

History of the Problems in the Materials Department

As requested, in the following report I have noted down my experiences in order to provide some clarity on the problems in my department. After your move to Maintenance, the IM Section did not have any head. I provided the major support to operations in terms of placing orders, and all evaluations were done by me. Whenever a recommendation was forwarded to the responsible person, no-one took the responsibility of approving the SSL increase. This set up the situation whereby material was not delivered on-time, and was not available when it was needed.

A further problem which affected the daily life of the end-user was that new, ad hoc, self-made procedures were developed, without anyone being consulted, and were forwarded to me verbally. I had to process and action these procedures whenever end-users lodged an inquiry. For example, it was decided that an agreement from the Department Manager via email would suffice to meet the audit requirement. A special SSL was developed for the signatory, which meant an increase in paperwork and the delaying of critical requests. And when end-users sent in the approval forms, the forms had to wait for months to be approved. In many cases, the forms were misplaced. When end-users called, I had no option but to say (with a sense of personal frustration) that the form had been forwarded for approval, and I had not yet received it back.

Communication and Motivation Issues

Whenever I tried to raise the topic of how we could facilitate the process for end-user requirements, I was clearly told that "It's not your father's company, so why are you trying to help the end-users?" These words would be enough to discourage anyone in my position, whether myself or anyone else. But I had to look beyond issues of self-respect, and I always took these words as an encouragement to work better, and to try and provide other services to the end-users, without stepping beyond the scope of my job. To date, I have not received any complaints against me.

Everything has its own time frames and limits. Given the above scenario, at one point I did resign, but my resignation was rejected, and I was told that I would not be allowed to work in any other oil and gas company. I accepted this. But the people who were responsible and in charge knew that without me they would have tremendous problems in dealing with and managing the inventory.

RSPLs were reviewed by me, and recommendations were sent for approval to delegated personnel. In order for SSLs to be approved, the only thing that was really necessary was a lot of convincing, as well the demonstration of real-time situations. For example, Fuji Filters and PPE all were becoming a major issue. I was never consulted on any increase in critical matters. The Safety Department Managers had implemented a new approach, which meant that they kept on calling me about these issues but I was never officially kept in the loop. The decisions regarding the increase, as well as my recommendations, were provided by me to the end-user, and were always to their satisfaction. My analysis usually contained an element of surprise.

Benefits to the Company

I have a proven record of how much money I have saved the company. These savings amount to millions of dollars. I was able to effect these savings because of my research and analytical capabilities, which I gained through continuing education and by reading industry-wide research papers in Inventory Management.

Through my dedication, I gained respect throughout the company's hierarchy, and was known as someone who served the end-users. My approach was to provide full information, as well as to provide my full cooperation regarding their issues.

Promotional Issues

The most distressing part of my work with the Materials Department was when my manager promoted a person who did not know the ABC of the Supply Chain Management field into a Direct Senior position. This person does not complete tasks in time, and it appears to me that he is happy to get the salary at the end of the month but is equally happy not to work. It takes him days to complete minor jobs. In due course, I stopped passing on my work to him, because people started complaining, since they expected the same service levels which I had provided to them.

For five years, I was told that “We are working to promote you”, but it now appears that this was never the truth. When I inquired on what criteria this person was promoted, the reply was simply that it was their decision. Then I realized that I was at fault for having asked the question, since I knew the reply. One cannot expect otherwise from people who think that end-users are their worst enemies who are always trying to make their lives more difficult.

Many times, when a matter or promotion was not approved according to my supervisory level, I was told “Let the plant stop, it doesn’t matter if the materials are delayed.” But I never accepted this attitude, and worked very hard in order to convince them to authorize the PR releases.

It took five years of my suffering amongst these personnel, but finally things have changed, and once again the situation looks more optimistic. Hopefully, the new management will consider personnel matters based on merit rather than upon one’s personal relationships.