



COUNCIL OF THE INSPECTORS GENERAL ON INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY

CIGIE Fellows Cohort Training Activity – November 2022

An introduction to followership presented by Eric Gregory, Homeland Security OIG

On November 8, the Fellows attended a learning session focused on the skills and tools necessary to support effective followership. Followership is the willingness to cooperate in working toward the accomplishment of the mission, to demonstrate a high degree of teamwork and to build cohesion among the organization members. A courageous follower has a clear vision of service while assisting the leader with the overall mission. They remain fully accountable for their actions without losing their unique value and identity. An effective follower challenges the leader's ideas in a healthy and diplomatic manner. A senior follower can teach new followers about the overall mission and how to hold themselves accountable. A valuable follower has the potential to breathe new life into the leader's vision and reinvigorate other members of the team.

Top Activity Takeaways:

1. An effective follower has the obligation to assume responsibility. Assuming responsibility for our personal development begins with self-examination. We cannot know in which direction we need to grow until we first know where we are. Courageous followers do not wait for performance reviews, they assess their own performance. Seeking honest feedback from our peers is another useful tool to help yourself assume responsibility. Personal growth is another prerequisite. We must learn how to navigate beyond our comfort zone.
2. An effective follower must learn how to speak truth to the hierarchy. Followers have the obligation to educate senior leadership on their observations. This is true even if the observations are not desired outcomes. To achieve this, the follower must be well prepared and confident in their observation. They should be economical and clear on how to present their findings to senior leadership. They also need to recognize they are assuming a leadership role in transmitting knowledge that others will be able to follow.
3. An effective follower must have the necessary skills to implement the leader's vision. A critical skill in doing so is the ability to manage crises. Implementing the leader's vision will not always be a smooth path. Roadblocks and obstacles will appear from every angle. Crisis management skills are essential to overcoming those obstacles. Relationship building skills is another skill paramount for successes. An effective follower must build a healthy working relationship with their leader(s).