

SUPERVISORY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Supervisor – it is not just some managerial position. It is one that has a lot of responsibilities, and various roles to play. A successful supervisor not only knows what is going on in their organization but also have knowledge about objectives and plans, their product, organizational hierarchy etc.

The skill set required for a Supervisor is no joke either. They need to possess technical knowledge such as production technology, basic principles of management like planning, organizing, directing, motivating and controlling. This is just what is required to handle the job. They will need additional skills to handle the people working under them, skills of a manager, leader or decision maker!

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional Intelligence is a very important when you are in a managerial role, or one of a supervisor. You are constantly dealing with people, and they will bring their own baggage, so you will have to treat your emotions with as much restraint as possible. A supervisor losing his/her cool is not a good sight to see, and it also does not reflect well on your ability. So, show empathy when it comes to mess-ups done by your team, but also at the same time, be careful to not turn into a doormat of sorts. Be stern, not rude. That is the key.

PROACTIVE THINKING

As a supervisor, you will have an objective and a plan to achieve it, but ideal situations do not exist and hence, you can never plan everything in advance. That when proactive thinking comes handy.

Often, there are situations that just come out of nowhere! They are so sudden, you might not have a plan to handle it, so be flexible and agile enough to make changes and also be committed to go through the plan of action. Being stubborn is not a great quality in a leader. Always remember, change is the only constant.

MENTALLY AGILE

There will be times when a million things are thrown at you, that is when your mental agility comes handy. You will have to grasp problems, new ones on top of old ones, provide solutions for all of them, in the same time, continue with your day to day activities, and assess the situation as a whole for the long run. Such situations arise more often than expected, and having this quality will make you shine out.

NEEDLE DOWN TO THE PROBLEM

Any supervisor should be able to get down to the crux of the problem, so it can be solved at the starting point – making sure it does not happen again. Diagnostic skill is the ability to analyse the nature of a problem with people, ideas, things or events. A good diagnosis precedes a recommended solution to a problem.

Supervisors are frequently called on to size up a problem in order to take appropriate corrective action. Many supervisors regard diagnostic skill as the most exciting part of their jobs. We have heard many experienced supervisors expressed say, “Figuring out what's wrong is why I am here. If all problems had a ready solution, you wouldn't need a supervisor.”

FAIR MANAGER

Your managerial skills are your most important ones! You are handling people, they are not your resources, but your assets. One of the most important factors for being a good manager is to NOT make commitments that you and your staff can't keep. Promising the world to a sponsor or partner does no one any good – especially if you can't deliver.

The next thing is to be available to your team and your peers. Availability can mean a lot of things, both tangible and intangible. On the tangible side, it means being physically present at work. Of course, you're not going to be at your desk every second of the day, but being away all day, every day by traveling too much, having too many off-site meetings, etc. isn't productive.

On the more intangible side, availability means being mentally present and available – and being clear about when you can't be. If you are under a lot of stress for a major project, you need to let your subordinate know that you won't be able to help them think through a project. But don't let the 'can't' times take over the 'can' times or you'll create problems.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Technical skill is proficiency in a specific activity that involves methods, processes, procedures or techniques. Individual performers expect their supervisor to be able to help them with technical problems. So, in order to be able answer their queries, you will have to be able to understand what they are working on. A good supervisor is one that their subordinate can go to, for any issue – technical or otherwise.

APT DELEGATION

Delegation is arguably the hardest of these skills to learn and perfect. Delegation basically means transferring decision-making authority to another employee for a task not necessarily within one's job description while still retaining ultimate responsibility for the task. When you delegate something to your supervisor, you hold the Responsibility – setting clear expectations, but not step-by-step instructions on how something should be done. No point in giving them minute instructions. It will make them feel that you don't trust them enough.

Next is, Authority – the delegate is given the right to make decisions, so make sure you choose the right person. Accountability – delegate is responsible for the work, but delegator has ultimate responsibility. So, acknowledge the effort put by your supervisee, and appreciate them as well.

TRANSPARENCY & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Not every decision needs a full, 360-degree explanation, but lots of secrecy is frustrating and ultimately dis-empowering to those you supervise. Being transparent also means admitting when you're wrong or when you don't know the answer. No one is perfect and if you constantly try to hide behind a perfect image, the downfall will be that much harder.

Another important quality is to give credit where it's due. Do not be that person who hogs everyone's credit. It will leave a distasteful image of yourself.

CONCLUSION

As a supervisor, the best you can do, it be true to yourself, and treat your supervisee with a firm yet friendly hand. Remember, the best version of yourself is the version that you constantly update, so do not be afraid of change, keep learning new things, about yourself and your profession.

