



By Jason Gallardo

1. Build relationships- your ability to succeed will depend on your aptitude at working with your sister BNs, BDE, DIV, and post agencies.

You have been told throughout your career that relationships are everything, but it becomes even more vital as a field grade officer. If you try to go at it alone, you will fail. Be genuine and always be the first to help your peers when you can. This will make it far easier to ask for help when you need it. Remember that you are the face of your organization and how you interact on post can determine the reputation of your unit.

2. Your commander's priorities are your priorities- but it is your duty to ensure those priorities are balanced with his/her boss's priorities. Never let them run counter to each other.

Remember that command is very personal for your boss, and while you are 100% invested in your organization, this isn't just a BN/SQDN fight. You are a part of larger organization and it is your duty to remain objective to ensure that you don't let your boss counter any

priorities or initiatives of your next higher boss.

3. Pick your battles - you can win most of the battles, but as a field grade, you need to know which battles you take on, which battles you nominate to the boss, which battles require a coalition, and which battles not to fight.

BDEs, Divisions, and even Corps make mistakes and your unit may not always get a fair shake. Accept that sometimes your unit will be tasked with more than other units. Save the fight for the things that really matter - remember that teamwork is more important than winning every single battle.

4. Be a leader! Staff time can be an even greater leadership challenge than your command time, but you will influence just as many lives.

While command was certainly a valuable time where you got to see the direct results of your leadership, staff is not a time to forget about your charge as a leader. As a BN or BDE staff officer, you will interact with just as many people and have a great impact on many young officers, warrant officers, and NCOs. Many junior leaders will look at you in your staff time and make a decision about a career in the Army based on the example you set. Your subordinates will look at you and think "Do I want to be a major in the Army?" Leadership does not stop when you pass the guidon - challenge yourself with setting an example every single day.

5. Learn the intricacies of the job - if you aren't knowledgeable, you won't know enough to hold people responsible for doing their job and you won't be able to predict problems.

You will face many unique challenges as a staff leader, one of which is not being the most knowledgeable individual in the organization. Take the time to learn the intricacies of the

other staff sections to help you both understand the contributions and hold the staff accountable for their jobs. If you don't know what their job entails, you will never be able to predict problems and create innovative solutions to those problems.

6-Don't forget what it was like to lead at the CO/TRP/BTRY. With every project or OPORD, remember your intended audience.

It is easy to forget the rigors of CO/TRP/BTRY CMD as a field grade and to pretend you had all the answers when you were in command. Spend your time enabling and building up the COs rather than criticizing and working against them. They are where the rubber meets the road, so if your plan, system, training event, or OPORD is not helping them, humble yourself to change it so it meets their needs.

7. Develop systems and pin the rose - make sure you track which system belongs to each staff section. If you establish a system, your "task management" decreases, and people take ownership.

With the bevy of tasks leveraged upon you as a field grade, it is easy to focus on your strengths and let other systems fall behind. Rather than giving vague guidance and assuming your staff will be able to translate that guidance, develop a system and then empower subordinates to make it better. The more your people own critical aspects of making the staff run more effectively, the more time you have to be a leader, rather than spending your time managing individual tasks.

8. Search for talent - as you delegate ownership of systems and projects, look for talent across the staff. If you stovepipe or use only your "strong horses", the staff will lack balance and people won't feel valued.

We all have the tendency to rely on our strongest subordinates and fail to search for the hidden talent elsewhere on the staff. Don't be afraid to task your folks to work outside of

their staff sections. Not only do you lessen the workload on your stronger staff by spreading the wealth, but you value and highlight the talents of other staff members and make them feel like an integral part of the team. In previous green-tab positions, we rely heavily upon our NCOs, but as field grade staff officers we often forget the valuable contribution and experience that they bring to the table. As a company commander you could do much of the work yourself, but as a field grade officer, you will not only have to outsource work, but will outsource thinking as well.

9. Always be quick with praise, take time to learn the facts before you criticize, and make sure your subordinates receive the credit they deserve.

You will always find things that frustrate you about your organization, but always learn the facts before your criticize. Staff work, especially for young officers and senior NCOs, is already a thankless job. If you actively recognize and praise their contributions, your staff will perform like a winning team. Create opportunities where your subordinates can shine in front of your BN/SQDN or BDE CDR, and give them the credit when they earn it.

10. Attitude will impact performance - if you are having fun, your staff will succeed.

Even if you are the most talented commander in the Army, the majority of your career will be on staff at some level. If you treat it like a sentence to be served, your staff will pick up on this. There is no doubt you'll stay at work until 2200 making countless changes to a training event, spend hours on formatting a command and staff briefing deck, and even spend a Friday night rewording a Serious Incident Report, but you can still have fun doing all of the necessary work of a field grade staff officer. Build a team, mentor junior leaders, change your organization for the better - That's why you joined the Army, so have fun doing it!

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Development jobs, he served as the 4th Infantry Division Deputy CJ33 in Kandahar, AFG, as the 2-1 Cavalry S3 and Executive Officer, and as the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th ID, Brigade Executive Officer. He commanded Eagle Troop, and Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Sabre Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment in both garrison and combat.

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