

# HOW TO CLIMB THE LADDER

Leadership, professional development and focus on goals are among the keys to successful promotion in public safety communications.

By Jonathan Jones

If you want to get promoted, you need to make yourself promotable by displaying the skills you have for the job you desire. If the manager in your emergency communications center (ECC) can't see your skills and abilities, how will they know you are the best person for the job? To win a promotion you must make yourself stand out by becoming a leader — either formally or informally.

Leadership, communications and the ability to impress others with performance at your current job are essential. It also helps to have the skills necessary to perform the job you want. Here are a few things you can do to make yourself more promotable.

## LOOK FOR A MENTOR

Choosing the right mentor can help you grow professionally and personally. A mentor can help you identify your weaknesses and give you tips and tricks for improvement.

They can also help you understand your abilities and what opportunities you have to improve. Your mentor can be someone from inside or outside your agency, but it should be someone who wants to see you succeed.

## WORK ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development can help you secure a higher position in public safety communications (and even improve your work in your current role) by polishing your current

knowledge and learning new things about the industry. This type of education improves your skills and quality of work.

Enrolling in training courses can impress the leadership of your ECC. Training boosts your abilities and shows how motivated you are to excel in this industry. Completed training shows you are willing to learn and improve your skills and do what it takes to succeed.

Opting for professional development courses outside the ECC sets you apart from coworkers. You can approach organizations



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such as APCO that can help you grow and develop your leadership potential. It benefits you, and it confers name recognition on your center.

In emergency communications, new methods and technologies are introduced regularly. You should be prepared to use processes and procedures that can eventually become a part of your working environment in a new role. Learning about new and upcoming aspects of your profession will give you a competitive edge over other employees. When a promotional opportunity arises, you

need to convince your manager that you are the best candidate.

#### **IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

Interpersonal skills include the fundamentals you use every day to communicate and interact with others. These skills help you collaborate efficiently, allow you to listen to others, build emotional intelligence, empathize and understand the people around you. If you want to become a leader, these skills are essential.

Using interpersonal skills at the workplace gets you noticed. These skills help you gain

allies, stand out from the crowd, boost social interactions, enhance work performance and give you an edge over colleagues. They also help you influence other people to provide desirable results for a particular task.

### DEDICATE YOUR EFFORT AND TIME

Remember that if you want a promotion but are not actively doing something to get it, your chances are minimal. Even if you have all the necessary skills and abilities, you must devote energy and time into achieving your goal. Frequently you will have to do extra work for a promotion. If your supervisor or director asks you to perform a task, be open and willing to complete the job. Consider training courses or certifications that might increase your chances of promotion and ask to enroll.

### UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP OR MANAGEMENT ROLES

Leadership isn't limited to answering questions, assigning tasks and training employees. Leaders can communicate with a person on their own level. As communicators, mentors and qualified individuals, they take significant

burdens upon themselves, look out for their team and overcome challenges. It might be your dream job, but it requires mental, physical and emotional capacity, so it is best to prepare.

You must learn to communicate with employees, supervisors and other people from different backgrounds. And most importantly, you need to know how to cope with relationships to become a successful leader.

### KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

Those at the start of their careers as 9-1-1 professionals are unlikely to secure management positions right away. It's essential to understand what you can achieve in a certain amount of time. Realistic goals will help you accomplish them efficiently and in less time.

You should also set limits on the energy, time and money you plan to invest in your journey. Avoid compromising your health and wellness in the effort to gain promotion.

### DEVELOP PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Practical and effective problem-solving skills are the key to getting the job you are

working toward. It's easier to complain than to offer solutions. When you learn to provide solutions rather than complain, the leadership of your center will notice. Because few may have this ability, you must learn to approach your leadership with proposed resolutions to the issues at hand.

Developing problem-solving skills shows that you are ready for promotion. It shows that you can face different challenges and problems that may come your way, you are a valuable asset to the ECC, and management should allow you to aim for higher positions and opportunities.

### START BEHAVING LIKE A SUPERVISOR

Your behavior is one of the most important things to be aware of if you want to become a supervisor or leader. Make an intentional shift and start behaving like a supervisor. Supervisory actions don't mean that you start giving orders or intruding on other employees' tasks. Rather, you should think, talk and act as a supervisor. Meaningful ways of doing this include supporting others, helping them to grow and

## Discover APCO's Leadership Programs



The **Registered Public-Safety Leaders Program** is designed for individuals interested in developing a solid foundation of management and supervisory skills necessary for successful ECC operations. The program focuses on aspects of managing and supervising that are vital to lead successful teams.



The **Certified Public-Safety Executive Program** is designed to elevate professionalism, enhance individual performance and recognize excellence in the public safety communications industry. It is focused on the skills and attributes necessary to lead organizations.



developing skills to be successful. Confidence and efficiency are also beneficial.

### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

It's vital to gain as much knowledge as possible to compete with your coworkers successfully. Try different avenues to gain new information so you are aware of the latest developments. While you work

on growing yourself, be a supporter for coworkers. A good leader has empathy for everyone and is always ready to help others. Be a good communicator, stay humble and try to understand others' points of view. Learn new personal and professional skills that can help master your current job to prepare for a higher role with additional responsibilities. ●

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## CDE EXAM #61711

1. Acquiring skills for the job you want will make you more promotable.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. To be promoted, you must be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Able to fool others.
  - b. Significantly better at your job than your peers.
  - c. Able to use others' accomplishments.
  - d. Willing to tell your director everyone's mistakes.
3. One of the best choices you can make is to find a mentor that gets upset when you ask questions.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. When working on your professional development, you should \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Improve your skills and quality of work.
  - b. Allow your certifications to expire.
  - c. Never apply for industry scholarships.
  - d. Never attend new courses.
5. Your interpersonal skills will help you to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Learn about others so you can hold their mistakes against them.
  - b. Communicate and interact with others.
  - c. Sit in your office and not communicate.
  - d. Create fear of your leadership in others.
6. To succeed and earn a promotion you must keep your goal in mind.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. To become a leader or manager, you must have great mental, physical and emotional capacity.
  - a. True
  - b. False
8. When becoming a leader, you must be able to develop what to succeed?
  - a. Better ways to complain.
  - b. Problem-solving skills.
  - c. An easier path to write up staff.
  - d. A better closed-door policy.
9. When you decide to start on the path of manager or leader, you must start acting and thinking like a manager or leader.
  - a. True
  - b. False
10. While working on your goals you must also remember to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A backstabber.
  - b. A supporter of everyone.
  - c. A tough person to work with.
  - d. Someone who keep all of their ideas in.

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