

## 10 Points for being Effective and Proactive Branch Officer!

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We, as branch officers tend to keep busy in routine matters on the plea that long hours are spent on satisfying the needs of DRM and headquarter. In fact, by working like this, we resort to the easy and convenient path of completing the tenure without falling in any kind of controversy. It is always easy to discharge the functions of subordinate officer at all levels of functioning i.e. it is easier to function as AME/DME while posted as Sr.DME. This is because one is well conversant with the functions of the level from which one has been promoted whereas working at the newly promoted level demands exposure to new areas of knowledge. Non tackling of issues at the right level is the major reason for the poor growth of Indian Railways of which Mechanical Department is an important part.

Following suggestions may be useful to a Branch Officer to be effective and proactive:

1. In the initial 2 to 3 months of posting to a new assignment, areas of concern must be identified. After this initial period, one starts flowing with the system lost in day-to-day functionalities and areas of concern are either not perceivable or they are too many to identify.
2. After identifying areas of concern, an action plan must be drawn detailing the weak areas, planned action and follow up. Statistics relevant to problem areas, instructions in vogue, on-going developmental activities like machinery, plant, works and other planned resources in pipeline should be incorporated in the action plan document.
3. Action Plan document should begin with Annual mission statement based on the urgency of issues. Annual mission areas must be given wide publicity and should be known to all the officers and supervisors of the unit. Similarly, Action Plan against individual areas of concern should be known to the respective officers and supervisors and staff for their active involvement in the follow up process.

4. Periodical review meeting must be held with the concerned officers and supervisors. Special efforts will be needed for making resources available for taking care of weak areas for which personal involvement of Branch officer is essential for making headway on the lines of action plan. Most of the action plans fail because of lack of interest and poor involvement of right level of management.
5. As a Thumb rule, 50% of the time should be spent on routine matters and balance 50% on planning & executing improvement on weak areas as identified above.
6. After taking over an assignment, latest schedule of powers of that post as well as the posts above must be one of the first lessons to be learnt.
7. Tab should be kept on expenditure under revenue as well as under demand 16 (Plan Head 41, Plan Head 42, RSP and other operative Plan Heads).
8. Progress of sanctioned items under M & P and RSP Programme/works under Works Programme must be meticulously reviewed at personal level. Supervisor of reasonable intelligence should be deployed to directly assist the Branch Officer.
9. Training of staff should be a priority issue. Action Plan must detail training plan for improving the skill of staff and supervisors. Use of information technology and electronic media must be conceived. Visit to outside institutions and other workplaces of similar activity should be organized to make the training interesting and refreshing.
10. Strategy to motivate workers must be devised and implemented at the personal level of Branch officer for keeping the morale high. A Unit is steered ahead by a Group of motivated and competent work force which generally comprises of not more than 25% of total work force. Simultaneously, strategy must be devised for poor performers and shirkers for taking up with them and counseling them.