

Mission Ready

Volume 6, Issue 2

February, 2004

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Semper Fi Goes Soft(back)

Time for a little self promotion – we warned you. The authors of *Semper Fi: Business Leadership the Marine Corps Way* are pleased to announce an upcoming paperback version of a book that, in some ways, exceeded our expectations. The twelve domestic hardcover printings were gratifying, but we were surprised and delighted to see the book come out in Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and People's Republic of China (Mandarin) editions, as well. Apparently other business cultures agree: the Marine Corps is a splendid organizational model.

If one were to dispassionately evaluate the Marine Corps as one might evaluate a potential stock purchase, a number of contradictions are apparent.

The Marine Corps is largely composed of near-minimum wage employees, yet it has a legendary reputation for excellence.

The Marine Corps, like all branches of the military, experiences an 80% turnover; yet its core values remain intact, after 228 years.

Most Marines are admittedly “short timers,” yet the investment in leadership cultivation focuses mainly on those who will leave the organization after four years.

The Marine Corps has the least amenities of all of the services, yet the highest morale.

It is a macho culture, with the fewest per capita incidences of sexual harassment.

The Marine Corps is populated with a tremendous diversity, yet it is a brotherhood.

The smallest service, it has the biggest reputation.

Clearly, the business community has something to learn from this high performance

organization, and much of what is learned comes as a surprise. Influenced by Hollywood stereotypes, many would think of the Marine Corps's “management style” as leadership through intimidation. Those who have served in the Corps will tell you that the officers and NCOs they would have died for were not tyrants; they did not push, they led, and their subordinates were drawn into the wake of personal example. Marines want to excel; they have been inspired by their leaders, not bullied.

This book is important because the managerial challenges in the business world are very similar to those encountered in the Marine Corps. Managers must find ways to motivate their rank and file, especially in lean times when bonuses and incremental raises are not possible. Supervisors must inspire employees who come from environments of failure. Executives must cultivate leadership throughout the organization, while engendering loyalty. And all must lead, at every level of the hierarchy, to victory in the marketplace.

Since the first hardcover edition of *Semper Fi*, the nation has seen the Marine Corps, along with our other splendid branches of the armed forces, surpass the expectations of news media commentators, in the mountains of Afghanistan and in the endless deserts of Iraq. The leadership cultivation principles responsible for such a high level of performance are, fortunately, applicable to private enterprise, as well. Businesses, small and large, would do well to emulate many of the leadership and management techniques which have been developed, and honed to perfection after 228 years, in the United States Marine Corps.

We'll let you, our valued newsletter subscribers, know as soon as our publisher gives us a publishing date. By the way, we're also updating the appearance of our website; you should notice a difference in about a week or so.