



CIRCULAR No. 09 /2022-24

(TO MEMBERS ONLY)

26/05/2024

Dear Comrades,

Today as I am completing 21 years in our beloved Institution, I am sharing a few thoughts which I think are relevant about the working conditions of officers at this point of time. It is quite unimaginable how the banking industry has transformed over the last two decades. As I have been receiving representations from across the regions regarding the extreme limits to which the staff is being pushed into with the changing strategies, I thought it would be fair from my part to convey my stand on the same, being the General Secretary of the only Association for officers in SIB.

SIBOA doesn't follow the habit of straightaway obstructing any policy decisions in so far as they don't affect the working conditions or the welfare of the officers. Before interfering, we have always made it a point to ensure that enough time is given for the changing systems to settle so that our criticism can be constructive and after a proper study taking its own time. And we are glad to say better sense has prevailed all the time in the past.

Let me start with Max points. While SIB Max was introduced as an Incentive Scheme, ultimately the same has turned out to be a pressure point for branches to do business in the disguise of increasing productivity. With very few branches having achieved the benefit in the quarter of introduction, the reality is that a huge majority of the branches are pushed towards achieving 100% Max points from which they don't get a penny as incentive. As per the scheme only branches above 100% achievement even starts to get benefitted. The changing product wise point distribution is only understood to control the achievement percentage and to change focus on products as the controllers desire, which, unfortunately is not taking into account the market situation. Quarter wise approach pushes the achievers and non-achievers back to zero at the end of each quarter from where the work pressure of branches gets reset. With the above, like we have always maintained, in the literal absence of an Incentive scheme, we suggest that an Ex-gratia shall be introduced in the system in which staff gets equally credited cadre wise.

The staffing pattern of 60:40 as explained by the Management as a ratio of field level staff to back-office operations has not changed as there has been no addition to branches from departments as assured by the Management. With sourcing being expected from mere 60% of the work force, the pressure and work load transferred to the ground level staff is pushing them to extreme limits breaking many HR principles our institution had been following. With the skeletal staff at branches further being divided to operations and sales, the other factors like compliance and customer service are put at stake which we believe will not aid our institution in improving our base. The clarity on roles such as sales, operation and hybrid sales are yet to be published. Interestingly, the same is being interpreted differently in each region and even the top management representatives who attend BM's meetings at different regions dish out totally differing stories.

Association had been repeatedly making representation to the Management for the need of a Review Schedule for branches and departments by which proper time management can be brought in place. With no existing guidelines for the review mechanism, we could find out a Region in which 10 reviews were conducted in a week of 5 working days. Considering a minimum of 1 hour per review, which is always above that, 10 out of 40 hours which is 1/4th of the time to be utilised for productive work is spent for taking commitments and naming non- achievers. Often, the language used in reviews are more of a threatening angle than a guidance or motivational which would be more productive. We reiterate our demand for having Review Schedule not affecting the productive hours of business to ensure that the opportunity for business is not lost at the cost of asking for business.

While the new initiative from HR Department -Wellness Wednesdays is appreciated, it is to be checked how many are attending the same. It was informed by the membership that it has been an added mental pressure to handle the



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calls from departments asking them to attend the event to ensure their “Mental Wellness”. Before HR department introduces such wonderful initiatives, It is to be ensured that the staff are provided with the time and opportunity to attend the same, keeping apart the hurdles branch banking has put on their shoulders.

While too much focus is being given to Customer Calling activities, we are yet to incorporate a system by which the output we receive from the same is duly assessed. The data we create with a CMS entry after a customer call is not retrievable for future use. The data profile of the customer, a caller procures from his earnest efforts is not recordable for later reference. Designed from selling point of angle alone, the name of a customer gets repeated in many enablers by which branches have ended up connecting a customer for different reasons in consecutive days, and ultimately losing business due to customer complaints. It is to be realised that branch banking has a lot to be looked into above selling, which can only be a component of the whole selling unit. It is seriously felt that basic branch banking is being thrown to the wind at the whims and fancies of Branch Banking vertical, which obviously lacks proper knowledge of what is actually happening in branches.

Our strong contention on initiating transfers as punishment for non-performance was conveyed by the Association to the top most Executives of our institution. It was examined and proven in most of the cases that no proper study was made in choosing the unfortunates who were transferred. 90% of such transfers are understood to be made from the recommendation of Regional Heads for which no logical explanation could be cited as reasons. Most of them were found to have performed reasonably well as per the score card system which was in vogue and which, we understand still exists. While such a move is brought in and is being used as the main tool for threatening the staff and questioning their productivity, it is to be noted that no increase in productivity has happened with the move. Moreover, the branches are yet to stabilise from the mishap the general transfers created, which has affected the productivity of branches very adversely. SIBOA hereby reiterate that such moves can only be used as lame excuses by the Regional Heads and executives to run away from the responsibility of failures their inabilities and lack of vision have created. By changing the victims, no asylum can be achieved by the real culprits who manipulate the policies for their personal benefits than to get exposed in their inabilities soon. We have been continuously pointing out over the past 2 years about the huge increase in staff in supervisory roles who, unfortunately get away with conducting reviews full of abuses only and do not in any way contribute to the business.

As I express my sincere gratitude to the Membership and Management for the 21 productive years in my career, I wish to assure one and all that SIBOA is committed to the well-being of its members as well as our Institution, which is our bread and butter. We as a team will continue to fight for the rights of its members. It will be ensured that the membership gets benefitted for their hard earned achievements in the days to come.

Comradely Yours

(Praveen R)
General Secretary