

## Orders from two bosses – Ohh No

Henri Fayol's 14 principles are still a gem. One among those 14 principles is Unity of Command. A subordinate should receive orders from one superior only. If he receives orders from more than one superior, he will not be able to carry out orders in a proper manner. Fayol observed that if this principle is violated, authority will be undermined, discipline will be in jeopardy, order will be disturbed and stability will be threatened. Dual command is the permanent source of conflict. Therefore, in every organization, each subordinate should have one superior whose command he has to obey.

One of the common grievance employees raise is about the communication patterns adopted by their immediate higher ups. Inconsistent messages often become a hurdle in the smooth sail of daily activities. It means that one supervisor gives an instruction and the other reporting authority tells employee instructs something else. Observe the following scenario and assume yourself in the position where one tells one thing and another tells them something different. **Imagine you are the supervisor or manager and critically evaluate the communication pattern in this case.**

Kervin is a 30 -year old who is managing foodservice at a resort situated at the outskirts of a city. It's a chain of resorts and overall there are ten resorts in major tourist attractions of the country. He is responsible for supervising and managing all employees in the back of the house. He has built a motivated bunch of staff who enjoy their work and people around the city like this place not only for food quality but also for the attitude of staff. The resort also gets a decent feedback from its in house guests largely due to food and hospitality. Over the years Mr Kervin has successfully implemented some strategies. One among these is to select the choice of dishes for the day based on the demographic composition of the guests. It simply means that breakfast / lunch / diner will have items belonging to the native cuisine of the guest. By doing this the resort was getting appreciation from the guests that they were not missing their home food.

One day the Chief Executive Officer was on the casual visit to the resort. He was travelling to some other destination and due to some unavoidable reasons had to stay in the resort. He thought it would be great opportunity to meet up with staff and motivate them. Naturally the CEO visit made lot of buzz in the resort all seem to be very happy to meet him. Unfortunately, Mr Kervin was on three-day personal leave however he had given all instructions for his staff regarding menu for all these days based on guest profile. A robust ERP system was giving information to kitchen staff about the profile of the guest.

CEO met the staff of resort and the entire atmosphere was jubilant. When kitchen staff interacted with the CEO he casually said 'for another couple of days fill the menu with Chinese dishes – I love it'. Staff could not say anything and they just nodded their head. They were confused. The guest profile for coming days was clear – majority were South Indian and Mr Kervin's instructions were according to this information. Mr Kervin was not reachable over the phone and finally staff had to prepare Chinese dishes as per CEO words. The result was totally disappointed in house guests. After the chaos when Mr Kervin returned to work realized what went wrong in his absence. But little he could do about this.

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(The above case let can be used for discussing the Fayol's principles or in Communication lectures)