

LEADING**BLOG**

Building A Community of Leaders

[« Managers Can \(and Should\) Be Leaders | Leading Blog Main Page | Is Your Story Winning Hearts and Minds? »](#)

12.07.09

Got Wingmen? Never Fly Solo

Air Force fighter pilot Rob “Waldo” Waldman learned how to overcome fear, anxiety, and self-doubt to fly combat missions that pushed him to his limits by disciplined training and the help of his wingmen. Wingmen are people with different backgrounds, skills, and experiences unified under one agreement—to **never think or act alone**.

got wingmen?
W

A wingman watches your back. In *Never Fly Solo*, Waldo threads real world experiences to encourage the development of a **check-six culture**. *Check-six* refers to the six o'clock position where the jet is most vulnerable—the pilot's blind spot.

Waldo says, “There is a limit to how much you can learn on your own. A good wingman will give you mission-critical feedback, catch your errors, ask questions, and propose challenging scenarios to push you to grow in your skills and mental discipline.” Encouraging others to look out for our blind spots requires a great deal of mutual trust. “These trusted partners, male or female, are your wingmen.”

Of course, this means first, not being afraid to acknowledge that you need help and then being able to ask for it. This is all the more difficult if you haven't built trust in yourself and invested the time to build trusting relationships with others. You've got to “walk the flight line.” Get out and build relationships with those people you work with—treating each other as people first and coworkers second. “It's the relationships we build and the people whom we trust that give us the courage to take risks and make ourselves better.”



By being willing to say, “I don't know,” or “I messed up,” we create a transparency that will attract others to us and “create the type of environment where people won't be afraid to make mistakes. They will also be more likely to check your six as well.”

Additionally, we have to keep our “radar sweeping for a wingman, coworker, or peer who may be experiencing a challenging time in her life. Don't let her get isolated.” Be supportive and find her some help if necessary.” It is the worker that keeps to themselves—trying to fly solo—that check out, become unmotivated, complacent and careless. “Never feeling invested in the company's mission, they do the minimum, and everyone suffers.”



ABOUT

About LeadershipNow
Email Michael McKinney

SEARCH THIS BLOG

RECENT POSTS

- Best Leadership Books of 2009
- The Nature of Small Wins
- Warren Buffett on Business
- We Hire For Difference and Fire Because They Are Not the Same
- Education Makes a Difference in How We Treat Each Other
- What Prevents Me From Learning Here and Now?
- Lift: How to Be a Positive Force in Any Situation
- Is Your Story Winning Hearts and Minds?
- Got Wingmen? Never Fly Solo
- Managers Can (and Should) Be Leaders

In today's environment, communication, feedback, and mutual support are critical Waldo says because:

- Human beings make mistakes.
- We each have a limited perspective.
- We operate in stressful environments that lead to tunnel vision and task saturation.
- Most professionals undervalue communication and teamwork.
- Faulty communication can kill a mission as well as a relationship.
- Errors increase when there is no definable set of teamwork standards and skills.

“An effective check-six environment frees up communication and removes barriers to growth, so that all members of the team feel empowered to speak up and ask questions.” It also builds team confidence.

We all need wingmen and **the best way to find a wingman is to be one!**

Posted by Michael McKinney at 07:29 AM
[Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#) | [Personal Development](#) , [Teamwork](#)



TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry :
<http://www.leadershipnow.com/cgi-bin/mt/mt-tb.cgi/670>

Comments

Very insightful piece! Thank you 4 that one...the greatest enemies are usually fear & doubt.wingmen help us overcome that aspect and creates opportunities to explore more with our abilities

Posted by: [David Wainaina](#) | [December 22, 2009 04:59 AM](#)

Post a comment

(If you haven't left a comment here before, you may need to be approved by the site owner before your comment will appear. Until then, it won't appear on the entry. Thanks for waiting.)

Name:

Email Address:

URL:

Remember personal info?

Comments: (you may use HTML tags for style)

ARCHIVES

- December 2009
- November 2009
- October 2009
- September 2009
- August 2009
- July 2009
- June 2009
- May 2009
- April 2009
- March 2009
- February 2009
- January 2009
- December 2008
- November 2008
- October 2008
- September 2008
- August 2008
- July 2008
- June 2008
- May 2008
- April 2008
- March 2008
- February 2008
- January 2008
- December 2007
- November 2007
- October 2007
- September 2007
- August 2007



Preview Post

- July 2007
- June 2007
- May 2007
- April 2007
- March 2007
- February 2007
- January 2007
- December 2006
- November 2006
- October 2006
- September 2006
- August 2006
- July 2006
- June 2006
- May 2006
- April 2006
- March 2006

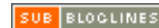
FULL SITE FEED

[XML](#) [Get the Blog RSS feed.](#)
[\[What is this?\]](#)

Subscribe by email
Enter your email address:

Subscribe

Delivered by [FeedBumer](#)



How to [link to this web site.](#)

CATEGORIES

Books
Books To Read Before You Lead
Change
Communication
Creativity & Innovation
Education
Ethics
Five Lessons
Followership
General Business
Government
Human Resources
Interviews
Leaders
Leadership
Leadership Development
Leadership Nuggets
LeadershipNow 140
Leading Views
Leadology
Learning
Lincoln's Lessons
Management
Marketing
Miscellany
Motivation
NeuroLeadership
NewsWire
Out of Context
Personal Development
Positive Leadership
Problem Solving
Teamwork
Thinking

POWERED BY
MOVABLE TYPE 3.2



[Main Page](#) | [LeadingArticles](#) | [LeaderShop](#) | [Connections](#) | [Communicore](#) | [LeadingThoughts](#)

Copyright ©1998-2009 LeadershipNow / M2 Communications All Rights Reserved

All materials contained in <http://www.LeadershipNow.com> are protected by copyright and trademark laws and may not be used for any purpose whatsoever other than private, noncommercial viewing purposes. Derivative works and other unauthorized copying or use of stills, video footage, text or graphics is expressly prohibited. LeadershipNow is a trademark of M2 Communications.