

Put Command Back in Flight/CC

Target Audience: Squadron Commanders

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Purpose | Encourage Squadron Commanders to deliberately engineer the professionalism and leadership development of their Flight Commanders (Flt/CCs). |
| Description | Flt/CC is typically an officer's first opportunity to be a formal leader, and can be a stepping stone to squadron command. Yet, the role of Flt/CC is sometimes undervalued and treated as a purely administrative position. Our Air Force is the best in the world at developing technical experts, but just like technical expertise, leadership and professionalism doesn't just happen by chance—it must be deliberately engineered. Young officers appointed to Flt/CC must be put in a position to command, and encouraged to develop as professional leaders. They're the future of the Air Force! |
| Employ | As a Squadron Commander, lead your Flt/CCs to be multi-dimensional, striving to balance technical competence with strong leadership principals. Consider the following to help foster creative, ambitious, and opportunistic Flt/CC development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, establish an expectation of developing professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss your rules of engagement: setting the example by living Air Force Core Values, promoting respect with one another, building relationships of trust, and stressing the importance of timely and accurate products. Communication is critical ○ Embolden Flt/CCs to take ownership in developing their own professionalism goals ○ When you conduct your initial feedback, reinforce individual expectations, but be an accountable partner in making sure they reach their goals ○ Once the expectation is set, get out of their way. There is risk in effective leadership • Second, emphasize leadership by encouraging them to gain experience in command. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenge them to lead people and not just manage records, gradebooks, or performance reports ○ Clearly define their solemn responsibility to lead not only Airmen, but human beings ○ Let them know it is their duty to raise up their subordinates (and families). ○ Suggested PACE tools that can be tailored for use by Flt/CCs to get to know their people: "Walk With Me", "Three Slides", and "Wingman Sorties" • Third, inspire professionalism and cultivate wisdom by building their knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advance the idea of talking human leadership and human motivation ideas ○ Encourage local attendance at formal leadership and professionalism seminars, and challenge them to piggy-back on existing TDY opportunities to attend distant events (make it important for tangeable and quantifiable impacts) ○ Energize them to seek out world-class insight from deliberate face-to-face question and answer sessions with military, business, and sports leaders |

Developing professional leaders is a constant process—a mountain without a top. No one ever arrives, but squadron commanders should energize young leaders to begin the journey, and then motivate them to keep climbing to achieve higher levels.