



Discover why a Commissioning Program is crucial to every Executive who wants his or her leaders to succeed.

Review the Commissioning Framework Checklist, and apply it to your organization today.

Leadership Insights

COMMISSION YOUR LEADERS!

A FRAMEWORK FOR APPOINTING LEADERS
INTO YOUR ORGANIZATION

Commission Your Leaders!



An Example of the Typical Promotion

Elizabeth worked hard for several years as the Administrative Assistant for a large communications company. She was a dedicated employee, often coming to work early and departing late. A sponge for knowledge, she stayed on top of the occupational and industry trends; and during the evening, she completed her bachelor degree in Business Administration and Marketing.

Elizabeth had her heart set on becoming the company's new Marketing Manager. Over the past year, she worked closely with Tracy, the Marketing Director, who was drowned in marketing activity. Elizabeth was a fast study. She quickly learned the tricks of the trade and was very helpful tackling the department's overflow. She was a great asset to the division and she knew Tracy would give her a good recommendation.

On a Friday afternoon, Tracy called Elizabeth into her office to give her the good news ... the job was hers for the taking! Elizabeth was thrilled, and that night she celebrated with family and friends!

Happy ending, right?

On Monday morning, Elizabeth reported to work as the new Marketing Manager. She didn't know what to expect. She sat behind her desk, organizing her agenda as she pondered the day. Soon, the office began to liven with staff. As Elizabeth's co-workers strode past her desk, a few commented on her nice outfit (she had bought a new suit over the weekend to look more the part.) Elizabeth responded with thanks and a grin, anticipating when the big announcement would be made.

When Tracy arrived, she and Elizabeth got straight to work, beating the grind and burying themselves in the daily routine. The day ended. The week passed. The month flew on wings. No one ever acknowledged Elizabeth's much deserved promotion. In fact, majority of the company did not even know about it. Managers from other departments, now her peers, continued to delegate administrative tasks to her. Moreover, the assistants now responsible to Elizabeth did not respect her instruction or new authority. The only evidence of Elizabeth's advancement was her paycheck.

Eventually, Elizabeth lost the zeal to perform – and Tracy is still wondering why.

Does this scenario sound familiar? Have you ever been promoted in this lackadaisical manner? Tracy may have been an effective manager, but she was not a very thoughtful leader.

There are many things Tracy could have done to make Elizabeth's promotion more successful and rewarding. However, I want to focus on what I believe was the most crucial oversight.

The Art of Commissioning

In the military, when an individual makes rank, their promotion receives national accolades. At the local level, a commissioning or frocking ceremony is one of the many ways the advancement is celebrated. At the national and international level, remote and overseas U.S. military bases receive the word through the military's communication system. It is quite exciting to review the latest advancement list to find the name of a former shipmate who is being promoted.

Likewise, in corporate America, many companies use media resources like press conferences or releases to announce the newest additions to their leadership team. Large corporations may even be featured in business magazines and publications, not to mention televised spots on the evening news. No doubt, there is a lot of recognition and prestige for high level executives. But what about the middle managers, or those who are being promoted from the front line to their first supervisory or leadership role within the corporation? What type of recognition do they receive?

What I appreciate about the military's protocol for advancement, is that it commissions its service members from the lowest rank to the highest. From a seaman to a petty officer, I can vividly recall all of the frocking ceremonies I either participated in or attended, during my brief six year military career with the U.S. Navy. I remember shaking hands with my Commanding Officers, as I stood proudly wearing my uniform, which was properly outfitted with new stripes representing my increased rank, and receiving my reward for "*a job well done!*" in the company of my peers, seniors and juniors.

Still, many corporate leaders scoff at the idea of mimicking military views and strategies to their workplace; disregarding the fact that America's founding forefathers, established and built our nation around military might, embracing many principles from what I call, "The Book of Best Practices".

Corporations state the case of insufficient resources and time. However, investing the additional time and resources to promote the authority and abilities of your leaders, will not only ease their transition into their new position, but also enhances corporate awareness and confidence. This concept endorses team cooperation, which in turn, enhances productivity, performance and employee morale. Therefore, time and resources, are the very reasons why adopting a commissioning program is crucial to a company who wants its leaders to succeed.

The aforementioned "Book of Best Practices" provides an excellent framework for Executives, who recognize the importance of building and maintaining a solid and thriving leadership team. The checklist on the following page was adopted from this legendary book, and offers a basic guide to promoting individuals at every level of the organization. Chief Executives should take heed to these steps and properly commission their leaders!

Commissioning Framework Checklist

- Unless you have personally selected the new leader, meet with the promoting manager to determine why they feel this individual has the qualities to perform in a leadership role. If the rationale is just, discuss and outline how to properly promote and induct the new leader into the company.
- Meet with the new leader to show your support and to encourage them to perform in their new role. Let them know what they can expect from you. Inquire about their expectations; be forthright in your response.
- Ensure the promoting manager and the new leader, have an explicit understanding of their cooperative roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Give the new leader a copy of your Corporate Leadership Guide. Instruct them to study it so they will justly represent and carry out the responsibilities expected of them as a leader in your organization.
- Managers should personally introduce their new leaders to the other members of the leadership team. They should clearly identify how the new leader's position, role and authority will benefit the company.
- CEOs or promoting managers should publicly commission new leaders in front of the entire staff, expressing how the new leader's position, role and authority will benefit the company. This is extremely important. If Tracy had taken time out of her busy schedule to publicly commission Elizabeth, Elizabeth would have readily received the support, trust and compliance of those with whom she worked.
- Immediately revise all corporate documentation to reflect the change in leadership. This includes the corporate history, organizational chart, internal/external directories, your website listing, as well as new business cards and stationary for the new leader.
- Announce the appointment of your new leader to all of your customers, especially those who will work with your new leader, directly. Your staff should never have to announce their promotion to anyone inside or outside of your organization. This includes vendors and suppliers that your company deals with on a regular basis.
- Meet with your leaders regularly. Listen, encourage, strengthen and empower them.
- Be a reflection of the internal and eternal rewards of principled leadership.

This Commissioning Framework Checklist was adopted from the induction of Joshua, as he was commissioned to succeed Moses. [Numbers 27:15-23](#); [Deuteronomy 31:7-8](#); [Joshua 1:1-9](#).