

# CHAPTER 7

## OFFICER AND NCO RELATIONSHIPS



Relationships are vital and take time. NCOs should never stop trying to build and improve their relationships with their Officer counterparts.

Relationship issues will not stay in garrison, they will put Soldiers lives at risk if not fixed.



**"The most essential dynamic of combat power is competent and confident Officer and Noncommissioned officer leadership."**

**- CSM Marcelino Malavet**

## **Chapter 7**

### **Officer and NCO Relationships**

#### 7.0. Ref.

- ADP 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*.
- AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*.
- FM 6-22, *Leader Development*.

#### 7.1. Army Officers and NCO relationship.

Mutual trust and common goals are the two characteristics that enhance the relationship between officers and NCOs. For instance, "Leaders who commit to coaching, counseling, and mentoring subordinates build relationships that foster trust. These relationships built on trust enable leaders to empower subordinates, encourage initiative, reinforce accountability, and allow for open communication. Further, these relationships establish predictability and cohesion within the team. Doing so ensures Soldier safety while forming professional and personal bonds with the officers based on mutual trust and common goals." NCOs are "the backbone of the Army" and are the senior enlisted advisors who assist commanders with knowledge and discipline for all enlisted matters.

- a. Every Soldier has a Sergeant. Officers are no exception. Platoon Sergeants, 1SGs, Sergeant Majors, and Command Sergeant Majors at all levels serve as their respective officer's Sergeant.
- b. An important part of your role as an NCO is how you relate to commissioned officers. To develop this working relationship, NCOs, and officers must know the similarities of their respective duties and responsibilities.
- c. Commissioned officers hold a commission granted by the President of the United States once approved by the United States Senate, which authorizes them to act as the President's representative in certain military matters. Laws, regulations, policies, and customs limit the duties and responsibilities of commissioned officers, NCOs, and government officials. As the President's representatives, commissioned officers carry out the orders of the Commander-in-Chief as handed down through the chain of command. In carrying out orders, commissioned officers get considerable help, assistance, and advice from NCOs.

d. NCOs obtain their authorities as agents of the Secretary of the Army outlined in Army regulations. They support the command authority of commissioned officers. As the Secretary of the Army's representatives, NCOs carry out the orders of Commander-in-Chief through the chain of command. In carrying out orders, NCOs provide support, assistance, and advice to officers.

e. A Commissioned Officer:

- Commands and establishes policy, plans, and programs the work of the Army.
- Must be technically and tactically proficient in his/her MOS and that of the organization.
- Concentrates on collective training to enable the unit to accomplish the mission.
- Is primarily involved with unit operations, training, and related activities.
- Pays particular attention to the standards of performance, training, and professional development of Officers as well as NCOs.
- Creates conditions, make time and other resources available, so the NCO can do the job.
- Supports the NCO.

f. A Noncommissioned Officer:

- Conducts the daily business of the Army within established orders, directives, and policies.
- Focuses on individual training, which develops the capability to accomplish the mission.
- Primarily involved with training and leading Soldiers and teams.
- Ensures each subordinate team, NCO, and Soldier is prepared to function as an effective unit and each member is well trained, highly motivated, ready, and functioning.
- Concentrates on standards of performance, training, and professional development of NCOs and enlisted Soldiers.
- Follows orders of officers and NCOs in the support channel.
- Maintains good order and discipline, suggests and implements solutions to unit issues, gives candid feedback to their officer counterparts, and ensures the welfare of Soldiers and their Families.
- Accomplishes the mission.
- Effective trainer.
- Develop foresight and keep standards high.
- Possess the courage to act.
- Subject matter expert in their MOS, able to provide clear and concise input relevant to MDMP.

g. The success of the U.S. Army is directly related to the quality of the professional relationships between its officers and NCOs. The officer/ NCO team forms the cornerstone of our Army, and when the bond is formed, it can have the single most important impact on unit effectiveness and efficiency. Conversely, if the bond is broken, it can have a devastating impact on morale, esprit de corps, readiness, and mission accomplishment.

h. AR 600-20 defines command authority and what is NCO support, but the officer/NCO relationship is not created by a strict set of rules, policy or procedures, it is based on mutual respect, communication, trust, commitment, and devotion. The officer/NCO relationship benefits officers at all levels, but especially junior officers. The relationship established during

junior officer development will have a lasting impact on those officer's opinions, respect for, good will, and confidence in NCOs for the rest of their careers.

i. NCOs accept as an unwritten duty, the responsibility to instruct and develop Second Lieutenants, but it is the company commander's responsibility to train lieutenants and the battalion commander who is the driving force behind the training of lieutenants.

j. There are several critical officer/NCO relationships that form the bond as a team: Platoon Sergeant/Platoon Leader, 1SG/company CDR, and CSM/CDR at battalion and higher. Both NCOs and officers have expectations of each other that form the foundation of a strong relationship. Two expectations that are applicable to all NCO/officer relationships are: NCOs and officers can expect mutual respect, trust, and loyalty from their counterparts; NCOs and officers should always appear unified. If there is a disagreement, it must be settled out of sight and out of sound of everyone.

k. What should the NCO expect of an Officer? The NCO can expect the officer to:

- Have personal integrity and high morals.
- Maintain a high state of appearance be a standard bearer.
- Be fair, be consistent, and have dignity.
- Be compassionate and understanding- do not be aloof to the issues and problems of Soldiers.
- Have courage in the face of danger.
- Have courage of convictions and stand up for what is right, even though it might be hard.
- Not expose themselves or Soldiers to unnecessary risk.
- Protect family time and encourage work/life balance.
- Be accountable for their own actions and the actions of their Soldiers.
- Endure hardships equal to the hardships experienced by Soldiers.

l. What should the officer expect of an NCO? The officer can expect the NCO to:

- Be loyal to the officer's position.
- Be devoted to the cause of national defense.
- Possess endurance and motivation that matches officers.
- Possess intestinal fortitude and courage.
- Possess a strong desire to achieve goals that matches officers.
- Possess a strong spirituality, love of country, and a love of duty that matches officers.
- Endure hardships equal to the hardships experienced by Soldiers.
- Master expertise in Army programs that supports the needs of Soldiers and their Families.

m. What should a Platoon Sergeant expect of their Platoon Leader? The PSG can expect the PL to:

- Be pleasant and approachable.
- Let the NCOs handle the problems of the platoon, while keeping him/her informed.
- Be equally involved in physical training, to share ownership of successes and shortcomings, communicate with the platoon when opportunities arise.
- Uphold the highest standards.
- Show maturity and display candor.
- Recognize the imbalance of experience.
- Ensure the PL and PSG begin with common goals.

- Communicate. Good communication does not happen all by itself. Talk, talk, talk and listen, listen, listen.
  - Counsel. The PL and PSG must work together to establish realistic, recognizable standards and after counseling a Soldier, communicate the results to each other.
  - Give the company CDR and the 1SG a perspective of how he/she is getting along with the PSG.
  - Lead Squad Leaders and depend on NCOs to directly lead individual Soldiers.
  - Give the company commander and the 1SG a perspective on how the PSG is doing.
- n. What should Platoon Leader expect of their Platoon Sergeant? The PL can expect the PSG to:
- Understand the inherent responsibility to coach and counsel PL's to develop their competence, character, and commitment in the performance of their duty. Developing junior officers is a PSG's responsibility.
  - Recognize the imbalance of experience.
  - Demonstrate tact and diplomacy with the PL.
  - Offer advice, but execute orders.
  - Incorporate the PL into the team he/she has to lead.
  - Mold, guide, and educate the PL to the subtleties of Army life.
  - Share knowledge and experience.
  - Train and correct the PL when needed.
  - Show a genuine concern that the PL is learning the right way instead of the easy way.
  - Present a unified front. Do not undermine or destroy the PLs credibility (Remember that order/counter-order creates disorder).
  - Set the example for the PL through military bearing and consistent demonstration of character, competence, and commitment to the mission, Soldiers, and their Families.
  - When the PL makes a mistake, make sure they learn from those mistakes, if repeated; provide firm, pointed instruction to keep it from being habitual.
  - Give the company commander and the 1SG a perspective on how the PL is doing.
  - Give the PL the PSG's view on particular matters before the PL discusses with the company commander.
- o. What should the 1SG expect of the company CDR? The 1SG can expect the company CDR to:
- Possess the same qualities expected of all officers.
  - Maintains a positive rapport with the battalion CSM.
  - Administer fair and impartial justice.
  - Take responsibility for their actions and those of the unit and Soldiers.
  - Seek the 1SG's advice.
  - Never belittle or undermine the 1SG and respect the position or the 1SG's authority.
- p. What should the company commander expect of the 1SG? The company CDR can expect the 1SG to:
- Possess the same qualities expected of all NCOs.
  - Maintain discipline.

- Train, educate, and share experiences with both the commander and Soldiers.
  - Loyal to the commander's position.
  - Develop and agree on the goals, standards and objectives of the company.
  - Build training plans with platoon leadership that supports the commanders vision.
  - Ensure all administrative functions are executed accurately and on time.
  - Build mutual trust and respect for each other.
  - Know the commander's strengths and weaknesses.
  - Know their responsibilities as defined in AR 600-20.
  - Possess a strong sense of duty.
  - Ready the company for any mission.
  - The standard-bearer in appearance, morals, ethics, values, competences, and commitment.
  - An advisor, but execute orders.
  - The subject matter expert in Army programs that best supports the needs of Soldiers and their Families.
- q. What should the CSM expect of the battalion/brigade CDR? The CSM can expect the BC to:
- Possess the same qualities expected of all officers.
  - Seek advice and share views.
  - Maintain open communications with the CSM.
  - Fair and impartial.
  - Inspire leaders and Soldiers.
  - Understand each other and how they will function together as a team.
  - Harness the CSM's talents.
  - Do not limit the CSM's duties or responsibilities.
  - Resource the CSM as an enlisted extension of the BC.
  - Learn to know the CSM's feelings about any given subject.
  - Give the position of CSM the respect it is due.
  - Empower the NCO support channel to solve problems at the lowest level.
  - Ensure there is no one in the chain of command that comes between the BC and the CSM.
  - Provide manning guidance and plan for manning proportionately, and manning issues.
  - Provide training guidance that includes crew certification, and company METL evaluations.
- r. What should the battalion/brigade CDR expect of the CSM? CDRs can expect the CSM to:
- Possess the same qualities expected of the BC.
  - Understand each other and how they will function together as a team.
  - Share views.
  - Visit Soldiers on the ground and get their perspective. Inspect and check where Soldiers are.
  - A leader of presence and character.
  - Inspire leaders and Soldiers.
  - Manage the organization's sponsorship program.
  - Manage processes and procedures.
  - An expert in customs, courtesies, traditions and ceremonies.
  - Understand each other and how they will function together as a team.
  - A reliable, trusted confidant.

- Have honest and candid communications and be able to disagree without being disrespectful.
- Ensure there is no one in the chain of command that comes between the team.
- Direct access and accountable to the BC.
- After obtaining advice and making a decision, the CSM supports those decisions.
- Ensure the CSM provides advice to company CDR/ISG relationships, CSM/ISG relationships, CSM/company CDR relationships vs. the company CDR/battalion staff relationship.
- Ensure the CSM is responsible for assigning incoming NCOs.
- Be impartial and be objective.
- Conduct inspections, check training, sit as president of promotion boards, and be a part of the reenlistment program.
- Work closely with the EO/EEO/Chaplain and SHARP Advocate.
- The subject matter expert on all Army programs to support Soldiers and their Families.
- Most experienced trainer in the organization.
- Learn to know the commander's feelings about any given subject.
- Execute manning guidance and develop plans for manning proportionately, and manning issues.
- Assist unit leaders understand the commanders training guidance that includes crew certification, and company METL evaluations.

## 7.2. Army Civilians and NCO Relationship.

The Army currently employs the largest civilian workforce within the DOD. Army Civilians are skilled personnel dedicated to serving the nation as an integral part of the Army team. They provide mission-essential capability, stability, and continuity during war and peace to support Soldiers. The Army instills the essential characteristics of the Army profession and prepares Soldiers and Army Civilians to operate in dynamic environments. The Army Civilian and NCO relationship enables the Army to accomplish its mission through performance, while contributing to the overall organizational goals.

a. With the exception of direct combat operations, Army Civilians serve alongside Soldiers in all operational environments. Taking an oath to support and defend the Constitution, Army Civilians provide mission-essential support and services. The NCO must understand the role Army Civilians play, how to utilize them in taking care of Soldier and accomplishing the mission. Whether working directly over, under or with Army Civilians, NCOs will afford the same level of respect given to fellow Soldiers. By knowing the rules and regulations by which Army Civilians adhere to, the NCO will gain an understanding on how to best build relationships and create an climate that's beneficial to all.

b. An NCOs use of social skills (team building) and especially inter-personal tact allows them to work effectively with other Soldiers and Civilians. When civilian supervisor NCOs they understand the professional development guidance needed to assist NCOs in their career advancement.