

“Chain of Command”

By: Jack Muellerleile

“Chain of Command” refers to the various levels of management between the ‘first line’ folks who deal directly with customers (or fight the enemy, corral the lawbreakers, extinguish the fires, etc.) and the person up the line possessing the ultimate authority for decision-making. The person at the top sets the policy for those down the line to implement.

Some things to consider by persons employed in this type of organization:

1. If you are the top banana, how are you going to ensure information reaching you from far down the line is accurate?
2. If you are well down the line, how can you get the attention of those higher ups that are in policy-making positions? Or should you even attempt this?
3. What benefits accrue to you when you disregard ‘following the chain of command’ and speak your piece directly to someone positioned several layers of management above your immediate supervisor?
4. What detriments could be associated with #3 above?
5. What is the correct amount of authority to be delegated down the line?
6. What authority must always be retained unto yourself?
7. How should workload be measured?
8. How should workload be spread among the workforce?
9. Are there ‘chinks’ (weaknesses) in the ‘chain of command’ in place at this time?
10. Would a shorter reach from top to bottom help or hurt the results achieved by this ‘chain of command’?