



## Welcome to the Edge Newsletter #5

This issue of *The Leading Edge* reviews the topic of communication and its relationship to command. The ability to convey messages clearly is essential for leadership. This newsletter examines some practices of good communication. We also highlight ways leaders can better communicate with their subordinates. As in previous issues, the reverse side of this document contains topic ideas you can distribute to your flight-level leaders to encourage discussion. We recommend you forward the AFPIMS link via email, post a copy on your organization's social media platforms, or send copies out via email to previous, current, and potential future course attendees.

As a reminder, *The Leading Edge* is designed to generate ideas for your courses and serve as a bridge between flight-level leadership expertise at Air University and course directors, lesson managers, and individual leaders in the field. We offer topics, tips and resources specifically targeted at the flight level.

### Course Director Corner

"I'm sorry this letter is so long, I didn't have time to write a shorter one." -- Blaise Pascal, French philosopher

The quote above, generally attributed to French philosopher Blaise Pascal in 1657, is a subtle nod to brevity -- a skill that every good leader should master. The ability to condense complex thoughts into simple and clear language is challenging and time consuming, but critical to public speaking, effective writing, and dissemination of easy-to-understand orders. Flight commanders should be encouraged to work on their communication skills continuously throughout their careers.

Communication is a core leadership function, requiring the ability to think with clarity and express ideas and information to diverse audiences. Effective communication is also about listening, asking questions, and aligning words and actions. On a daily basis, flight-level leaders need to be skilled communicators in countless relationships -- at both the personal and the organizational level. Today's leaders must also learn to handle the rapid flow of information within the flight, squadron, wing, delta and other organizations across their base. Additionally, flight-level leaders face distinct challenges in communication.

The Communication in Command lesson highlights skills and behaviors flight commanders should know and examines how communication requirements change when in a command position. In the lesson, attendees complete a personal assessment of their own communication skills and then begin to develop a plan for improvement.

Visit the AFPIMS page to download FCE experiential lesson plans and lesson guides, and the Course Director's Guide for information and ideas on how to pull your own program together.

#### Important Note:

Additional resources were added to the *Communication in Command* leadership lesson on handling difficult conversations. See the *To Learn More* area under the lesson on AFPIMS page.



### Develop a personal plan to improve your communication skills

view the

#### "Communication in Command" lesson

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME/Flight-Commanders-Edge/>

FlightCommandersEdge@us.af.mil

(Tip: Open this newsletter in your browser, then save page 2 as a PDF file to create a 1-page flyer you send out to flight-level leaders!)



"Communicate, communicate and communicate."

General Lester Lyles, USAF (Ret)

"A four-star general's leadership advice," *The Washington Post*

### Communication in Command

Read [How to Lead a Group Discussion](#)

Air University's *Squadron-Centered Learning*

Watch [Unconscious Bias](#)

Watch this 3-minute video and discuss how unconscious bias affects you and your team.

#### Questions to Consider

Why have group discussions?  
How does your flight communicate?

Ask these questions of yourself and your flight members

#### What is effective communication?

"There are three words that describe my management style: communicate, communicate and communicate." General Lyles told *The Washington Post*. "As a leader, you must communicate upward to those for whom you work, communicate laterally to those who you partner with and communicate with those who work for you. Communication also implies receiving. Sometimes it's just shutting up and listening to others."

#### Why have a group discussion?

One way to build relationships with others (interpersonal skills) is to have purposeful communication within your flight. One of the reasons to have a discussion is to generate thought and build a better understanding of a topic through the exchange of ideas. Good discussion in a group setting involves all of the members contributing their own thoughts and ideas while listening and evaluating the thoughts and ideas of others. Good discussion does not require agreement between members, but it does require civility without condemnation or mockery of anyone's contributions. For topic ideas see the [Squadron Centered Learning](#) page.

#### What communication methods work best for your flight?

Effective communication is about listening, asking questions, and aligning words and actions. On a daily basis, flight-level leaders are in countless relationships -- at both the personal and the organizational level. How does your flight handle the rapid flow of information within the flight, squadron, wing (and organizational) levels across your base? What are your methods for overcoming challenges in communication?



Visit *The Flight Commander's Edge* website

If your unit would like to create its own flight-level leadership course using professionally developed resources from Air University visit

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/GCPME>

FlightCommandersEdge@us.af.mil