

How I counsel Officers:

The first time I counsel an Officer the first thing I do is inquire about them and their family. Are they settled in, how many kids, where are they from, what was the last duty assignment, did we know any of the same people, etc... This is intended to one give me the basic info about the officer and his family, to ascertain how nervous and or how confident they are, and to also attempt to put them at ease in order to make the rest of the counseling section an environment where the communication process will work best.

Next I tell the officer about myself, how long I've been in the Army, where I've been stationed, and what jobs I've held, what my wife's name is, how many kids I have, and what kind of leader I am.

I tell them there are two kinds of bosses in the Army. One kind is the "yeller and screamer" type of boss and the other is the "non-yeller and screamer". I am a "non-yeller and screamer". So, when I tell you something, just because I'm not yelling and screaming doesn't mean you can ignore it and blow it off, because I am expecting you to listen and follow my guidance and direction.

LT's

What I talk to LT's about:

- I don't expect LT's to know everything, but I do expect them to learn.
- Gotta hit the regulations, many young officers will listen to someone tell them what the reg says, but not read the reg for themselves – gets them in trouble because what they were told was wrong.
- Fine line between learning from your NCO's and being run by your NCO's – you are in charge!
- Officers plan – NCO's execute the plan – then officers check to ensure the plan was executed. To many young officers fail to follow up and check.

- Take care of Soldiers and mean it – now, this doesn't mean caudle them – training them the proper way in tough realistic conditions and making them do PT in the cold and rain is taking care for them for the long haul, – Read “The Defense of Duffers Drift”.
- What is the definition of leadership – it's getting people to do what you want them to, and make them think they want to do it. The best way to do this is give them ownership of the process. If they are part of the decision then it's their plan to. You can't always do this – there are times when you have to make a decision and everybody drives on.
- Manage your boss- make work easy for him, the best compliment a Commander can give you is – “I never had to worry about your platoon, or work performance”.
- Communication: 80% or more of the problems in the Army are due to a lack of communication. There are three key elements to communication, 1. The Sender – the person sending the message; 2. the Message – the info that is trying to be conveyed; and 3. The Receiver – the person receiving the message. Gotta make sure that what you are trying to say is understood correctly by the Receiver. This takes work.
- Team work – work with other LT's and share ideas and knowledge.

CPT's – Company Cdr's

This section will focus on counseling topics for company commanders.

SEE Initial Officer Counseling Example:

General:

- Focus all training towards METL. That is your number one priority.
- Read AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy) and provide me a 30 minute Information briefing by 3 Oct 2003.

- Provide me a written assessment of your company NLT 1600 hrs 8 Oct 2003.
- Have your XO, 1SG, and Plt SGTs provide me a written assessment of respective unit element NLT 1600 hrs on 9 Oct 2003.
- Command Climate:
 - Loyalty, confidentiality, trust, and integrity are all non-negotiable
 - Set and maintain high standards (both personally and professionally)
 - Define lanes of responsibilities
 - Identify routine events
 - Don't worry about things you can control
 - Focus on leadership/taking care of both the mission and soldiers/families
 - Maintain a positive attitude daily
 - Develop and maintain an effective unit sponsorship program;
 - Battalion level – program will be run by the Bn CSM
 - Most common thing that can get you fired:
 - Loss sensitive items and property
 - Accidents (because of poor safety/maintenance programs)
 - Fraternalization (or perception there of)/DWI
 - Loss of integrity
 - Soldier abuse
 - Don't be afraid to call JAG (In fact, make the call just to be sure you are legally on sound ground)
- Identify goals and objectives for your unit (short and long term)
- Never surprise the Boss. Understand Fire Missions and 24 Hour Service.
- Take Leave and require your key leaders to do the same.
- Take care of yourself, your family, and SOLDIERS.

Leadership

- No one can take your integrity—you have to give it away. Never give anyone reasons to question your integrity.
- Soldiers want to know how much you care before they care how much you know.

- What you do is more important than anything you say.
- Accept responsibility for the shortcomings of the unit; pass credit for success on to your subordinates.
- Never allow yourself to be perceived as self-serving. If subordinates believe you're trying to get ahead at their expense, all you'll get is minimum effort and little initiative. Be selfless, always.
- Be compassionate.
- Never violate or be perceived to violate your own rules or policies.
- Be willing to admit when you are wrong.
- Reward soldiers and publicly recognize those that make the tough decisions—those who choose the harder right over the easier wrong.
- Use the chain of command to pass on new information.
- Let your leaders know that mistakes are OK as long as we learn from them. Explain to them the difference between mistakes and mission failure, versus doing something illegal or immoral.
- Allow subordinates to “change your mind” now and then.
- Identify your lane and stay in it.
- Share hardships; be visible. Do what your soldiers do, eat what they eat, sleep where they sleep. Ensure your subordinate leaders do the same. There is no substitute for personal example.
- Give young officers and NCOs a chance to grow. Spend time with them, listen to them and let them talk to you one-on-one.
- Mentorship takes time. Ensure you take the time with your XO.
- Be consistent with rewards, awards and punishment.
- Praise in public, criticize in private. Recognize good soldiers at every possible opportunity.

- Be technically and tactically proficient. If there is something you don't know, say so and ask a soldier or NCO to teach you—they'll love it.
- Foster teamwork and camaraderie among your Officers, NCOs, and civilians. Discourage too much competition, except at sports events.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Be open and accessible. Make yourself available to soldiers by getting out into their work areas.
- Perceptions are reality.
- Prepare your company to function without you.
- Sexual harassment—ensure your leaders know what it is, how to identify it, and how to deal with it quickly and justly. Ensure you do the same.
- Establish a good relationship with your fellow company commanders.
- Insist on leaders giving orders in their own names.
- If you don't understand something---ask!
- Never walk past something that is not right; if you do, you have set a new and lower standard.
- Bad news never improves with age. Insist that your leaders make timely reports, even if all information is not immediately available. Then give them time to get follow-up information.
- Lead from the front. Your personal example counts more than you will ever know.
- Don't let superior performance go unrewarded. Don't allow continued poor performance to go unpunished.

Training:

- Involve yourselves personally in planning, executing, assessing training:

- Be visible
 - Train
 - Protect the training plan
 - Provide Feedback on Training
- Format for Briefings:
 - Mission
 - Concept of Operations/Scenario
 - Internal/External requirements
 - Timeline/Milestones
 - Site Layout/Engineer Diagrams
 - Support Requirements (Supply/Maintenance)
 - Resource required (\$)
 - Risk Assessment/Safety
 - Outstanding Issues POCs
- Briefings:
 - Information briefs should not take more than 30 minutes
 - Operations brief should not take more than 60 Minutes
 - Don't use information/operation briefs as coordination meetings
 - Have a note taker to record issues/concerns at each briefing
 - Meeting Management – Have all of the players present before starting a meeting
- Eliminate training distracters
 - Train all elements to proficiency on the METL (Low Density MOS)
 - Centralize training planning/Decentralize execution.
 - Establish effective communications between echelons (soldiers, NCOs, Officers, and Civilians).
 - Responsible for developing your subordinates (Mentor, guidance, listen to subordinates)

Maintenance:

- Prohibit cannibalizations of equipment. Controlled substitution can be used, however, it must be authorized by the battalion commander.

- Keep unit integrity. Periodic services should be scheduled (reflected on company training schedules) and conducted.
- Never check training without checking maintenance. Spot-check vehicles, masks, weapons, and related equipment.

Supply:

- Establish a program to monitor logistical expenditures; monitor what things are being ordered, and how they are being used.
- Be ruthless on required inventories and reports of surveys; know inventories frequency; **you must conduct those inventories required of you as a commander; you will not delegate this task to any subordinates.**
- Know what property you are accountable and responsible for.

MAJ's – Staff Officer

- Lazy Staff work: Staff's are inherently lazy, it's easier to pass on a task than to do it yourself. Too often I see staff's send out a tasker like, "Tell me what your requirements are for blocking and bracing materials during rail load operations." This is lazy staff work. A better method is to develop a list of supplies that are required for blocking and bracing then task the units to input how much of each item is needed." In the long run this actually saves the staff officer time and effort – he gets his report back in one standard format, with no confusion over what the unit meant by "Wire Rope". Also, sometimes a staff has to take care of a unit in spite of themselves. Instead of saying "I told the unit 5 times but they never returned the memo so I can't get the job done" – just type the memo your self, get the signature and drive on with the mission – if you had do this after the second time the task would have already been accomplished.

- Difference between Staff and Command vision: Staff officers should understand that they have a different way of looking at things than a Commander has. And when a commander makes a decision which is contrary to what you thought should have been done do not take it personally. You as a staff officer are interested in getting your tasks

accomplished in your lane – and that is the right attitude! But, commanders are interested in the organization as a whole and your lane may not be the most important thing at the time.

- Don't bring me a problem with out recommended solutions. You've been around long enough to conduct an analysis and develop COA's.

All Officers

Along with many of the items under CPT's / Company Commanders (leadership, accountability, training, EO, etc...) I also cover these topics:.

- Provide them a copy of my support form and my bosses support form.

- Cover the Rating Chain – who is the Rater and Senior Rater – then discuss projected moves of key leaders if applicable – which may mean that a Change of Rater will be due before the next Annual evaluation.

- Data Management: At some point in the officers time under me I will give him a class on data management and pivot tables. By knowing how to manage data better work quality and efficiency improve allowing leaders more time to check up and get out of the office.

- Goals / Objectives / Vision: Cover these items with each officer so they have a bigger picture view of where the organization is heading.

- Reputation: You build your officer reputation by what you do – word and deed. If you have a good reputation many things you are trying to do become easier because people believe your ferocity and are less likely to question you.

- Decisions: Do not be afraid to make a decision. I would much rather have an Officer who makes a decision than one that has to ask for permission to do something. But, always consider the second and third order effects of any decision you make. Also, never make a decision in

anger – best to allow yourself to cool off then re-access then make a decision.

- OER's: Never work for an OER. If your objective in this job is to get a top block OER then you have the wrong attitude. Your objective as a leader and officer should be to serve and take care of soldiers. To do this well, you need to do your job well – it's more important to be able to look yourself in the mirror and know you did the best and right thing for the soldiers under your care. If you're working for an OER, then you're working for yourself and not for the soldiers and you will tend to make selfish decisions, your intent will be to do things to make yourself look good. This is not the kind of leader I want in my organization and not the kind of leader your soldiers want to follow. If you do your job correctly, then most of the time the OER will reflect correctly.

- Career Mapping: I use an excel matrix to layout and map a soldiers career and possible career options based on his desires and on key timelines for promotions and boards.

Additional info on OER's

- Senior Rater Blocking:

- What's important

- Difference between good and great comments

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