



Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson

What made Nelson such an effective leader?

Theoretical studies all agree: once in command he developed a consensual leadership style. For those whom he knew, Nelson generated a genuine warmth and care which, in turn, invoked loyalty and support. He was a hard man – managing his crews with an 'iron fist' – he demanded high standards and demonstrated how to set them.

A Naval Captain serving with Nelson, George Duff, explains what Nelson was like as a leader – "He is so good and pleasant man that we all wish to do what he likes without any kind of orders." In some cases, Nelson took the time to shake the hand of every sailor on deck. This approach was unique.

Leadership qualities

- + Overcoming adversity and personal injury
- + Placed his duty before self and others – often at the expense of personal relationships
- + Nelson's forethought, preparations and attention to detail as a fleet commander
- + Ability to maintain the 'common touch'
- + Able to create ownership and engagement (Band of Brothers story)
- + Embraced the 'cutting edge of new Naval technology'
- + Encouraged ownership of change and change management
- + Ability to maintain tactical insight, decision, speed and confidence in the morale and training of his seamen
- + A great visionary – simple and innovative in his approach.

Horatio Nelson operated with an AT STAKE behaviour set – NOT focused on AT RISK behaviours – Nelson commented that "[Other] admirals are more frightened of losing than anxious to win"

Organisations who pursue "corporate protection" can only operate and lead AT RISK (i.e. "we must protect xyz as we have everything to lose"). Of course we must "protect the business." but (as Tom Peters, Author and Management Guru identified) "we must vigorously pursue "Winning" rather than to expend most of one's energy (as most do) on 'avoiding defeat'."

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