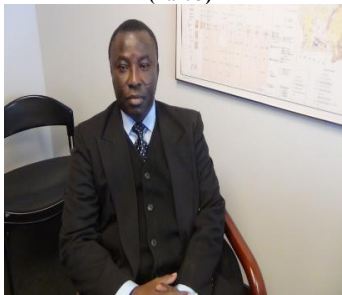


ORGANIZATION OF THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

(Part 3)



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THE LINE-STAFF RELATIONSHIP (cont'd)

As military organization grew in size it became necessary for the commander-in-chief to rely upon his immediate subordinates to command those units which would carry out his orders. These men became known as his staff or the General Staff. In the 1860's, Graf von Moltke – reorganizing the General Staff of the German Army – added the formal theory of the staff function to the line organization. “The theory of a General Staff is that each topic that may be of use to an Army shall be studied to perfection by a separate specialist, and the combined wisdom of these specialists shall emanate from a supreme staff.”

Efficient corporations and indeed, the efficient Maintenance Departments within them, utilize the staff theory. As the jobs become more technically complex, the Department adds more and more specialists whose knowledge is implemented into decision by the Department's management and carried out by the vertical line arrangement.

Thus, we have a line organization consisting of craftsmen supervised directly by first line foremen. First line foremen are, in theory, supervised by the Department's Manager. However, he is limited by what is known as span of control; he can effectively

supervise only a limited number of people. Thus, the Manager or Superintendent delegates his line supervisory duties by inter-posing a proper number of assistants – general foremen or even a rank higher – depending upon the size of the organization.

But the Department's Manager must also have a cadre of specialists to provide the “combined wisdom” defined by von Moltke. The make-up of this “combined wisdom” for Maintenance consists of – (1) knowledge of the production equipment, the needs and the methods for its maintenance and restoration; (2) training and direction of the members of the organization so that they may function properly; (3) control of all activities to assure that the goals, objectives and assignments are properly accomplished in a timely manner; and (4) a supply function having the prompt tools, machines, supplies and parts available when and where needed.

The ideal organization is one which requires only line duties at that supervisory level which deals only with the craftsman accomplishing the work. It assigns only staff duties to others who are concerned solely with facts. Policies stem from the Manager, who thus has a line/staff relationship with those reporting to him.

We have already established that in the Department's planning, its manager must provide:

1. Farsighted planning and clarification of the Department's objectives – updating them as appropriate.
2. A sound plan of organization to enable all parts to function most effectively in reaching the common goals.
3. Fully qualified personnel in all key positions, and
4. Effective means of control.

Thus, the Maintenance Manager's duties are a combination

of staff and line activities but mostly the former. So are the duties of those assistants who interpret policy for him and integrate into the line activities the “knowledge” developed by the staff specialists. Policy setting, final acceptance of the control activity and determination for breakthrough are important elements of the combined line/staff activities of the Department's upper management level.

But in establishing the line/staff organization, one basic rule cannot be ignored. The nature of the line duties – doing the maintenance and restoration work – places upon the individual pressure to accomplish his line activities at the expense of any staff services which provide efficiency. Doing the right job, the right way, and with minimum manhour expenditure, requires staff work. Successful organization properly balances the line and staff activities. For providing the proper number of line/staff jobs there must be adherence to a concept known as “span of control”.

SPAN OF CONTROL

Any supervisor must be certain that those under his direction are operating most effectively. For maximum efficiency there must be assigned work for every available manhour; the work performed must be the most needed work; and what work must be accomplished safely, efficiently, on time, with proper parts and without waste of materials. This places upon the supervisor the responsibility for manpower assignment in a manner to best match the skills of the available craftsmen; for operating within the Labour Agreement; for compliance with Job Safe Practices and the regulations of OSHA; for such discipline as may be required; for such consoling as may be essential to the development of the worker; and for such other training and skills development as will assure work of acceptable quality.

(End Part 3 – To be continued)

