

Supervisor

The success of a supervisor depends on his ability to motivate and inspire Team members

They say that leaders are born, not made. While it is true that some people are born leaders, some leaders are born in the midst of adversity. Often, simple people who have never had a supervisory role will stand up and take the lead when a situation they care about requires it. The more experience you have acting as a genuine leader, the easier it will be for you. It is never easy to take the lead, as you will need to make decisions and face challenges, but it can become natural and rewarding

Defining a Supervisor

A Supervisor leads by Example not by Force

A supervisor is anyone that has the capacity to establish direction and to influence and align others toward a common goal, motivating and committing them to action and making them responsible for their performance.” Although this is more descriptive, it is not substantial.

Characteristics of a Supervisor

The mark of a true supervisor is not a position or title held, but how many people are willing to follow him or her. Motivation is one of the most important characteristics that a supervisor should have because:

- *"Motivation is the art of getting people to do what you want them to do because they want to do it."*
- *Motivation is everything. You can do the work of two people, but you can't be two people. Instead, you have to inspire the next guy down the line and get him to inspire his people.*

How to divide work & supervisory skills?

- Creating an action plan:

Plan how to put your various concepts into action.

- Set Leadership Goals

*When setting goals as a supervisor, you have to make sure that the goals are **SMART** goals.*

- **Specific:** *The vision itself is general while the goals are specific targets to be met. Specific goals answer the who, what, when, where, why and how questions as specifically as possible.*
- **Measurable:** *Goals must be measurable in terms of progress and attainment. They must be tracked according to the amount of time or money spent, or results achieved as appropriate.*
- **Attainable:** *Clearly, a goal which cannot be met is not a goal, it is an ideal. If you know you need certain infrastructure in place to accomplish your vision, you should break down your goals into attainable steps you can monitor as each step is put into place.*
- **Realistic:** *A goal may be attainable, but not with the resources at hand. In that case, you need other goals to build up to the level where the attainable goal becomes realistic. A goal may be possible, but you need the right people with the right amount of time and support to make it happen.*
- **Timely:** *All goals need to be accomplished within a given time frame. Deadlines may indeed be missed, but without any time table there will be no sense of urgency and no reason not to put it off until “later.”*

Create a Personal Mission Statement:

What do you want to be remembered for? What do you want people to think of you? What kind of are you determined to be? Write a statement that defines who you will become.

Modeling the Way

"Some look at things that are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not?"

By definition, a supervisor is in the lead, right up front, ready to take the heat if something goes wrong. If something does go wrong, a true leader never blames his followers even if in fact they failed. A true leader takes the blame, and then addresses how to correct the problems that arose.

Note that you must never do the work for the people you supervise. There are times when a crisis arises that you might work alongside with your followers, but you must never be caught in the trap of shared responsibility. You are not their friend or coworker, you are the supervisor. They are not in charge, you are. If you do not lead because you are doing their job, they will not have anyone to follow – or worse, they will follow someone else. In a vacuum of leadership, the loudest or most dominant personality will rise to take control, and these are usually the worst people to be in charge because they do not care about the mission or the followers. They care only about themselves.

You should be an inspiration role model. Being in a leadership position is neither for the timid nor for the arrogant. Confidence is often resented or misinterpreted for arrogance. People who lack self-confidence often feel intimidated by a true leader. This should never hold you back. If you have honesty, integrity and deal with everyone fairly, then others will see that. Be willing to listen to criticism, but also consider the source. If you are too afraid of what others might say about you, or you ignore legitimate complaints insisting on respect solely because of your position, you will lose all respect and cooperation of your followers and you will fail.

Influencing Others' Perspectives

*You may have heard that perception is reality. You must always present an honest, caring, dedicated attitude to inspire others. If a question arises about your leadership or something you said is taken out of context, your followers should give you the benefit of the doubt and not jump to call for your resignation. To inspire loyalty, you must have a track record of honesty and fairness. If any of your followers do feel they have been wronged, for whatever reason, you need to address the issue immediately. People talk, and **a problem ignored is a problem that grows.***

If you want to influence people, they have to trust you. That won't happen if they think they know more than you, so whatever field you are in, be sure to learn as much as possible about it. Read, search the Internet, and take seminars to become the expert.

Believe it or not, the most powerful influence you can have is often not trying to influence someone. When people believe you are open to their suggestions and believe they have been heard, they will work harder even if they disagree with the methods or goals. That is the power of listening. Simply listening to others makes them feel empowered, even if you don't accept their suggestions. If a follower feels there's no point talking to you, they won't, and they will disengage themselves from your vision and will only follow your directions.

Choosing Your Vision

What do you want to accomplish, and what do you need to do to get there? Determine attainable goals and focus on them. King Arthur sought the Holy Grail. Lewis and Clark mapped much of the United States. NASA took us to the moon, and now to an international space station.

Your vision will provide a sense of direction for you and your followers. In the military, focus is on “the mission.” Whatever the mission is, everyone is dedicated to it. Let your vision be like a lighthouse on a hill, guiding ships to safety and warning them away from the rocks.

Communicating Your Vision

Communication is more than just the words you say or the memos you write. Remember, actions speak louder than words. Take every opportunity to communicate your vision in words and deeds. One of the best ways to communicate a vision is to sum it up in a simple catch phrase. Post your slogan, catch-phrase and/or mission statement in prominent locations. When you send out emails, list it in quotes below your signature block. Hold meetings occasionally or hand out “Visionary Awards” to people who exemplify your vision. Above all, lead by example.

Identifying the Benefit for Others

Answer the question, “What’s in it for me?” as if you were one of your own followers. The answer might not always be obvious. Certainly performance bonuses and awards work, but most followers enjoy being part of a larger, successful organization. Everyone loves a winner. Win the home team wins at the stadium, you would think the fans in the stand were the players by the way they share in the victory and excitement.

We are social creatures who like to feel like we belong. We crave acceptance. If you can get your followers to accept your vision as their own, and excite them about being part of it, they will often excel beyond what you (or they) thought possible. Be sure to reward loyalty and performance above and beyond the call of duty.

Enabling Others to Act

The only man who makes no mistakes is the man who never does anything.

As mentioned before, you cannot do your followers' work for them. It's not your role and you can't possibly do the work of ten to a thousand people. Besides, if you do their work, what are they getting paid for? You have your own work to do. The ultimate goal that you have as a supervisor is to develop your followers to the point where you can delegate tasks without a lot of oversight.

To be a true supervisor, you must enable others to act responsibly and not encourage bad worker habits by compensating for them or overlooking them. At the same time, you cannot berate a follower for trying hard but making an honest mistake.

The goal of a supervisor is to empower others to work. To the extent that you can do this is the extent that you will be successful. If you are respected, admired, or even adored by your followers but they are not skilled, competent or willing enough to accomplish their own tasks, your vision will never be realized and you will be a failure.

Basic Influencing Skills

The best supervisors are able to influence others to do something and think it was all their idea. Don't worry about taking credit for every good thing that happens on your watch. As the leader, you get credit whenever your followers succeed because you created the environment that allowed their success.

The Principles of Influence:

- **Commitment:** *You cannot get people to commit to you or your vision if they don't see your commitment. Once you provide a solid, consistent example, they will feel they have to do the same.*
- **Authority:** *If people believe you know what you are talking about and accept your expertise, they are far more likely to follow you.*
- **Friendship:** *People listen to their friends. If they know you and like you, they are far more likely to support you. A pleasant personality can make up for a multitude of failures.*

Positive attitude is essential for encouragement

No one likes to fail and many take it very personally. While failure should never be rewarded, and understanding attitude and positive outlook can work wonders. A child only learns to walk by falling down many times. The focus is not on the fall, but on getting up. The goal is to walk...then to run. Meeting with an employee one-on-one is important for positive motivation. Here again, you must use the power of listening. Avoid blame when something goes wrong and focus on the reason for the failure. You may learn someone needs more training, more self-confidence, or more freedom. You may learn someone does not have the tools needed to be successful. You will never know if you don't ask questions and listen – or worse, if you berate someone for a failure. If someone is willfully defiant, then feel free to be stern and resolute. Take disciplinary action if necessary and document the conversation. Be defiant or lazy out of a misplaced concern for his or her feelings, you will be performing a great injustice against the rest who are working hard. In most cases, however, people really do want to do a good job and they have a sense of pride when they meet a challenge.