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**Ten things I learned about leadership in the CIA from Mentors and OJT (PRB ver).**

**1) Be Down to Earth, Helpful, Accessible, and Humble.**

- As a leader, don't take yourself too seriously. A good leader realizes that – “you work for your people”, “they don't work for you”.
- A leadership position is not a personality trait – definite pitfall if air of too big for britches.
- Don't be “that guy/gal” – too cool, or too full of him/herself. CIA is full of type A personalities.

**2) Maintain a Positive and Inclusive Work Environment:**

- Infuse a ton of positive energy, a real key to success. You need to be the cheerleader. *(PSR Bullet: Foster a positive work environment that espouses teamwork, creativity, mission accomplishment, inclusion, accountability, professional development, and fun).*
- Keep the workplace fun, productive, full of great teamwork.
- Recognize contributions across the board.
- Managing a team in a first world location is harder than in an austere environment – first world environs tend to create drama. -
- Sarcasm is caustic, try to stamp it out. -
- Teambuilding events can be great – bottom up is best.

**3) Adapt leadership style to the work unit/environment; only add value.**

- Each team environment is different, has different people – teams can flourish with adaptive management style.
- Don't fix what ain't broke. After on the ground a while, make informed changes that positively impact mission and morale and generate better OPS/FI/CA results.
- If make a mistake, own it.

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#### 4) **Have a Plan: Key to success in the CIA**

- Play chess not checkers.
- Convey vision, mission, and tout successes – great OPS breed more OPS.
- Know the difference Between OPS and Activities.
- Racoons never get ahead – avoid a “chase the shiny optic” reactive work environment. Use pro-active engagement, strategy and planning to achieve success.
- Don’t let “perfect” be the enemy of “good enough” – don’t overthink something to death, and avoid OPS progress.
- A diversified OPS portfolio is the key to sustained success. While home runs can win games on occasion, focusing on solid base hits wins games over time. Have a laddered portfolio with different maturity dates – short/med/long term, and varying degree of statistical success (“probably will work” to “moonshot”).
- Mission, impact and camaraderie motivates a team; however, **metrics don’t motivate.**

#### 5) **Partnerships -- Be a Bridge Builder:**

- Maintaining a productive relationship is 10 times easier than rebuilding one that has been destroyed.
- Do the right thing, treat and partners well, and realize your success depends on your positive reputation established through professional interactions with partners. Bureaucratic KARMA is real: What goes around, comes around. Short term gains (at expense of your partner) always translate into a long term loss.

#### 6) **Embrace Risk and Push the Envelope:**

- HQS encourages the field to take risks to achieve the mission – smart risks.
- We only win on offense, not defense. (*Recruitments, FI reports, CA OPS – push*).
- Push aggressive and well thought out OPS.
- Consult HQS to make sure you understand “the line”, and have “top cover”.

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- Know when to stand on the line, and when not to cross the line (on particularly aggressive OPS with very high risks).

**7) Empower, stand up for, and learn from your employees:**

- Empower, support, and don't micromanage employees – encourage them to take on responsibility. Recognize and encourage professionalism – because there are two kinds of people in CIA.
- Anything that goes well should be credited to the employees; anything that goes wrong is your (as a leader's) responsibility. Trust in the workplace is key – you get it for free, but once it's gone, it cannot be recovered.
- Empathy is your biggest asset as a leader; use it. Receive mode is far more useful than "broadcast". Managing down is far more important than managing up, and any team will recognize where a leader's priorities are (down or up).
- When managing up – suggest outreach infrequently, with a defined "one stop shop" e-mail that explains strategy, status and plans. Showing compassion in an officer's time of need can make a big difference.

**8) Do the Right Thing, even when Harder than Doing the Wrong Thing:**

- Small picture -- Opportunity Cost: Focus your team on productive OPS that achieve CIA's core mission focus; don't waste time.
- Big picture – Correct Serious Problems. Lead by example, take on the hard challenges, right wrongs.

**9) Positive, open, and productive communications is key to success:**

- Be diplomatic in all communications. Two Rules of thumb: 1) if anyone could possibly be offended, they will be; and 2) assume noble intent (until proven otherwise).
- Pay particular attention to cable traffic, and never write when mad.
- Encourage and foster productive relationships between employees; defuse tension where needed.
- Only have a meeting if there an excellent reason to have one – the value of a meeting is what happens after the meeting.

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- Have an open door policy and one-on-ones; You can find out what's important to your employees.

**10) "O The Places You'll Go" -- Things will not always go your way:**

- Don't sweat the small stuff – serious issues deserve serious attention, little nitpicky things are not worth aggravation. Choose your battles. Plan for a rainy day – mindset. You've got to expect the unexpected, to be blindsided in short order, and react appropriately – and lead.
- Learn from leaders and mentors in the organization of how to handle minor setback and serious situations in a manner that inspires confidence in the team.
- When things turn serious, that is your time to inspire confidence in your team.
- Bad news does not get better with time.
- Don't try to control things you can't control, because that is wasted energy; focus on what you can impact.

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**\*Closing Remarks** -- Have fun, make an impact, and realize that this is a unique career path and organization – everyone wants to work here. It's an honor and a privilege to be selected for a leadership position. Everyone's time in CIA is finite, so make something great happen during your time here.

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