LAI Leading Authorities, Inc.

Michael Abrashoff

Former Commander, USS Benfold and Author, It's Your Ship

It's Your Ship: Achieving Breakthrough Performance When Mike Abrashoff took command of the USS Benfold, morale was low, turnover was high and the ship's performance ranked near the bottom of the Pacific Fleet. Just twelve months later Benfold was ranked #1 – using the very same crew. The lesson was clear – leadership matters and culture is everything. This inspiring talk is for every individual and organization looking for practical and usable ways to take organizational performance to new heights. In Mike's case, he realized that before the ship's performance could change, he had to change his leadership style. Mike worked to create a culture of trust and empower his crew to take charge and use ingenuity and initiative to improve every aspect of the way things were done. Top down leadership is dead, so when the crew would present a problem, Mike became famous for responding "What would YOU do? It's YOUR ship!" Mike's presentation leaves audiences with the tools and inspiration to accomplish big goals.

No Limits: Don't Let Goals Become Limitations Sometimes in our professional lives we might think we are in a battle to beat an adversary or a competitor when in actuality we are really in competition with ourselves but just haven't figured it out yet. When battling the competition, you want to come out on top, if only by one more sale or maybe a few percentage points. Other times, someone at a higher level gives you a goal based on some median expectation set for others. When Mike Abrashoff took command of a well below-average ship in the U.S. Navy, his goal was to get to average. He initially set average goals and expectations for himself and his crew until one day it dawned on him: his ship could be much better than just average. It was Mike's eureka moment: realizing they weren't in competition with anyone but themselves. To be their best they had to stop putting limits on what they believed was possible. That realization changed Mike Abrashoff's approach to leadership and led the same crew to accomplish one of the most remarkable turnarounds that was chronicled in the Harvard Business Review , Fast Company magazine and Mike's New York Times' and Wall Street Journal bestselling book, IT'S YOUR SHIP. This presentation will challenge audiences to think differently on how to set expectations while realizing the only limits that you have are self-imposed.

Go Deeper with Half-Day and Full-Day Programs Dive deep into the Leadership Roadmap with a half-day or full-day program. The sessions are most often used as a follow-on to Mike's keynote and provide attendees with powerful tools and strategies to apply in their work environment. Depending on the circumstances, these longer sessions are facilitated by a senior strategist from Mike's firm, Aegis Performance Group, or Mike himself. These sessions create an exciting interactive atmosphere where participants examine the key components of high performing leaders, teams and organizations. Inquire for more details and program descriptions.

The Virtual Leader's Roadmap Mike Abrashoff had to change his leadership mindset when he took over the near-worst performing ship in the Navy. The situation was dire. If performance did not improve, sailors could have gotten injured…or worse. In response, Mike quickly adopted a new set of principles to guide a new way of leading. His focus was on building trust and authentic ways of engaging. It was about listening to and empowering his crew who then went on to make the USS Benfold the best ship in the entire U.S. Navy. These very same principles are the foundation of success for organizations that embrace working virtually. In the short term, many organizations have found virtual work arrangements actually increase effectiveness of employees. That effectiveness may not be sustainable if leaders and organizations don't master a new skill-set of how to lead people they can't see. It's about measuring results – not activity; and about finding ways to let people know their efforts are appreciated. Those who succeed in leading in the virtual environment will create a decisive competitive advantage.