty-three).
- ✓ Commander Abrashoff had **100** percent of his crew sign on for another tour of duty (the Navy average is 54 percent). This alone saved the Navy another \$1.6 million.

His method?

- 1 He continuously asked **questions**.
- 2 He sincerely **listened**.
- 3 He *acted as quickly as possible* to **implement** what he had heard.

In his first interview with each crew member he asked the following questions:

- What do you like best about this ship?
- What do you like least about this ship?
- What would you change if you could?

Abrashoff set the vision – he trusted his crew. He helped people take pride in their work.

Whenever he did not get the results he was expecting, he always asked **himself** three questions:

- 1 Did I clearly articulate the goals I was trying to achieve?
- 2 Did I give people the time and resources they needed to succeed?
- 3 Did I give them enough training to get the job done properly?

He found that **eighty** percent of the time, *he was part of the problem*. Through his own actions alone, he could have altered the outcome significantly.

He claims he was driving his officers crazy, by creating a culture in which **everybody questioned everything**. He was training his people to keep their eyes open to new ways of doing business.

The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers. (Ralph Nader)