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Lieutenant Rock Star

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The *power* of a lieutenant; to some people that statement may sound like an oxymoron. Maybe a lieutenant colonel or a lieutenant general but a young lieutenant with power; come on! How ridiculous is that? Not ridiculous at all; enter Lieutenant Rock Star.

Lieutenant Rock Star was an F-15 pilot. After months of training, his first duty station was Elmendorf AFB Alaska. It was a typical cold Alaska morning and Lieutenant Rock Star was scheduled to fly. He went through a standard flight briefing, after the brief he was off to life support and then hopped in a truck to be driven to his awaiting jet. It was a standard morning for Lieutenant Rock Star.

As Lieutenant Rock Star was going through his routine; I, the young, naive, excited Airman Smith was going through my daily routine on the flight line. I served on mid-shift so my duty was to prepare the aircraft for the morning takeoffs. Typically the takeoffs happened after my shift ended but that day was different. The takeoffs were several hours earlier than the norm. This meant that I had the opportunity to assist with launching the jet.

I saw the blue aircrew van enter the flight line; soon Lieutenant Rock Star was dropped off at the jet I was assigned to. I instinctively started to do a "once over" on the training munitions that were loaded. Shortly after, something neat happened. The lieutenant came up to me and asked me what I was doing. I explained and he seemed genuinely interested. After my short show and tell, he thanked me for my efforts and patted me on my back. Soon he strapped in, brought the jet to life and taxied out. As the jet rolled off he gave me a fist pump, followed by a thumbs up and a wave. Boy, I thought I was so cool.

A few days later I went to the base gym for a work out. From a distance I saw the lieutenant. Immediately he recognized me and walked towards me. He shook my hand, we chatted for a bit, and then he went on his way. Boy, I thought I was so cool.

[See Rock Star on page 2](#)

Rock Star continued from page 1

While some leadership skills can be taught, others seem to come naturally. Regardless, it is always more effective to thank and praise people than to beat them up with constant negative feedback.

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Two times within a week an officer, a pilot no less, tracked me down and said hello to me. After those two meetings, I was always on the lookout for Lieutenant Rock Star; I was anxious to see him again whether on the flight line or around base. He had a certain power over me. As I progressed in my career, I learned there's an official term for what I felt. Lieutenant Rock Star had *referent power*.

In the context of leadership, *power* is nothing more than the *potential* to influence and referent power is based largely on someone's personal traits. Typically, people who are seen as likeable or charismatic often evoke referent power. It's a personal power trait to which followers respect, feel good about and are committed to their leader.

Looking back, I'm sure the lieutenant didn't have the slightest clue as to the affect he had on me. In the grand scheme of things, I'm sure the lieutenant was doing all he could just to keep his head above water. The two encounters I had with him were nothing outside the potential happenings of a normal day; although, nothing normal resulted.

The brief moments I had with him made me feel special, important and appreciated. I believe the average officer, and even NCO, underestimates the potential influence they may have on our Airmen in a normal day. This experience taught me never to take my particular position or leadership role for granted. Whether I was "just a" staff sergeant, squadron superintendent, or now as a command chief; the potential to positively influence someone...to leave a lasting impression, through even the smallest gesture is an everyday reality.

Some people dedicate their entire life trying to become a rock star. The lieutenant became a rock star in two brief moments.

[SOURCE: The Wright Stuff, Air University, USAF, Maxwell AFB. Reprinted with permission. <http://www.au.af.mil/au/aunews/>]

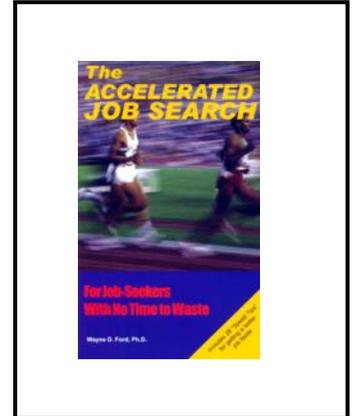
EDITOR'S NOTE: Referent Power is defined as the *ability to influence based upon respect, loyalty, admiration, affection, or a desire to gain approval*.

If you wish to learn more about Referent Power, go to [http://www.ictnet.us/Professional/MOL/LEAD605/ThomasJMicroBP\\$2.pdf](http://www.ictnet.us/Professional/MOL/LEAD605/ThomasJMicroBP$2.pdf) for a copy of *Leadership Effectiveness of Referent Power as a Distinction of Personal Power*, Joseph C. Thomas, Regent University Center for Leadership Studies, LEAD605 Foundations of Effective Leadership.

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<http://www.management-advantage.com/products/jobsearch.htm>



POTPOURI

- **Credit Scoring/Employment Background Checks**

More than half the states considered bills regulating the use of credit scoring by the insurance industry in 2009. In recent years, some states have also considered bills that would regulate the use of credit scores in evaluating job applicants. Washington already requires that an applicant's credit history be related to the job he or she is applying for. In July, 2009, the Hawaii Legislature overrode Gov. Linda Lingle's veto of HB 31, which bars Aloha State employers from using background checks in hiring workers. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a similar measure (AB 943). With unemployment still a major concern nationwide, it is expected that more states will consider similar bills. [SOURCE: State Net Capitol Journal, Vol XVII, No 38, <http://www.statenet.com>]

- **Federal Government Speeding Hiring of Disabled**

With President Obama's recent order that federal agencies should do more hiring of disabled workers, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has added this class to Schedule A appointing authority.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep>

- **DOL Announces Regulatory Changes Coming for Employment of Disabled**

On December 7, 2009, the DOL announced it will revise regulations implementing Section 503 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* and the *Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act*.

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OFCCP Regulatory Changes Coming Later This Year

Before the end of 2009, the new OFCCP Director, Patricia Shiu, held a public web chat session. She accepted any and all questions from an audience that presumably sat in chairs everywhere in the country. It followed by one day a similar chat session hosted by DOL's Secretary Solis. Here are a couple of points made by Director Shiu:

- "During our review of the construction, 503 and VEVRAA regulations, we are researching barriers to equal employment opportunity for women in construction, women with disabilities and female veterans, with the intent of increasing equal opportunity and addressing income inequality."
- "OFCCP is looking at three regulations: Section 503 (for persons with disabilities), VEVRAA (for protected veterans) and construction. We expect to publish the Section 503 NPRM [Notice of Proposed Regulation] in December 2010, the VEVRAA NPRM in December 2010, and the construction NPRM in January 2011."

So, we can expect that the end of this year and the early part of next year will be busy times for OFCCP regulation change proposals.

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