Leading Change and Adapting Business Models to Complete the Mission
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A Rising Tide –

With the holidays forthcoming I thought I would take it upon myself to boost your wallets with a promotion. Congratulations - You have all been promoted to NOAA Rear Admiral (upper half – two stars)! With this new designation, you are now the Director of the NOAA Corps and NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations which consists of 16 active ships, 9 active aircraft, 800 people (321 of which are Active Duty), Small Boat Program with an inventory of 400+ boats, Dive Program supporting 15,000 dives annually and the task of safely and efficiently operating these platforms and programs to execute the myriad of NOAA missions. Piece of cake, right?!

Before you corral NOAA leadership as the chair of the Fleet Council meeting or send your Flag Lieutenant to ready the coach (this is an exaggeration) for a visit to the Hill to educate the newest Members of Congress on one of the least known, yet oldest uniformed services, please consider this: the utilization of the NOAA Corps workforce is an adapted business model. Because this is a leadership seminar, focusing on the leadership characteristics of the individuals within this adapted model is the goal of next Wednesdays meeting.

In the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard the civilian and contract workforce exist to support the active duty, reservists, and National Guard service members. Contrary to this model, in NOAA, the NOAA Corps' primary objective is to support the civilian workforce. The charge for the individual NOAA Corps officers is similar to the charge given to officers in the other services, yet the organizational business model is 180 degrees different. In developing NOAA Corps officers, similar to the other services, the objective is to train them to be leaders from day one. This effort continues throughout the individual officer's career. Aside from assignments as Aircraft Commander or the Commanding Officer of a ship where leadership roles are black and white, NOAA Corps officers are often given the challenge to lead from a wide variety of positions (staffers, deputies, xo's, forecasters, liaisons, etc) scattered throughout the NOAA hierarchy. The Admiral (you!) faces a unique challenge in harnessing the value of an active duty Corps and adapting that workforce to best serve NOAA. Piece of cake, right?!

BEFORE OUR SESSION:

Take a moment to look at examples from another service. Examples could have come from any service - I just happened to choose the Army:

Please enjoy this three-minute Youtube video on the Army Officer Candidate School where the Army instills leadership traits into the Army's newest officers from day one:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0Gx3oKac1A

1. What are the leadership skills the Army instills into its newest batch of officers?

    a. Which of these skills might be valuable to all NOAA leaders? Which of these skills could be detrimental to the NOAA culture?
    b. What are the advantages or disadvantages to conducting this initial leadership training rather than waiting until they have been an employee for 5-10 years?
2. Please enjoy the attached research paper: "Leading Change: Military Leadership in Civilian Organizations," by Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Wittig, United States Army. a. As a new Admiral, what lessons would you pull from this research paper and how would you implement them into your NOAA Corps to better serve the Agency?
    a. If the Admiral followed the authors steps to lead change, would the National Weather Service (or NOS or NMFS or OAR or USEC, etc) be receptive to these tactics? Why or why not
    b. As a civilian, do you agree with the perspectives of Lt. Col Wittig?
    c. What are your thoughts on the marathon versus the sprint approach? Is a sprint ever appropriate in the work place?