

Kelley's Corner

Last month we discovered that the company we are studying did not have defined policies and procedures. These important guidelines are different for every organization, so it is ill advised to assume that what works for another organization will work for yours. Once policies and procedures are established, however, it is important to ensure that:

1. Roles and responsibilities are assigned to the employees with the correct skill sets.
2. Employees are empowered to make decisions at a level which allows them to solve problems.
3. Performance measurements are in place which reward, review or retrain. Discipline is not a perfect learning experience.

It has been my experience that the commercial ground transport industry struggles to accept these goals.

The existing procedure for a breakdown with this company was for the driver to make the first call to Operations. The reasoning was that that load delivery was of utmost importance..... The reasoning was correct, but the procedure was wrong. Calling Operations first would not deliver the load faster unless a second company truck was nearby with a LTL condition and a cargo that could be hand transferred. Not likely.

The procedure was changed to provide 24/7 off site maintenance support. The **first** call either went to maintenance which had extended hours, or to the assigned after hours maintenance person who did not work the following morning. This provided a number of benefits going forward:

- The driver makes one call.
- The repair is directed to a reputable repair provider (Remember the \$700.00 tow bill).
- The repair costs are reduced because the repairs were audited at the front end, rather than the back end.
- Payment is pre-arranged by Maintenance.
- The operations staff are more productive. They do not arrive to work the following morning grumpy after a disturbed sleep.
- The driver has a contact with a role and resources designed to support, rather than direct.

In most cases, Operations do not see any interruption in delivery and are informed of the repair event the following morning.

Simple you say? No one had the time to stand back and evaluate the situation. This is just one of many procedure problems which exist in most businesses.

What did we miss? Ah, yes – next month we will look at performance measures.

Kelley