



**What's Your Contribution?**



## **Title: What's Your Contribution?**

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Reference: Perspective

### **Article Body:**

We tend to think about personal conduct in terms of individual actions and behaviors as they relate to misconduct and disciplinary issues. While clearly an aspect incorporated in the concept, personal conduct is a much broader idea that includes self accountability for performance, actions, and contributions. Being an effective leader therefore means understanding your own individual contributions and ensuring these are aligned with your role and responsibility within the organizations.

When speaking of effective executives, Peter Drucker notes that the most important leaders continually analyze what they are contributing to the organization (1993, p. 53). Failing to perform this critical self critique and address individual personal conduct results in poor performance and incorrect contributions. According to Drucker, contributions by leaders can be made in three types of categories.

First and perhaps the most obvious, leaders can contribute to the direct performance and results achieved by the organization (Drucker). In the Coast Guard this translates to accomplishing the mission. Whether it is actually performing the mission (such as interdicting drugs or rescuing people) or whether it is ensuring the mission can be accomplished (such as repairing a part or providing a meal), these types of contributions tend to be the ones most easily recognized because the impact is apparent and it is often what we as members are graded on.

Although not as apparent, the other types of contributions are also vitally important to the ensuring the success of the organization. The second form of contributions by executives is efforts to build and reaffirm the values of the organization (Drucker). Within the Coast Guard, this requires leaders to instill and reinforce the core values as well as the concepts and direction laid out by the Commandant. The dedication to stewardship is one example of the Service's values which relies on the leaders to produce and implement throughout the organization.

The final type of contributions made by leaders is the development of future leaders and executives (Drucker). This means investing time and energy into developing the people around you and ensuring they are prepared to step up in future positions as leaders and executives. This, perhaps, is the greatest contribution a leader can make because without these future contributors to the organization, the organization becomes stagnant and fails.

As a leader in the Coast Guard, no matter what the rank, we all have a role to play in contributing to the organization in one of these three areas. This means that leadership involves understanding one's role and responsibility in the organization and routinely analyzing the contributions that you are providing. Ensuring your own personal conduct therefore needs to go beyond simply behaving appropriately. Although it is tougher than just ensuring you stay out of trouble, analyzing your contributions and ensuring their

alignment with the organization is more important to your success as an individual and the success of the Coast Guard. Do more than just participate. Be self-aware and responsible: determine what you are contributing to the Coast Guard.

**Leadership Competencies Addressed: Personal Conduct, Accountability and Responsibility, Customer Focus, Management and Process Improvement, Stewardship**

Reference:

Drucker, P. F. (1993). *The effective executive*. Harper Business: New York, NY.

Pictures: Suggested pictures include any pictures conveying the concept of each of the contribution types. For results or mission performance any picture of members conducting a mission could suffice. For the other two types of contributions, a picture of someone conducting mentoring or training could work.