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## **Line and Staff Organisation**

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Line and staff organization is a modification of line organization and it is more complex than line organization. According to this administrative organization, specialized and supportive activities are attached to the line of command by appointing staff supervisors and staff specialists who are attached to the line authority. The power of command always remains with the line executives and staff supervisors guide, advice and counsel the line executives. Personal Secretary to the Managing Director is a staff official.

Most business organisations, except the very small, have this type of structure. As the organisations have grown complex, the problems of line executives have become sufficiently complicated. The line executives being generalists need the advice of personnel with specialised knowledge and functions to tackle these problems. For this purpose, the staff positions are

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created in the organisation. In line and staff organisation, the line authority remains the same as it does in the line organisation i.e. the authority flows from top to bottom; and the line executives perform the major functions; the staff functionaries support and advise the line executives. For example, for sound management of human resources, the line managers are provided specialised assistance through personnel/Human Resource managers. As staff functionaries are employed to perform supportive role, they do not have any power of command in the organisation (Figure 2).

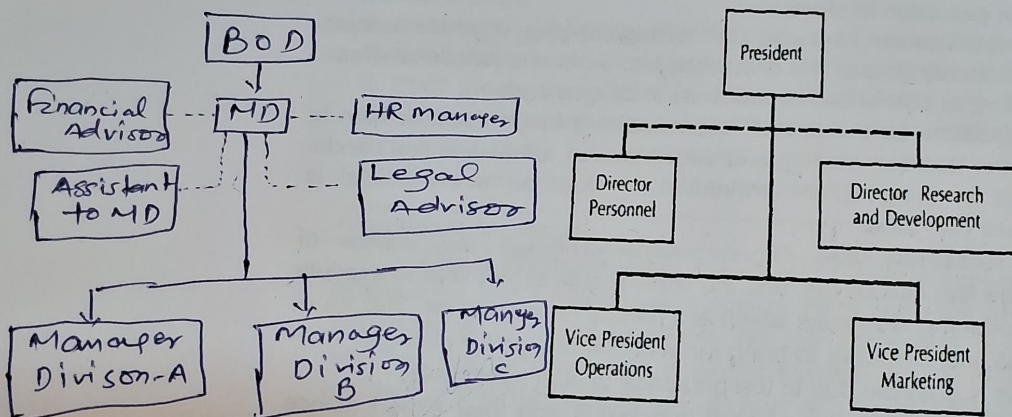


Figure 2: Line and Staff Organisation

### Features of Line and Staff Organization

1. There are two types of staff :
  - a. Staff Assistants- P.A. to Managing Director, Secretary to Marketing Manager.
  - b. Staff Supervisor- Operation Control Manager, Quality Controller, PRO
2. Line and Staff Organization is a compromise of line organization. It is more complex than line concern.
3. Division of work and specialization takes place in line and staff organization.
4. The whole organization is divided into different functional areas to which staff specialists are attached.
5. Efficiency can be achieved through the features of specialization.
6. There are two lines of authority which flow at one time in a concern :
  - a. Line Authority
  - b. Staff Authority
7. Power of command remains with the line executive and staff serves only as counsellors.



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### Merits of Line and Staff Organization

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1. **Relief to line of executives-** In a line and staff organization, the advice and counseling which is provided to the line executives divides the work between the two. The line executive can concentrate on the execution of plans and they get relieved of dividing their attention to many areas.
2. **Expert advice-** The line and staff organization facilitates expert advice to the line executive at the time of need. The planning and investigation which is related to different matters can be done by the staff specialist and line officers can concentrate on execution of plans.
3. **Benefit of Specialization-** Line and staff through division of whole concern into two types of authority divides the enterprise into parts and functional areas. This way every officer or official can concentrate in its own area.
4. **Better co-ordination-** Line and staff organization through specialization is able to provide better decision making and concentration remains in few hands. This feature helps in bringing co- ordination in work as every official is concentrating in their own area.
5. **Benefits of Research and Development-** Through the advice of specialized staff, the line executives, and the line executives get time to execute plans by taking productive decisions which are helpful for a concern. This gives a wide scope to the line executive to bring innovations and go for research work in those areas. This is possible due to the presence of staff specialists.
6. **Training-** Due to the presence of staff specialists and their expert advice serves as ground for training to line officials. Line executives can give due concentration to their decision making. This in itself is a training ground for them.
7. **Balanced decisions-** The factor of specialization which is achieved by line staff helps in bringing co- ordination. This relationship automatically ends up the line official to take better and balanced decision.
8. **Unity of action-** Unity of action is a result of unified control. Control and its effectively take place when co- ordination is present in the concern. In the line and staff authority all the officials have got independence to make decisions. This serves as effective control in the whole enterprise.

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### Demerits of Line and Staff Organization

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1. **Lack of understanding-** In a line and staff organization, there are two authority flowing at one time. This results in the confusion between the two. As a result, the workers are not able to understand as to who is their commanding authority. Hence the problem of understanding can be a hurdle in effective running.
2. **Lack of sound advice-** The line official get used to the expertise advice of the staff. At times the staff specialists also provide wrong decisions which the

line executives have to consider. This can affect the efficient running of the enterprise.

3. **Line and staff conflicts-** Line and staff are two authorities which are flowing at the same time. The factors of designations, status influence sentiments which are related to their relation, can pose a distress on the minds of the employees. This leads to minimizing of co- ordination which hampers a concern's working.
  4. **Costly-** In line and staff concern, the concerns have to maintain the high remuneration of staff specialist. This proves to be costly for a concern with limited finance.
  5. **Assumption of authority-** The power of concern is with the line official but the staff dislikes it as they are the one more in mental work.
  6. **Staff steals the show-** In a line and staff concern, the higher returns are considered to be a product of staff advice and counselling. The line officials feel dissatisfied and a feeling of distress enters a concern. The satisfaction of line officials is very important for effective results.
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