

Part-Time-Army-Officer



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The purpose of this newsletter is to help you develop your potential, improve your effectiveness and be the best part-time Army Officer you can be. My goal is to provide helpful training tips, insights, articles, interviews and other practical information. My ultimate goal is to provide value.

What's In This Issue?

- *The Officer-NCO Relationship*
- Suggested Book of the Week
- About the Author
- Contact Information
- Recommended Resources

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The Officer - NCO Relationship

By MAJ Charles Holmes

The Officer & NCO Relationship is a beautiful thing when it works properly. Unfortunately, it doesn't normally work out that way.

This happens for a variety of reasons, but most of the time it's because the officer isn't doing his job properly. It's because the Officer and NCO don't know their respective "lane" and therefore they don't "stay in their lane."

Therefore, I'm going to explain to you the role of the Officer and the role of the NCO, so you can understand what you should be doing. Once I've finished doing that, I'm going to teach you a few ways to improve your professional relationship. Let's get started.

The Role of the Officer

- 1) The Strategic Planner
- 2) Mission Planning
- 3) Collective Training
- 4) Establish the Mission and Vision for the Organization
- 5) Establish and Enforce Standards within the Unit
- 6) Establish the "organizational culture" within the unit

The Role of the NCO

- 1) Conduct day-to-day operations
- 2) Handle Individual Training
- 3) Resolve Soldier Issues
- 4) Enforce discipline with Soldiers

These are the most important things Officers and NCOs should be doing with the majority of their time. After reading the list, how do you stack up? Are you doing the tasks you're supposed to be doing? What about your NCO?

Now that you know what you should be doing, I'm going to take a few moments and show you a few ways to improve your relationship. You see, for the two of you to be effective, you need to have a professional working relationship. Here are a few simple things to help you get started:

- 1) Establish Roles and Responsibilities through Initial Counseling:

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Everything starts with formal, written counseling. As a leader, you need to formally sit down with your NCO and outline performance expectations. You need to tell them what you expect of them, and what will happen if they meet or fail to meet your expectations.

That doesn't mean you have a one-way conversation with them though. What I've found to be effective is to brainstorm (with them) a list of ALL tasks the section is responsible for, and then divide up those tasks between the two of you.

When you do this, you will clearly know who is responsible for what. Please use my "role of the officer and role of the NCO" advice listed above when you do this. Some things can't be delegated (and shouldn't be delegated) to your NCO.

2) Hold Each Other Accountable

You and your NCO need to hold each other accountable. That means you need to have an open, professional working relationship where you can speak freely with each other. If you can't do that, you won't be effective.

Don't adopt the mindset that you are the boss and that's that. The Army gave you a NCO for a reason. I've always believed that my NCOs keep me grounded. They are my eyes and ears to what is actually going on in the unit.

If you never listen to them, they'll stop trying to talk with you. The day your NCO can't approach you with a problem is the day you've lost your effectiveness as a leader. Don't ever let that happen.

More importantly, when you mess up or do something wrong, your NCO needs to be able to pull you aside and say "what's going on sir?" If you don't let them do that, you are missing the boat.

Additionally, when one of you "steps out of your lane" you both need to be able to pull aside the other person and ask them what they are doing.

3) Review Performance & Make Improvements

Every three months you need to sit down with your NCO and conduct quarterly counseling. This must be done in writing. Your goal is to identify shortcomings and make continuous improvements.

During the counseling, you must allow your NCO to give you feedback too. Ask him what you can do better. Or ask him how he thinks the identified roles are working out. If necessary, make some minor changes, in order to improve your effectiveness.

4) Keep Your Relationship Professional

You and your NCO are not friends. You're not drinking buddies either. You must keep your relationship professional. The second you become "buddy-buddy" you jeopardize your relationship.

Therefore, don't be on a first name basis. Don't go out drinking with your NCO. Don't do anything that could put you in a compromising position.

You've worked too hard to build a professional relationship. The last thing you want to do is ruin that relationship.

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In conclusion, the Officer-NCO relationship is a beautiful thing when it works well. The secret to success is to build a professional working relationship, where each person knows his roles and responsibilities, and receives periodic feedback about their performance.

Recommended Book of the Week

Developing the Leaders Around You by John Maxwell



About Charles Holmes

I am a part-time Army Officer in the Maryland National Guard. I'm currently a Major (unless they demoted me). I love to write, teach, train and motivate. Unfortunately, I don't always get to do that as much as I'd like to. That's why I created this newsletter.

I've got just under sixteen years in the Army. As a civilian, I am a work-at-home entrepreneur. I build websites and have authored six published books. I also have a successful eBay business. I am married to the most incredible lady on this planet, Rachel.

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