Supervisor Workshop

Role of the Supervisor

Participant Guide
Overview

Objectives
By the end of this module, participants will:
- Learn ways to face supervisory challenges
- Discover the nine skill sets needed for effective supervision
- Learn the supervisor’s four key knowledge areas
- Know the challenges of coming up from the ranks

Agenda
- Overview
- One Tough Job
- Nine Supervisory Skills
- Knowledge is Power
- Promotion Challenges

Supervisory Challenges

What are your greatest challenges as a supervisor? Write one or two below.


One Tough Job

Force Field Analysis for Supervisors

Organization
Mission/Purpose/Vision

Rules & Protocols

Your Boss

Your Customers

Manager/Supervisor

Your personal history & background. Your beliefs, values, and sense of yourself

Department
Section or Unit
(Results, Work Flow)

Product or Service
(Quality, Output, Distribution)

Employees
(Work Performance, On the Job Behavior)

Your personal aspirations & dreams. Your expectations.
Pressures and Challenges

List below three ways that you can manage the stress and pressures that you may face as a supervisor.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

In pairs, discuss the pressures and challenges of supervision based on the force field analysis on the previous page and your methods for dealing with these stressors.

Benefits and Payoffs

Given these pressures and challenges, why become a supervisor? In the space below, list the benefits and payoffs, personally, and professionally of becoming a supervisor.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
## Skill Sets

### Nine Essential Job Skills

A recent survey * of over 500 organizations asked respondents to rate from a list or write in the job skills needed by supervisors in the current workforce. The nine skills that received the greatest number of responses are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Skills</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Skills</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management Skills</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement Skills</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Analysis Skills</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Management Skills</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The authors group these nine job skills into three skill sets as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Skills</th>
<th>Technical Skills</th>
<th>Administrative Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Coaching Skills</td>
<td>2. Continuous Improvement Skills</td>
<td>2. Writing Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See The 21st Century Supervisor: Nine Essential Skills for Frontline Leaders by Brad Humphrey and Jeff Stokes
People Skills
On a scale of 0 (no skill) to 10 (total mastery of skill) rate yourself and give a reason that you rate yourself at that level.

Communication Skills:
The supervisor must have the communication skills to listen to, understand, and influence others. These skills require supervisors to understand the different communication styles used by others and tailor communication to fit the style of others. The supervisor must also be able to perform formal communication tasks, such as making a presentation.

Coaching Skills:
Today’s supervisor must be able to motivate others and challenge them toward self-improvement. These skills require supervisors to confront and counsel employees as well as teach them or support training for them.

Team Skills:
The supervisor must be able develop a unified approach to work and encourage individuals to work together cooperatively. This skill set requires supervisors to lead and facilitate meetings and assist employees to move through the stages of team development.
Technical Skills
On a scale of 0 (no skill) to 10 (total mastery of skill) rate yourself and give a reason that you rate yourself at that level.

Computer Skills:
The supervisor must know how to operate a computer to develop presentations, produce reports, create financial analysis, build graphs, and so forth. Computer skills allow the supervisor to access and organize invaluable data for decision-making and resource management.

Continuous Improvement Skills:
Continuous improvement is now a part of almost every business and the modern supervisor must actively pursue quality improvement efforts. The supervisor must be able to recognize performance variances, determine the impact of these variances on results, and reduce variances with cost-effective solutions.

Business Analysis Skills:
Today’s supervisor must be able to identify costs associated with performance and make good decisions based on business information. The supervisor must know how to monitor performance measures, develop budgets, and understand factors influencing operating costs, such as the costs of mistakes.
Administrative Skills
On a scale of 0 (no skill) to 10 (total mastery of skill) rate yourself and give a reason that you rate yourself at that level.

Project Management Skills:
The supervisor must be able to identify long-term objectives and develop action plans to accomplish those objectives. This requires the supervisor to create a vision of the future for the work area and to communicate that vision to others. Project management includes designation of completion dates, performance monitoring, and resource allocation in order to complete projects on time and in budget.

Writing Skills:
The supervisor must be able to communicate clearly and effectively in writing through reports, letters, memos, e-mail, and required paperwork. Business writing skills help the supervisor to write so that others receive clear, accurate, and precise messages.

Resource Management Skills:
The supervisor must be able to identify and obtain the resources needed for the work group to accomplish their jobs. These skills require networking with others, building relationships with industry experts and building a base of knowledge about available resources (such as suppliers, technical support services, and consultants). Resource management includes understanding and maintaining budgets and preparing for future needs.
Knowledge is Power

Educate Yourself

Your first assignment as a supervisor is to educate yourself. Preferably, you will have started this process well before you step into the position. Even if you are a seasoned supervisor, it is wise to revisit these questions at least once a year.

You should strive to educate yourself in the following areas:

- Know Your Job
- Know Your Boundaries
- Know Your People
- Know Your Organization

Know Your Job

Your first step is to find out what is expected of you. This includes the expectations outlined on the job description, but extends beyond it. No job description covers every expectation and many include a catchall such as “other duties as directed by the Chief.” Plus, your immediate supervisor will have his or her own interpretation of the duties. It is your job to clarify these expectations and make sure that you understand them thoroughly.

- I have a thorough understanding of my duties as described on the job description
- I have clarified these duties with my immediate supervisor
- I know my immediate supervisor’s expectations of me and the criteria that will be used to evaluate my performance
Know Your Boundaries

Your next step is to clarify your decision-making boundaries. Supervisory and management positions come with an elevated level of responsibility and authority. You must determine the amount of authority you actually have in your position. It is your job to find out what you can and cannot do on your own and know when you should turn matters over to higher authorities. This means that you must learn the kinds of decisions you can make and the parameters within those decisions that are acceptable.

- I have clarified the level of authority that I have in relation to each of my duties
- I know what decisions I can and cannot make and the appropriate parameters for making those decisions
- I know the appropriate chain of command for matters that should be deferred to others

Levels of Authority

A = Full Authority to Act; report only through normal reporting mechanisms

B = Partial Authority to Act: act, but report immediately upon taking the action.

C = Deferred Authority to Act; you must check with your supervisor before taking action
Know Your People

Your success as a supervisor depends on how well you interact with the people around you. Take the time to learn about people in general, including what motivates them and how they learn. Make this an ongoing study for yourself and you will reap tremendous rewards in your career as a manager. On a more immediate level, learn about the people around you, especially those that you supervise, your supervisor, and others that you may depend on or that you may need to influence.

- I have met with each employee that reports to me to clarify my expectations of them and determine their expectations of me as a supervisor
- I know the strengths and weaknesses of each employee that reports to me and what is likely to motivate them
- I know the key people within the organization with whom I should create positive, mutually beneficial relationships in order to fulfill my duties

People Power

List three people in the organization on whom you depend in order to do your job:

List three people in the organization (and not in your department) with whom it is wise to have good relationships (e.g., receptionist; payroll clerk):
Know Your Organization

You must find out the organizational structure and how you fit into it. Learn the chain of command, to whom you report, and who reports to you. All organizations have some hierarchical structure, although some are more strictly structured than others. Take time to learn the vision, mission, and goals of the organization as well as those that relate to your immediate division or department.

☐ I understand the structure of the organization and have copies of the current organizational charts

☐ I know the vision, mission, and purpose of the organization as a whole and the mission of my section within the organization

☐ I understand the flow of work within the organization and how my section contributes to and is affected by other section within the organization
Promotion Challenges

Transition

Being promoted over co-workers into a supervisory position is one of the most challenging situations. You must make the transition from a person who worked side-by-side on equal footing with your co-workers to the person in charge. As a general rule, it is better to talk openly about the situation with these people than to try to second-guess each other. This will help establish your new role and clarify your new relationship. It also allows an opportunity to air any concerns and establishes an important precedent to talk out issues and problems.

Friends

When a former co-worker is a friend that you now supervise:

Talk to him or her. Establish the goal of preserving the friendship while honoring your new duties. Explain that you will have to treat him or her as you would any other employee. This means that you cannot grant special favors because of your friendship. It also means that you may, at times, have to keep confidences and will not be able to share everything that you know. Explain that your job will also require that you tell the person what to do and give feedback about his or her performance.

Rivals

When a former co-worker was a rival for the position that you got:

Talk to him or her, preferably before either of you is offered the position. This allows you to set the frame for preserving the relationship no matter what the outcome. You do not want to start out on the wrong foot if your co-worker becomes your boss or have a jealous employee who may want to undermine you if you get the job. Once hired, sit down with the former rival. Talk openly about the change and air any challenges that may interfere with a positive working relationship. Compliment
the person on his or her strengths and note how they will be useful in the future.

Pre-Existing Conflict

When a former co-worker and you had a strained relationship:

Talk to him or her, preferably before you are offered the position. This allows you an opportunity to work out differences beforehand. You will learn some conflict resolution techniques during this course. After you are installed in the position, sit down and talk to the worker. Remember Covey’s habit #5, which is seek first to understand, then be understood. Tell the worker that you do not expect that he or she will like you but that you will work to develop a positive working relationship as his/her supervisor. Review job duties and clarify what he or she expects in a supervisor. Determine if you are able to deliver what he or she expects. If so, strive to do so and earn his or her respect.

In General

Guidelines for achieving a balance between relationship and fairness:
**Action Plan**

**Applying the Module on Your Job**

Doing something right away to reinforce key concepts and skills will help you to make the most of this module. Describe two or three ways you will use the skills you gained in this module to the job. Be specific and detailed in your plan.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tbody>
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**Bibliography**