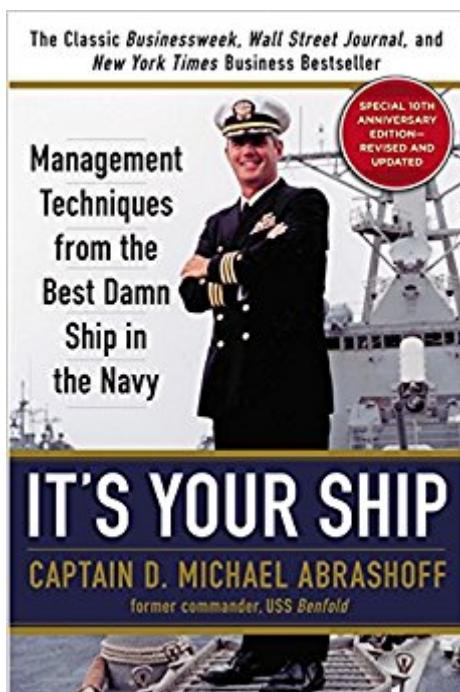


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# It's Your Ship: Management Techniques From The Best Damn Ship In The Navy, 10th Anniversary Edition



## Synopsis

The story of Captain D. Michael Abrashoff and his command of USS Benfold has become legendary inside and outside the Navy. Now Abrashoff offers this fascinating tale of top-down change for anyone trying to navigate today's uncertain business seas. When Captain Abrashoff took over as commander of USS Benfold, a ship armed with every cutting-edge system available, it was like a business that had all the latest technology but only some of the productivity. Knowing that responsibility for improving performance rested with him, he realized he had to improve his own leadership skills before he could improve his ship. Within months he created a crew of confident and inspired problem-solvers eager to take the initiative and take responsibility for their actions. The slogan on board became "It's your ship," and Benfold was soon recognized far and wide as a model of naval efficiency. How did Abrashoff do it? Against the backdrop of today's United States Navy-Benfold was a key player in our Persian Gulf fleet-Abrashoff shares his secrets of successful management including: See the ship through the eyes of the crew: By soliciting a sailor's suggestions, Abrashoff drastically reduced tedious chores that provided little additional value. Communicate, communicate, communicate: The more Abrashoff communicated the plan, the better the crew's performance. His crew would eventually call him "Megaphone Mike," since they heard from him so often. Create discipline by focusing on purpose: Discipline skyrocketed when Abrashoff's crew believed that what they were doing was important. Listen aggressively: After learning that many sailors wanted to use the GI Bill, Abrashoff brought a test official aboard the ship-and held the SATs forty miles off the Iraqi coast. From achieving amazing cost savings to winning the highest gunnery score in the Pacific Fleet, Captain Abrashoff's extraordinary campaign sent shock waves through the U.S. Navy. It can help you change the course of your ship, no matter where your business battles are fought.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Other than the sobering fact that real lives are regularly at stake, running a navy ship is a lot like running a business: leaders of both must get the most out of their crews to operate at peak efficiency and complete the tasks at hand. As commander of the highly acclaimed USS Benfold, Captain D. Michael Abrashoff irrefutably demonstrated how progressive management can succeed at sea; in *It's Your Ship*, he translates his methods into an approach that can also be applied by land-bound captains of commerce and industry. Describing "the ideas and techniques that I used to win my sailors' trust and, eventually, their enthusiastic commitment to our joint goal of making our ship the best in the fleet," Abrashoff cites embarrassing failures along with subsequent triumphs to illuminate the keys to his accomplished 20-month tenure aboard the guided missile destroyer. His suggestions: lead by example; listen aggressively; communicate purpose and meaning; create a climate of trust; look for results, not salutes; take calculated risks; go beyond standard procedure; build up your people; generate unity; and improve your people's quality of life. While hardly original on the surface, Abrashoff's course should provide practical direction and inspiration for any leader hoping for similarly positive results in similarly rigid organizations. --Howard Rothman

CAPTAIN D. MICHAEL ABRASHOFF is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, and was a military assistant to the former secretary of defense, the Honorable Dr. William J. Perry. Abrashoff left the Navy in 2001 and became the founder and CEO of Grassroots Leadership, Inc., in Boston. You can visit his website at [www.grassrootsleadership.com](http://www.grassrootsleadership.com).

This is an EXCELLENT book on leadership and living with others who have different backgrounds and experiences from you. We're not all cut of the same cloth, but we're all human with needs and bring different experiences and views to the job. Abrashoff made an effort to recognize every person's value and seeks ways as a leader to utilize those individual characteristics for the goals of the organization. Clearly the military is not civilian life, but there are far more things in common than differences. Having served 4 years in the Navy (1971-1975), including 1 year, 5 months and 13 days (but who was counting) on an aircraft carrier, the USS Ranger, CV-61, I was enthralled by the Benfold's emphasis on individual search for excellence and teamwork. There's nothing ironic of the

aphorism "a rising tide lifts all boats". Abrashoff writes with an interesting combination of pride and modesty. There's no limit in to how far you can go if you do things to improve your company without caring about who gets the credit. Give opportunities to succeed to others below you, recognize the individual's characteristics, talents, views and needs and seek ways to incorporate them into the organization to improve it for everyone! Decades ago my teenage niece gave me a paperweight which I kept prominently displayed which read: "You're not hopeless, we can use you as a bad example." At first it comes across as a put down, but to me it was a tongue-in-cheek reminder that everyone has value and can contribute to the group's success.

Fantastic, easy, fun book on leadership with great stories and insights that are easy to relate to the corporate world. I found this book useful on many more levels than I had originally anticipated, including leadership, management, coaching, and even parenting. First and foremost, it is an excellent book on leadership and does a great job of illustrating the various styles that can be employed in various situations. Abrashoff talks openly about many facets of the inner workings and command structure of the Navy, the various styles of command, and provides excellent insights about how he was able to lead in a way that could almost have been perceived as subordinate or disrespectful. He demonstrates how having clear goals and communicating those goals can aid in decision making, empowerment, peer relationships, and even help to understand and anticipate the needs of your superiors and customers. The biggest thing that I got from this book (and I fully intend to reread it and take notes the second time through) was how to be effective when procedures, culture, and bureaucracy all seem to be fighting against you. Not everyone may appreciate Captain Abrashoff's style, but there is no doubt the rapid and impressive results he achieved testify to many of the truths he adopted and employed. As a middle manager at a growing company, this book has energized and inspired me in many ways, and has also confirmed for me many of the things that I have been doing or have wanted to do. I have also been awakened to the importance and the challenge of managing up, something that I have not wanted to spend much if any time doing in the past.

Great read! At first I was like, mehhhhh, because I had to read this book for a leadership class and any time I'm assigned to read something, I assume it's not going to be pleasant. Boy was I wrong! Captain Abrashoff has a lot to offer and teach in terms of leadership styles and techniques. He did an amazing job rehabilitating the crew of the USS Benfold through alternative leadership activities. I was having so much fun reading this book and getting ideas that I could apply at my

place of work, that I finished it two weeks before I was required to. The anecdotes told by Captain Abrashoff are so very interesting and illustrate excellent examples of the techniques he is trying to teach. Thank you for your service Captain Abrashoff, and thank you for changing my leadership style!

On the first day of my new job as a middle manager, my boss told me to get this book, read it, understand the "point" and make things happen within the company based on what I gleaned from this book. Long story short, I did and I was promoted . It's a no nonsense book on taking ownership of your "lane" , changing the morale and letting the buck stop with you. I will never look at the world of work the same again. Buy this book !

"It's Your Ship", is one of several leadership books I have read and I have to say, this one is definitely good. (Ret.) Captain Abrashoff writes about his leadership through real world happenings and the reasoning behind his decisions to do or not do something. This book does not take on the often too dry and (in my opinion down-talking) analytical, "I'm a business professor" droning that these types of books can become. This is a real life telling with short/simplistic breakdowns of actual events and the leadership decisions that were made. Yes, this book will cover the basics in leadership each of have heard, been taught and, hopefully, follow in our daily business lives. However, in my opinion it's much much more. It's Your Ship reads like a comfortable novel with "moral of the story" endings briefly detailing the how's and why's. At no time during my reading did I want to put the book down. I became interested in the Captain, his crew and the USS Benfold. I was eager to read the next chapter to find out what sort of snag or operational challenge popped up and how "they all" came together to create the best course of action. Hopefully if you decide to read this book, It's Your Ship, you will enjoy it as much as I did. I will also say, and I mean this in a good way, the book is not very long. Many of us don't have a great deal of free time to prop-up our feet and digest some 500+ page tome. Capt. Abrashoff tell the stories of his experience in clear easily understood ways and then gets to the point. This is definitely one of my favorite books.

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