

“Field Presence”

By: Jack Muellerleile

“**Field Presence**” is probably the most important and the most neglected part of a professional line manager’s responsibilities.

Far too many top executives allow themselves to get squirreled away in luxury headquarters offices surrounded by staffers of every kind. As the result, they rapidly lose track of what is REALLY happening in the field because ‘reports’ they read are often colored by those through whom they pass enroute to that executive. This lack of “Field Presence” also deprives the lower level people of their words of wisdom about ways to improve the results being produced.

“Field Presence” can be maintained by every executive line manager. These few things will assure this without allowing decision-making at the top to suffer:

1. Find and install a fully qualified staff manager (who dearly loves sitting at a desk all day and is very good at managing people) to review nearly everything arriving at the executive manager’s office every day.
2. Delegate to this person the needed authority to implement decisions in your absence.
3. Review the routine things and instruct him as to the decisions you would make and expect him to make in your absence.
4. If ever in doubt, he is to call you in the field to talk about the situation.
5. Establish a pattern to your field visits (i.e. Tues-Wed-Thurs only) so people know you can be reached in person in the office each Monday & Friday.
6. Stick to the established routine.