

SURVIVAL

A Scouting Ireland challenge

Leadership



Leadership

The Island - an exercise in Leadership styles

What style of leadership do I use in my Patrol or Team. Will I play the nice guy and let people get away with murder or will I play the hard military type and “run a tight ship?...” This little story might help to explain:

A group of twenty five passengers are marooned on a desert island along with five officers from their luxury liner that floundered during wild storms. The Officers know the rough location of the island and realise that this spot in the South Pacific is completely off the main shipping lines. The best chance is to build a raft and sail away to safety.

The passengers look to the Ship's Officers for leadership and it is decided that it will be best for all if the group divides up into five teams, each team being led by one of the Ship's Officers. Each team will search the island for a suitable source of raft making material, food and water.

If any team gets a raft built they will sail to safety and contact help. Here is an account of how each team got on after they split up.

Team one

The first team was led by the Ship's Entertainment Officer. He had spent many years organising the cabaret, games and dances on board ship. He had great concern for the welfare of the passengers and never wanted to push them too hard. He was the most popular officer of the lot. As soon as the group broke up, he

took his team and asked them what they wanted to do. They weren't too keen on travelling East along the island - it seemed too heavily forested. The Western shore looked much easier to travel golden sandy beaches, coconut groves - no real raft making material but nice, easy-going territory. As the beach was surrounded coral reef, making launch impossible.

This team set off along the beach and reached point 1.9 on the map. This, they decided was the furthest they should go. The entertainment's Officer agreed. He didn't want to push them at all, as long as they were happy. He made sure that they had enough food - he let them go swimming as they wished - the lagoon was safe and beautifully warm. Team One didn't get off the island - but they were all very

happy - the Entertainment's Officer made sure of that. He kept them at point 1.9 where they were all very comfortable and he remained as popular as ever.

Team two

The second team was led by the Ship's Engineer. He was a hard old sea dog who believed that the team should get off the island as soon as possible. He had worked with worse teams than this but always came up trumps. Push them hard - that was his motto. Give them no time to think. He choose the Easterly route along the island. At times this looked very overgrown, with some cliff areas along the shore, but there was bound to be plenty of wood there and food and water must abound. He took his team aside, telling them that if anyone

didn't pull their weight, they would be left to die. There was no room for slackers here. The survival of the fittest, that's what it was all about!

He pushed his team along the Southern shore of the island for two solid weeks. For much of the time they had to wade through mangrove swamps and once or twice had to scale cliff ledges. They found many sources of timber, food and water, many areas where a launch might have been possible but on arrival at point 9.1 on the map, team two mutinied. One of their members had already died when he fell from a cliff. The others knocked the first mate unconscious and escaped into the forest. The Ship's Engineer awoke at point 9.1 on the island in a daze and wondered what had gone wrong. Team three This team was led by the Purser. He was used to taking bookings, counting money, ordering fuel and food. He never really wanted to be a ship's Officer. His father had pushed him into it.

All he wanted to do all day was to remain undisturbed. He was happiest when people left him alone. He turned to his team, once the others had gone, and told them he didn't really want the job of leading them. He only took it because he didn't want anyone to give out to him. He didn't really want to get off the island or even make sure that his five passengers were fed and safe. He just wanted to stay where he was and wait, for someone else, to save them. So they panicked, fought among themselves, split up and left him to get more and more depressed.



Team four

This team was led by the Captain. He took his team aside and had a meeting. They made up a map of the island, worked out where the best source of food and materials would be. Then they discussed the skills and capabilities of each member of the team. Balancing the need to get off the island against the capabilities of the team members that they decided to head in a North Easterly direction - avoiding the dangerous swamps. After a week or so they had set up base camp at point 9.9 on the map - a point from which they had easy access to the lush timber and food reserves. There was also an ideal spot for launching their raft - with no fear of crashing on a coral reef. They started to collect timber and build up stocks of food.

The Captain worked hard alongside his team. They shared out the work among the team. One passenger, a carpenter, took on the job of designing the raft, the others started collecting wood. Problems arose from time to time, people felt tired, they saw little progress at times, but the Captain got the team together and discussed the problems - not allowing grudges to build up. Within a month, the team had a raft built and stocked. They launched and spent a week or so on trials. Having sorted out some design faults they sailed away and were discovered two weeks later by an oil tanker and saved.

Team five

The fifth team was led by you. Where exactly would you end up? Which of the first four teams would you follow? You see the first four teams by different kinds of leaders. Each leader had a different emphasis on two things - people and results,



1. The Entertainment's Officer who led Team One was only interested in keeping his people happy. He didn't really care about getting off the island because his people just wanted the easy option - they wanted to laze about on the lagoon rather than work. He didn't even expect them to gather food - he did all that and they loved him for it. He knew that there would probably be a stormy season, but didn't want to bring it up, he just laughed it off. People mightn't like him if he was too serious. His team ended up at point 1.9 on the map so we'll call him a "one-niner".

2. The Ship's Engineer took exactly the opposite approach. He had very little regard for his people - all he cared about was the result which had to be achieved - regardless! He pushed his people hard. He took the side of the island that was obviously going to produce the goods but his people suffered, and as often happens they fought back and left him. He made all the decisions - regardless of whether some of his people had good ideas. He won all arguments and made sure the other person knew they had lost. He ended up on the bottom right hand corner of the island (grid ref. 9.1) so we'll call him "nine-ner".

3. The Purser wasn't really interested in whether his people were happy or not. Nor was he interested in achieving his set goal, i.e. getting off the island. His team could do as they liked as long as they didn't disturb him. As you would expect, his team enjoyed themselves for a while - they did as they wished, but soon panicked, quarreled and left him alone at point 1.1, so we'll call him a "one-ner".

4. The Ship's Captain on the other hand seemed to be able to handle both the people and the task in hand together. While he showed his ability to work his people according to their skills and abilities, he was also able to keep them working towards their goal. He seldom

made decisions on his own - by involving the team, he gave them a feeling of importance and -also the quality of decisions was much higher - the carpenter obviously knew what he was talking about when it came to boat building. From time to time his people had arguments amongst themselves and with him. Instead of brushing it under the carpet he made the point of actually discussing these problems, trying to find the root cause. The Captain made it all the way to point 9.9 on the island, so we'll call him a "nine-niner".

YOU!

So which style do you normally use? How do you go about leading your team?

Think of other people in Scouting - what style do they use? Are they "engineers" or "entertainment officers", "pursers" or "captains"?

Their style of leadership we use has a great effect on the people we work with. There are too many ship's engineers and lots of entertainment officers who just want to keep everyone happy.

We have some 'pursers' who do just enough to keep their position and don't want to stick their necks out.

We don't have enough Ship's Captains around. Those people who would end up at point 9.9 on the island is the kind of leader we need. It's not too hard to become a "nine-niner". It involves developing good teamwork, listening for new ideas, evaluating these, proposing solutions and confronting problems as soon as they arise. Above all it means that at no time do you lose sight of the needs of either the people around you or task in hand.