

**ELEMENTS OF SUPERVISORY  
PRACTICES: PART I**

***MANAGEMENT IN STATE GOVERNMENT***

*PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL*

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*State of Louisiana*

***ELEMENTS OF SUPERVISORY PRACTICES:  
PART I***

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Governor's Office & the Department of Civil Service*

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## ELEMENTS OF SUPERVISORY PRACTICES: PART I

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to help supervisors make the transition from employee to supervisor. Being a supervisor is more than just having a title. Supervisors are not only responsible for their own work, but also for the work of those they supervise. Through this class, participants will learn skills necessary to becoming an effective supervisor.

### JOB OUTCOMES

- Expresses information to individuals or groups effectively.
- Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire new knowledge and skills.
- Understands where the organization is headed and how to make a contribution.
- Takes a long-term view and recognizes opportunities to help the organization accomplish its objectives or move toward the vision.
- Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements.
- Is open to change and new information.
- Adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
- Monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.
- Plans, distributes, coordinates, and monitors work assignments of others.
- Ensures the staff are appropriately selected, utilized, and developed, and treated in a fair and equitable manner.
- Influences, motivates, and challenges others.
- Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job.
- Works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to the job.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the roles associated with becoming a supervisor.
- Identify the impact of one's attitude on subordinates.
- Develop tools for aiding upper management after becoming a supervisor.
- Evaluate personal strengths and areas of improvement.
- Create an action plan for self-improvement.

### WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

Supervision is the first level of management in an agency. The supervisor is concerned with getting the employees in the work unit to work toward meeting the agency's goals and objectives. This means that the supervisor does not necessarily do all the work himself/herself but is responsible for seeing that it is done through his/her employees.

The supervisor must learn to make good decisions, communicate well with employees, make work assignments, assign work to the right employees, plan work, train employees, motivate staff members, do performance reviews, and deal with staff in other departments. Supervisors do a variety of tasks. Some of these tasks may be hard to learn and master, but effective supervision is needed to make the agency run properly.

#### **Small Group Activity**

*What:* Case Study #1

*How:* The Office of Group Benefits has a few hundred employees. Jane Knight and John Ritchie are employees in the Claims-Processing office. Both have been with the agency for about 6 years. This morning, their unit head, David Laiche, gave Jane and John a big shock. He asked both of them if they would like to become supervisors in the Claims-Processing offices. David explained that two of the supervisors in the unit were being promoted and said that he needed two new supervisors. David also said that he felt that Jane and John would make good supervisors because they knew the job and knew the people in the unit. David asked both of them to think it over and let him know their decisions the next day. Later, John saw Jane at lunch and they began talking about the possibilities. They began their discussion by talking about the behaviors and practices needed for effective supervision.

- What are some issues/concerns that Jane and John might bring up in their discussion? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class?

Note: Solution to this case is discussed later in the course.

Notes:

### **Small Group Activity & Discussion**

*What:* Effective Supervision

- How:*
1. Identify an excellent supervisor you've worked with during your career.
  2. List and explain the things this person did that made them an excellent supervisor.
  3. Has the definition of "excellent" supervisor changed through the years? Is the supervisor you described above different from a "traditional" supervisor? If so, discuss how or why?

Notes:

**INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISORY QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questionnaire can help you as a supervisor to determine how your behaviors or practices help or hurt your work group.

The items below are important to building good working relationships. Rate yourself and your work unit on each item. Give yourself one (1) point if the item rarely applies, two (2) points if the item sometimes applies, and three (3) points if it applies most of the time.

	Rating Scale		
	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Most of the time (3)
1. I know my job.			
2. I know employees' jobs in my work group.			
3. I know my department's/agency's objectives and standard procedures.			
4. I explain my objectives and procedures to my employees.			
5. I define my objectives and procedures clearly.			
6. I try to make sure objectives and procedures are in line with one another.			
7. I establish clear performance standards.			
8. I explain performance standards to my employees.			
9. I insist that performance standards are met.			
10. I try to improve performance that is below the work group standard.			
11. I set standards for myself and follow them.			
12. Employees in my work group know what to expect from me.			
13. I avoid being self-centered.			
14. I think about what is good for employees and not just what is only good for me.			
15. I know the things that my employees are good at and/or not-so-good at.			
16. I keep employees well informed on issues that affect them.			
17. I keep lines of communication open.			
18. I actively lead and direct employees when necessary.			

	Rating Scale		
	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Most of the time (3)
19. I allow employees to lead and direct themselves when they are able to.			
20. I avoid criticism that is not justified.			
21. I criticize employees in private and in a constructive manner.			
22. I give credit when it is earned.			
23. I praise employees regularly.			
24. I avoid taking credit for things my employees did.			
25. I show respect toward employees.			
26. I command respect from employees by my own conduct.			
27. I discipline consistently.			
28. I discipline only when required.			
29. I back employees to the fullest when they are right.			
30. I refuse to back employees when they are wrong even though doing so may be unpopular with my work group.			
31. I delegate as far down the line as possible.			
32. I value employees' suggestions/opinions.			
33. I provide opportunities to get employees' suggestions/opinions.			
34. I use the suggestions/opinions I receive or explain why I didn't use them.			
35. I encourage employees to develop their skills and abilities.			
36. I use my authority/power in the right way.			
37. Employees in my work group have pride in our accomplishments.			
38. I actively try to build team spirit and morale.			
39. I practice what I preach.			
40. I recognize my weaknesses.			
41. I work to improve my areas of weakness.			
42. I keep my sense of humor when dealing with employees.			
43. I admit my errors when I am wrong.			

	Rating Scale		
	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Most of the time (3)
44. I apply the same standards of conduct and performance to men and women.			
45. I continually try to improve myself and my work group.			
<b>Total</b>			

**Scoring:**

<b>125 or higher:</b>	Your supervisory behaviors and departmental practices promote positive work relationships.
<b>100-124:</b>	Some of your behaviors/practices may contribute to difficulties with employees, but no urgency for change is indicated unless one or more items scored very low.
<b>75-99:</b>	Probably many of your behaviors/practices contribute to difficulties with employees, and you should ask yourself what you can do to improve the low scoring items.
<b>75 or below:</b>	Improving your overall supervisory behaviors/practices should be a high priority for you.

Taking a questionnaire like the one above is the first step to improving your supervisory skills. The results of the questionnaire can help you determine areas where you may need to improve. You can use this information to develop a personal supervisory plan. As a supervisor you can always want to make sure that your actions are having a positive impact on your workgroup.

\*Source: Adapted from Gary W. Hobson, "Eliminating Managerial Blind Spots." Supervision, August 1990, pp. 16-17.

### WHERE DO SUPERVISORS COME FROM?

Many supervisors are promoted from the ranks of staff employees. Employees with good technical skills are the ones who are normally selected by management for supervisory jobs.

However, good technical skills and a good work record do not necessarily make a person a good supervisor. In fact, sometimes these qualities alone may not lead to effective supervisory behaviors.

#### **Small Group Activity**

*What:* Changing Supervisor Positions

*How:* List some of the differences you have seen between being an employee in your work group and being the supervisor of your work group.

What kind of things changed for you when you became a supervisor?

Notes:

## THE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

Supervision can be broken down into five areas:

1. Planning
2. Organizing
3. Staffing
4. Leading
5. Directing

### **Small Group Activity**

*What:* Case Study #2

*How:* After Jane Knight had been in her new supervisory job for only a few months, she saw how important it is to meet deadlines. This first hit home when she missed a promised deadline for a large batch of claims. Karen Little, her direct supervisor, called Jane on a Friday and asked if she could rush a large batch of claims. Without much thought, Jane promised to get them out by the next Tuesday. Because of some problems with office equipment, she did not get the claims out until late the next Thursday. When the same thing happened a few weeks later, Karen called her in and talked about the importance of setting goals and meeting deadlines that have been agreed on. Jane decided that she had better learn to plan her work more carefully.

What should Jane do to improve her performance and meet her supervisor's deadlines? What are some issues that might be a problem for Jane?

Notes:

## Planning

Planning means finding the best way to get the unit's work done. The supervisor must plan his/her work if it is to be done effectively, properly, and on time. If the supervisor does not plan well, the work unit can lose time, waste materials, and misuse equipment and/or space. The supervisor must understand how his/her plans fit into the overall plan of the agency.

### **Small Group Activity & Class Discussion**

*What:* Pressing Problems

*How:* In your small groups brainstorm the most pressing problems you feel are causing an impact on your ability to plan and achieve your goals and objectives.

After brainstorming the problems, brainstorm practical solutions to them.

Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class.

Notes:

Planning usually includes three steps:

1. **Determining the current situation.** Look at things like the current condition of equipment, the attitudes of the employees, and which resources are available to the unit.
2. **Determining the goals/objectives.** The goals/objectives for the work unit are usually established by upper management. Typically, supervisors give upper management suggestions for developing plans for their work units. Supervisors should look at the agency's overall plan and make sure that their work units are operating in a way that helps the agency reach its goals/objectives.
3. **Determining the most effective way of achieving the goals/objectives.** Based on the current situation, what does the supervisor need to do to reach goals/objectives.

Most of us follow these three steps when we make personal plans. Supervisors have to realize that they are not only making plans for themselves, but also for the people who work for them.

### **Developing an Action Plan**

Once the objectives have been set and put in priority order, the supervisor must decide how they will be achieved. This part of the planning process is called *action planning*. When developing an action plan, a supervisor must answer the following six questions:

1. **What must be done?** Exactly what steps must be taken to reach the objectives? Are there any other ways to reach the objectives? The supervisor must be sure that all of the actions taken are in line with the objectives.
2. **Why must it be done?** This question serves as a check on question 1. Are the actions taken necessary? Is the use of resources justified?
3. **When should it be done?** The supervisor must decide how to schedule the new tasks while still getting the rest of the work done. Dates and times should be selected and coordinated with existing work.
4. **Who should do it?** The supervisor must decide what skills and abilities are required. Once this has been decided, the supervisor should choose the right employees to do the work.
5. **Where should it be done?** This question is closely related to question 4. Where will the necessary people and equipment be located?
6. **How should it be done?** What methods and procedures will be used? Can we use procedures we already have, or do we need to create new ones?

By addressing each of these questions, the supervisor can work out the details and decide how to proceed. This process can also help the supervisor see any problems that may come up in the process.

## Individual Activity

*What:* Developing an Action Plan

*How:* Individually, think about an upcoming task/project that your workgroup is currently working on in the planning stage.

Create an action plan for this project so that the work flows smoothly and will be accomplished on time.

Use the questions on the previous page as your guide.

## Solution to Case Study #2

*Solution:* Jane has obviously had problems setting objectives and meeting deadlines in her new job as a supervisor. It seems like Jane agrees to requests and deadlines without thinking about what will be needed to meet the deadline. Jane should learn the importance of not being a “yes person.” Before she accepts additional work, she should think about each individual request. Even where she has no choice but to agree to a deadline (for example, her boss assigns one), there are helpful steps that she should take. She must realize that a deadline is a type of objective. In this view, she should make sure that the deadline meets the characteristics of a well-stated objective (specific, measurable, aggressive - yet attainable, realistic, and time-bound).

The way Jane currently plans her daily schedule does not allow for much flexibility, and because of that she had difficulty dealing with unexpected situations. Once a deadline has been agreed upon and clearly stated, Jane should develop an action plan for meeting it.

## Group Discussion

*What:* Case Study #3

*How:* Before his promotion, John Ritchie had often said and had heard other employees say, "We need to get organized around here." Now that he is a supervisor, John wants to do his best to make sure that his employees won't feel this way. He also remembers the many times when he had more than one supervisor telling him what to do.

Since becoming a supervisor, John has learned that getting things organized is not an easy job. For example, the other day John asked one of his employees, David Owen, to complete a job. When John checked on the job three days later, he found that nothing had been done. John wondered where he had gone wrong in delegating this task to David.

Group Discussion: What should John do differently?

Notes:

## Small Group Activity

*What:* Case Study #4

*How:* Betty Brown is a supervisor in the Office of Risk Management. She is in charge of a group of clerical workers who review reports and calculate claims. Before her promotion to supervisor, she was a clerical worker in the unit. One of the main reasons Betty got promoted was because of her reputation as the best worker in the unit. "If Betty did the work," her co-workers said, "it was right."

This reputation has carried over into Betty's supervisory practices. Everything coming out of her group is done correctly and turned in on time. In fact, Betty rechecks in detail all the work coming out of her group to make sure that it is correct. It is not unusual for her to turn work back to one of her employees several times until it is "perfect." Betty's employees quickly recognized her eye for detail and her checking and rechecking of their work. One of them was recently overheard to saying, "I don't really worry about getting my work perfect, because if I make an error, I know that Betty will catch it."

Last week, at Betty's annual performance evaluation, her boss, Ron Jones, said that Betty was spending too much time on detail work and not enough time on supervision. In fact, he said that she must start spending more time in supervision and less time in doing the work of others. Betty's response to Ron was, "People in my unit don't seem to care about sloppy work, and since I'm responsible, I feel like I have to check it before it goes out."

Discussion questions:

1. Is Ron right?
2. What does Betty need to know about supervision?
3. What do you think of the reasons for Betty's promotion?

Notes:

## Organizing

*Organizing has two parts:*

1. Distributing the work among employees in the work group
2. Arranging the work so that it flows smoothly

Supervisors are responsible for completing work assignments from upper management. Upper management gives supervisors a general structure to follow, but supervisors have to organize the specific tasks and make sure the work is completed.

Organizing involves grouping activities together that need to be completed to achieve the agency's objectives. Once the activities are grouped together, those activities are given to a supervisor with the authority to carry out the activities. Delegation of authority is a major part of organizing. Both organizing and delegating are duties that a good supervisor must learn how to do.

Failure to delegate is probably the most frequent reason that supervisors fail in their jobs. Being able to delegate does not come naturally to many people. The way we usually think of delegation refers to the delegation of authority. To delegate authority means to grant authority from one person to another. Supervisors usually delegate authority to make it easier to complete a duty or task. For example, a supervisor may give employees the authority to organize their work as long as they meet certain production or performance expectations.

### Can Responsibility be Delegated?

Some say that you can delegate responsibility; others say you can't. Those who say that responsibility can't be delegated argue that supervisors can never give up their job responsibilities by passing them on to their employees. Those who say that responsibility can be delegated point out that supervisors can certainly make their employees responsible for certain actions. Both are correct. Supervisors can delegate responsibility in the sense of making their employees responsible for certain actions. However, this delegation does not make supervisors any less responsible to their bosses. Delegation of responsibility does not mean handing over responsibility by the person delegating it. Responsibility is not like an object that can be passed from individual to individual.

### Example of Delegating Responsibility

Suppose a Claims Supervisor for the Office of Risk Management decides to delegate to the Claims Investigators the responsibility for investigating all claims within a 30-day limit. The claims supervisor can certainly make the Claims Investigators responsible (accountable) for meeting this target. At the same time, however, the Claims Supervisor is no less responsible for the investigation of claims.

### **How to Delegate**

Successful delegation involves three steps:

1. Assigning work to the different staff members in the work unit;
2. Creating an obligation (responsibility) on the part of each employee to perform duties satisfactorily; and,
3. Granting permission (authority) to the employee to take the actions necessary to do the duties.

Successful delegation involves the delegation of both authority and responsibility.

### Assigning Work

The first step in assigning work is to identify what work is to be delegated. Once a supervisor decides which tasks can be delegated, he/she must then decide which employees should handle each task. The supervisor should look at this as a process of matching the people to the task requirements (matching the right person to the right task). The key to success when assigning work is to make the best use of the skills and resources available. In order to do this, supervisors must be aware of the skills and abilities of their employees. Other factors that should be considered when making work assignments include:

1. The personal relationship involved.
2. The effect on other people.
3. The attitudes of the people involved.
4. Departmental/Agency policies that might apply.
5. Safety considerations.

Once the supervisor decides how to assign the work, this information has to be passed on to employees in a way that is clear and easy to understand. When assigning work, supervisors should remember to tell employees what they need to do, but necessarily how to do it. If you give your employees some freedom to make decisions and solve problems, you create a workplace where employees work together to get the job done. You should not let employees make decisions that they do not have the skills or

experience to make. Supervisors should not micromanage their employees to a point where people stop giving suggestions about how to make the workplace better.

### *Creating an Obligation (responsibility)*

Supervisors sometimes expect employees to take on responsibility that was not previously part of their role in the work group. Supervisors who clearly communicate what they expect of their employees will be more successful at getting positive results. Supervisors who get suggestions from staff members are more likely to build a sense of responsibility among their employees. Supervisors cannot force feelings of responsibility. These are feelings that come from within the individual.

### *Giving Authority*

Giving permission to take the actions necessary to perform the assigned duties is often the most difficult part of delegating. Many supervisors think that once responsibility has been established, the employees should then ask for the necessary authority. This approach gives only the authority that is specifically sought by the employee. But, the keys to successfully empowering employees are:

- expressing confidence in their abilities to perform at high levels
- designing jobs so that employees have a certain amount of flexibility in making work-related decisions
- setting meaningful and challenging expectations, recognizing good performance
- encouraging employees to take personal responsibility in their work

### *Reasons Supervisors May Not Want to Delegate*

- If you want something done right, do it yourself.

Many supervisors believe in this saying, but this attitude shows that the supervisor does not understand the supervisory process. It also shows that the supervisor may have done a poor job of selecting and training his/her employees. Supervisors who try to do it all themselves spend a great deal of their time on non-supervisory tasks – and then they do not have time to perform their supervisory role.

The question is not if the supervisor can do the job better, but can the employee do it in an acceptable way. If an employee can do the job satisfactorily, then the employee should be assigned the job and left to do it.

## Individual Activity

*What:* Delegating Tasks

*How:* List the tasks that you currently do that could be delegated to one of your employees.

While listing the tasks, think of who can do this work for you presently. If there is no one within your workgroup that these tasks can be delegated to, list how you will develop the skills necessary within your employees to accomplish these tasks.

Notes:

### Small Group Activity

*What:* Case Study #5

*How:* Jane Knight knew when she took the supervisor's job that two of her employees would be leaving in about three months. One resigned to go back to school, and the other resigned to take a job at another state agency. They were both good employees, and Jane wanted to be sure to replace them with qualified people. Because Jane wanted the replacements to get off to a good start once they were hired, she recently started to think about how to train new employees. In fact, she felt that now might be a good time to give everyone in the department a short training program on report writing.

What advice do you have for Jane? What are some things Jane should think about before she does this training?

Notes:

## Staffing

Staffing deals with hiring and developing good employees. Since supervisors get their work done through others, staffing is important. Functions include recruiting, selecting, orienting, and training.

- Recruiting is seeking and attracting qualified people for job vacancies. In state government, many of the tasks that are part of recruiting are done by someone outside of the supervisor's work group. However, your reputation as a supervisor and the culture of your work unit are important factors in your ability to recruit and attract employees.
- Selecting is choosing the best person for the job from the candidates who apply. The goal is to hire the person who has the skills necessary to perform the job and will fit best within the agency.
- Orienting is the process of introducing new employees to the agency, their work unit, and their jobs.
- Training involves the learning and transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to improve employee effectiveness.

Supervisors may not be responsible for all of the staffing activities, but they are usually involved in one or more of them. If supervisors are to be effective in the staffing function; they must understand each of these activities.

### **Class Discussion**

*What:* Jane has learned the importance of employee training, and has created a formal training program for her staff. She has also learned that a supervisor should avoid several common mistakes in order to make a new employee's training experience more meaningful. Lack of reinforcement is a common error in training. Praise and recognition can be very effective means for reinforcing a trainee's learning. Practice and repetition always reinforce learning.

*How:* What additional advice do you have for Jane?

Notes:

## Small Group Activity

*What:* Case Study #6

*How:* Laura LeBlanc has been a supervisor for over a year now, but she feels unsure of her ability to lead her employees. Oh, sure, she can order them around, but do they really follow her lead? Laura has been watching Anne Morris's group. Ann has been a supervisor for over five years, and her group seems to run like a well-oiled machine. Anne's employees seem to trust her completely and never hesitate to follow her lead. On the other hand, Laura feels that she has to bargain or convince her employees to follow her lead. Laura can't help wondering if Anne knows something that she doesn't.

What advice do you have for Laura?

Notes:

### Leading

- Leading is directing your employees so they work towards achieving the work group goals and providing a workplace where employees want to achieve those goals.
- Leadership is the ability to get people to willingly follow one's guidance or accept one's decisions.
- Leaders use power in a positive way to influence group behavior.

### **Class Activity**

*What:* Case Study #7

*How:* Since taking over as supervisor of the claims section, John Lewis has discovered things often don't get done as they should. John has missed deadlines. In addition, his unit has mishandled claims and made basic processing errors. On top of this, John's work group ran out of claim forms last week. It took three days to get some replacements. John does not expect everything to go perfectly, and he understands why certain things can go wrong. What he doesn't understand is why he never finds out about a problem until it is too late to correct. John talked about these problems with a friend of his that is a supervisor in another unit. John's friend suggested that John's supervisory procedures might not be working.

What are your thoughts about John's situation?

Notes:

### Directing/Controlling Work

Directing/Controlling work means comparing how well the work was done to what was planned by the supervisor.

Controls in the workplace are created by comparing how the job was actually done (actual performance) with how we expected the job to be done (target performance). Once this information is compared, supervisors can correct problems.

The control process has three basic steps:

1. Set performance standards
2. Monitor performance and compare it with standards
3. Take necessary corrective action

### **Small Group Activity**

*What:* Case Study #7 Solution

*How:* John probably has not given enough attention to the basic steps in the control function. There is no evidence that he has clearly communicated what standards he expects in each of his problem areas. Even if his standards were clear, he is not doing a good job of monitoring performance. John should set up systems to alert him and/or his employees before they get out of hand. Once problems have been identified, he should take corrective action.

To avoid missed deadlines, mishandling of claims, and basic processing errors, John might set up daily reporting systems to help monitor what is going on. These systems should not be complicated or take too much time; they should simply report the production and quality status of claims. John might also consider starting some type of quality assurance program as a means of “building in” quality. To avoid running out of claims forms, John might consider starting some type of inventory control system for reordering.

Do you think that supervisory skills can be learned through books and study or only through experience? Why?

Notes:

## Group Activity & Discussion

*What:* Position Description Exercise

*How:* The job description for a maintenance supervisor is listed below.

From this job description, determine if the duties and responsibilities are planning, organizing, staffing, leading, or directing.

### **Maintenance Supervisor:**

To supervise maintenance through the implementation of a preventative maintenance program and an ongoing maintenance repair program for the facility, vehicles, and equipment.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. Plans and implements effective procedures and policies for the maintenance department to ensure that all equipment, facilities, and utilities are in acceptable state of repair.
2. Coordinates with vendors, suppliers and contractors the installation of new equipment or equipment processes.
3. Establishes, with direction from management, priorities of all maintenance activities through a work order procedure.
4. Supervises all daily activities of the maintenance department through subordinates to ensure completion of assigned projects that will result in the least amount of machine downtime.
5. Monitors completion of maintenance projects to ensure that safety and quality standards are met.
6. Approves all requisitions relating to new and replacement parts, supplies, machinery, and equipment for the maintenance department.
7. Provides technical knowledge and expertise to solve problems of a mechanical, electrical, or hydraulic/pneumatic nature.
8. Schedules and assigns personnel to maintain good housekeeping for the facility grounds and administrative offices.

*Job description is continued on following page*

**Organizational Relationship:**

This position reports to the head of engineering and maintenance. Coordinates work with all service and production and units.

**Position Specifications:**

Must possess 8-10 years experience in maintenance, engineering, or related fields. Prefer minimum of 3-5 years supervisory experience. Must be familiar with each of the following areas: boilers, air compressors, heating and air-conditioning, plumbing, welding, carpentry, electrical/electronic equipment, pneumatic hydraulics, and heavy manufacturing equipment.

## SUPERVISOR'S SKILLS

The supervisor's work can also be examined in terms of the types of skills required. Four types of skills have been identified:

1. **Technical skills**: the knowledge about things like machines, processes, and methods of production.
2. **Human relation skills**: knowledge about human behavior and being able to work well with people.
3. **Administrative skills**: knowledge about the agency and how it works - the planning, organizing, and directing functions of supervision.
4. **Decision-making and problem solving skills**: analyze information and objectively reach a decision.

In most organizations, supervisors need more technical, human relations, and decision-making skills than or administrative skills. The skills needed by a supervisor changes as he/she moves to higher positions in the agency. A good supervisor must develop all four types of skills.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL SUPERVISOR

Supervisors are successful for many reasons. However, five characteristics are important keys to supervisory success:

1. **Ability and willingness to delegate.** Most supervisors are promoted from staff jobs and have been made used to doing the work themselves. Even though delegating work may be difficult at first, it is a necessary skill for a supervisor to have.
2. **Proper use of authority/power.** Some supervisors let their new power go to their heads. It is difficult sometimes to remember that the use of power alone does not get the support and cooperation of employees. Learning when not to use authority is as important as learning when to use it.
3. **Setting a good example.** Supervisors must always remember that the work group looks to them to set the example. Employees expect equal and fair treatment from their supervisors.
4. **Recognizing the change in role.** People who have been promoted into supervision must recognize that their role has changed and that they are no longer one of the gang. They must remember that being a supervisor may require unpopular decisions. Supervisors are the link between the other levels of management and staff employees and must learn to represent both groups.
5. **Desire for the job.** Many people who really don't want to be supervisors are promoted into supervision just because of their technical skills. Regardless of one's technical skills, the desire to be a supervisor is necessary for success in supervision. That desire encourages a person to develop the other type of skills necessary in supervision - human relations, administrative, and decision-making.

The five characteristics discussed above are not the only ones necessary for supervisory success, but they are certainly some of the most important.

## Group Discussion

*What:* Different Points of View

*How:* A good supervisor should be able to perform any job that he/she supervises better than any subordinate employees.

Discuss your views regarding this statement.

Notes:

## Solution to Case Study #1

*Solution:* Jane and John have learned that supervision is the first level of management in an agency and that an important part of the job is encouraging the members of the work unit to work toward accomplishing the agency's goals. By attending this course, they learned what work a supervisor performs. Planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and directing are five forms of work that a supervisor must perform. They have also learned that four basic types of skills are required to perform the work of supervision. These are technical skills, and decision-making and problem solving skills. Finally, they have learned five reasons why some supervisors are successful. If they are to be good supervisors, they must understand the work of supervision, master the skills necessary to perform that work, and consistently apply the elements necessary for supervisory success.

Notes:

## SUPERVISORY COMPETENCIES

Supervisors must bring to their work a broad range of technical and human relation skills. Most organizations establish a set of qualities or competencies that supervisors must possess. This is true for state agencies as well. With the help of more than 5,000 managers and supervisors, a competency model specific for Louisiana state managers and supervisors were developed.

### Louisiana Managerial/Supervisory Competencies

For decades, Louisiana used an educational model to design its management training and development curriculum. In 1997, the Division of Administration realized that its programs were becoming disconnected from the needs of supervisors/managers and a partnership was created with the School of Human Resources at Louisiana State University to change this. The outcome was the creation of the Louisiana Managerial/Supervisory Survey (LMSS) and the LMSS Competency Model. Using this model, an application-based training program was designed to provide more effective training for supervisors and managers.

The term *competency* was many definitions. The term sometimes refers to characteristics that enable an individual to achieve outstanding performance.

Successful supervision requires the knowledge of, and ability to use a variety of skills. The primary measure used in determining a supervisor's success or failure is the productivity of the supervisor's work unit. Effective supervision requires a great amount of time and effort. However, that investment pays off in terms of work unit productivity. Use the results of the LMSS to determine which of your competency areas could be improved through an investment of your time and effort in training.

### **Individual Activity**

*What:* Taking the LMSS

*How:* Complete the LMSS on the following pages. Your instructor will provide you with the guidelines for completing the instrument. The scoring sheets are provided. This instrument will help you determine some of your areas for improvement while highlighting many of your strengths.

Notes:

**LMSS SELF-RATING SUPERVISOR SURVEY**

**Step 1:** Rate your current level of skill using the scale provided based on your current job. Once you have entered all skill level ratings, total the values and divide by the number of items for that competency. Then, write your competency score in the space provided.

**Step 2:** Once all of your competencies scores have been calculated review your results. Those items with lower competency scores will likely be items you should develop first.

*For example: Oral communication is a critical part of a supervisor's job; therefore, with a "Moderate" score, this person should work on developing their oral communication immediately.*

MARK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE COLUMNS NEXT TO EACH STATEMENT				
<u>SKILL LEVEL</u>				
1	2	3	4	5
None	Low	Moderate	Considerable	Very High
<u>NOT APPLICABLE</u> - Mark if skill is not applicable <u>at all</u> to the job				
			SKILL LEVEL	COMPETENCY SCORE
<u>ORAL COMMUNICATION</u>				<b>3</b>
1. Communicates ideas and facts verbally in a clear and organized way.			5	
2. Adjusts style, tone, and level of verbal communication to fit the audience and situation.			3	
3. Listens to others and shows understanding of what they are saying.			2	
4. Anticipates the implications of words and actions inside and outside of the work group.			2	
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>			12	
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>			4	

- ADD 5 + 3 + 2 + 2 = 12
- ENTER 12 IN THE TOTAL BOX
- THEN DIVIDE BY THE NUMBER GIVEN. HERE IT IS 4, SO (12/4) = 3
- WRITE YOUR SCALE SCORE (3) IN THE BOX THAT SAYS "COMPETENCY SCORE"

**LMSS SELF-RATING SUPERVISOR SURVEY**

**Directions:** As you read each managerial/leadership competency, think about your current job. Rate your current level of skill. Use the scale provided below to make your best estimates.

<b>MARK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE COLUMNS NEXT TO EACH STATEMENT</b>					
<u><b>SKILL LEVEL</b></u>					
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Considerable</b>	<b>Very High</b>	
<u><b>NOT APPLICABLE</b></u> - Mark if skill is not applicable <u>at all</u> to the job					
				<b>SKILL LEVEL</b>	<b>COMPETENCY SCORE</b>
<b>ORAL COMMUNICATION</b>					
1. Communicates ideas and facts verbally in a clear and organized way.					
2. Adjusts style, tone, and level of verbal communication to fit the audience and situation.					
3. Listens to others and shows understanding of what they are saying.					
4. Anticipates the implications of words and actions inside and outside of the work group.					
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>					
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>				<b>4</b>	
<b>WRITTEN COMMUNICATION</b>					
5. Communicates ideas and facts in writing in a clear and organized manner.					
6. Adjusts style, length, and level of written communication to fit the audience and situation.					
7. Reviews and critiques others' writing in a constructive way.					
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>					
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>				<b>3</b>	
<b>NEGOTIATING</b>					
8. Identifies and understands interests and positions of others (e.g., co-workers, citizens, customers).					
9. Applies appropriate negotiation skills to find mutually acceptable solutions to problems or conflicts.					
10. Persuades others to commit to action when appropriate.					
11. Gains cooperation from others to get information and to accomplish department/office objectives.					
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>					
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>				<b>4</b>	







<b>MARK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE COLUMNS NEXT TO EACH STATEMENT</b>					
<b><u>SKILL LEVEL</u></b>					
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>None</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Considerable</b>	<b>Very High</b>	
<b><u>NOT APPLICABLE</u> - Mark if skill is not applicable <u>at all</u> to the job</b>					
			<b>SKILL LEVEL</b>	<b>COMPETENCY SCORE</b>	
<b>HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>					
47. Anticipates impact of possible changes in staff (e.g., retirement, expertise, T.O.).					
48. Takes an active role in recruiting and retaining staff.					
49. Provides opportunities for employee orientation, training, and development.					
50. Sets performance expectations for subordinates and gives timely feedback about progress.					
51. Assesses employee performance and conducts constructive performance reviews.					
52. Develops others through coaching and mentoring.					
53. Recognizes achievement of performance expectations.					
54. Takes appropriate corrective actions with employees.					
55. Uses human resources practices that promote good employee relations in the workplace.					
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>					
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>			<b>9</b>		
<b>TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT</b>					
56. Makes maximum use of available information technology to improve the work group's effectiveness.					
57. Ensures subordinates are trained and capable in computer applications useful in their job.					
58. Anticipates changes in technology that will improve work group performance.					
<b>Add skill levels (Total)</b>					
<b>Divide sum of skill levels by</b>			<b>3</b>		













## Individual Activity

*What:* Action Plan

*How:* Document your plan for professional development (i.e., according to your LMSS scores, which competencies require further development for you to meet your full potential? What course or learning activities will you become involved in to improve your supervisory skills?)

Notes:

**REFERENCES**

Hobson, G.W. (1990, August). Eliminating managerial blind spots. *Supervision*, 16-17.

Humphrey, B., & Stokes, J. (2000). *The 21st century supervisor: nine essential skills for frontline leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

## JOB AIDS

### The Functions of Supervision

The complex work of supervision can be categorized into five areas:

- Planning
- Organizing
- Staffing
- Leading
- Directing

### Supervisor's Skills

The supervisor's work can also be examined in terms of the types of skills required. Four types of skills have been identified:

1. **Technical skills**: the knowledge about things like machines, processes, and methods of production.
2. **Human relation skills**: knowledge about human behavior and being able to work well with people.
3. **Administrative skills**: knowledge about the agency and how it works – the planning, organizing, and directing functions of supervision.
4. **Decision-making and problem solving skills**: analyze information and objectively reach a decision.

### Key Reasons for Supervisory Success

Supervisors are successful for many reasons. However, five characteristics are important keys to supervisory success.

1. **Ability and willingness to delegate**. Most supervisors are promoted from staff jobs and have been made used to doing the work themselves. Even though delegating work may be difficult at first, it is a necessary skill for a supervisor to have.
2. **Proper use of authority/power**. Some supervisors let their new power go to their heads. It is difficult sometimes to remember that the use of power alone does not get the support and cooperation of employees. Learning when not to use authority is as important as learning when to use it.
3. **Setting a good example**. Supervisors must always remember that the work group looks to them to set the example. Employees expect equal and fair treatment from their supervisors.
4. **Recognizing the change in role**. People who have been promoted into supervision must recognize that their role has changed and that they are no longer one of the gang. They must remember that being a supervisor may require unpopular decisions. Supervisors are the link between the other levels of management and staff employees and must learn to represent both groups.
5. **Desire for the job**. Many people who really don't want to be supervisors are promoted into supervision just because of their technical skills. Regardless of one's technical skills, the desire to be a supervisor is necessary for success in supervision. That desire encourages a person to develop the other type of skills necessary in supervision – human relations, administrative, and decision-making.