

Ten Commandments of Good Organization

By Olan Hendrix

There are two kinds of efficiency. One kind is apparent and is produced in organizations only through the exercise of mere discipline. This is but an imitation of the second, or true efficiency which springs. As Woodrow Wilson said, from “the spontaneous cooperation of a free people.” If you are a manager, no matter how great or small your responsibility, it is your job to create and develop this voluntary cooperation among the people whom you supervise. For no matter how powerful a combination of money, machines, and materials an organization may have, they are dead and sterile without a team of *willing, thinking, and articulate* people to guide them.

Here are “Ten Commandments of Good Organization,” I have slightly adapted from the American Management Association.

1. Definite and clear-cut responsibilities should be assigned to each person or position. We might know today what our job is, but the situation might change so that tomorrow we do not know. We need adequate supervision so that we can rediscover what our job is when it has evolved.
2. Responsibility should always be coupled with corresponding authority.
3. No change should be made in the scope or responsibilities of a position without a definite understanding to that effect on the part of all persons concerned.
4. No executive or employee, occupying a single position in the organization, should be subject to orders from more than one source. Every person should have only one boss. Where it is necessary for one person to have two or three positions, there should not only be a clear understanding as to who gives orders with respect to which work, and the time allocation for these positions. Otherwise, the individual is going to be torn and subordinates may well be frustrated because they take orders from so many people.
5. Orders should never be given to subordinates over the head of a responsible executive. The manager tells the supervisor what a certain subordinate under the supervisor should do; the manager does not go directly to the subordinate.
6. Criticisms of subordinates should be made privately, and in no case should a subordinate be criticized in the presence of executives or employees of equal or lower rank.
7. No dispute or difference between executive or employee as to authority or responsibilities should be considered too trivial for prompt and careful attention.
8. Promotions, wage changes, and disciplinary action should always be approved by the executive immediately superior to the one directly responsible.
9. No executive or employee should ever be required, or expected, to be at the same time an assistant to, and critic of, another.
10. Executives whose work is subject to regular inspection should, whenever practicable, be given the assistance and facilities necessary to enable them to

maintain an independent check of the quality of their own work. The truth is that we are harder on ourselves than our superiors would be. Executives should be given the opportunity to report to you so that there can be not only your appraisal of their work but also their own appraisals of their work, both coming from the same standard.