

# 1

## The Supervisor's Role in Management

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- Identify the level of the supervisor's position in a management team.
- Describe the major competencies supervisors are expected to bring to their work.
- Discuss the resources supervisors must manage and the results obtained from them.
- Identify the key behaviors that are likely to positively affect employee attitudes and performance.
- Discuss the need for balancing a concern for output and a concern for the people who perform the work.

# 1

## Members of a Unique Team

### CONCEPT

Supervisors are an essential part of the management team.

**Management.** The process of obtaining, deploying, and utilizing a variety of essential resources in support of an organization's objectives.

**Manager.** An individual who plans, organizes, directs, and controls the work of others in an organization.

**Management process.** Covers five key functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling organizational resources for the attainment of results.



[www.amanet.org/index.htm](http://www.amanet.org/index.htm)

#### A Source for Management Development.

Access the American Management Association (AMA) site to see what this nonprofit organization provides in the form of educational forums and resources for managers.

### What is management? Why is it important?

**Management** is the process of obtaining, deploying, and utilizing a variety of essential resources to contribute to an organization's success—both effectively and efficiently. Managers are deemed *effective* if they achieve their goals and *efficient* if they do so with a minimal amount of resources for the amount of outputs produced. One of the most important resources of an organization is its employees. **Managers** devote a large proportion of their efforts to planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling the work of human and other resources. One clear distinction between managers and other employees, however, is that managers direct the work of others rather than perform the work themselves.

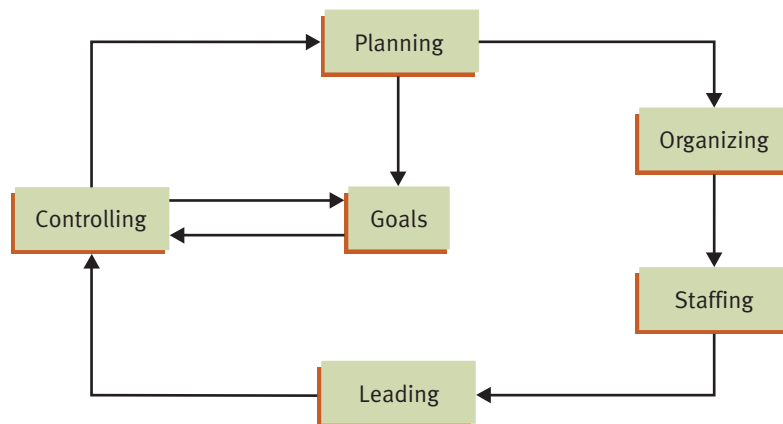
### Where do supervisors fit in the management process?

They are an essential part of it. Supervisors perform exactly the same functions, to a greater or lesser degree, as all other managers in their organization—up to and including the chief executive. Each specific task, every responsibility, all the various roles that supervisors are called on to perform are carried out by the **management process** (Figure 1-1). This process is repeated over and over, daily, weekly, and yearly, and consists of five broad functions. From a supervisor's standpoint, each function has a particular significance:

**Planning.** This is the function of setting goals and objectives and converting them into specific plans. For a supervisor, the outcomes of planning include operating schedules, quality specifications, expense budgets, timetables, and deadlines. The planning process also establishes policies, standard operating procedures, regulations, and rules.

**Organizing.** In performing this function, a supervisor lines up all available resources, including departmental tools, equipment, materials, and—especially—the workforce. It is at this stage that the organizational structure of a department is designed and its work is divided up into jobs.

**Staffing.** This is the function by which supervisors figuratively put flesh on the organizational structure. Supervisors first figure out exactly how many and what kinds of employees a department will need to carry out its work. They



**FIGURE 1-1**

Functions in the management process.

**Which function demands the most of a supervisor's time?**

then interview, select, and train those people who appear to be most suitable to fill the open jobs.

**Leading.** This function gets the blood flowing in an organization. Supervisors energize the vital human resources of their department by providing motivation, communication, and leadership.

**Controlling.** Once departmental plans are set in motion, supervisors must periodically keep score on how well the plans are working out. To do so, supervisors measure results, compare them with what was expected, judge how important the differences may be, and then take whatever action is needed to bring results into line. Controlling is closely linked to planning (as Figure 1-1 shows), because control actions are guided by the goals established during the planning process.

In theory, supervisors perform the five functions of the management process in the order listed above. In practice, however, supervisors perform all the management functions in one way or another each time action is in order. They may find themselves shortcutting the management process sequence or turning back on it, inasmuch as each problem situation is unique and calls for its own solution.

### Why is it called a process?

It is called a *management process* because it moves progressively from one stage to another in a fairly consistent sequence. In a fast-food restaurant, for example, a supervisor first plans the daily schedule, then organizes the tasks and resources, then assigns people to their roles, then directs the process by giving orders and instructions, and, finally, controls, or checks up on, results. In a typical office, a similar management process takes place as supervisors plan the workday, organize the work and the staff, direct others by communicating and motivating, and control by seeing that work procedures are followed properly.

### Quips & Quotes

*Peter Drucker's comment regarding the planning process: Trying to predict the future is like trying to drive down a country road at night with no lights while looking out the back window.*

**Management process.** The major managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling carried out by all managers in a repetitive sequence or cycle.

This process is carried on repeatedly, day by day, month by month, and year by year. For this reason many people refer to it as the *management cycle*.

### Why is so much emphasis placed on the management process?

There are two reasons. First, the process serves to differentiate the work of managers from the work of nonmanagers. Second, the management process provides a valuable underpinning that guides the practice of management and its various approaches.

#### QUICK TEST 1

1	T or F	Supervisors perform the same five functions that other managers do.
2	T or F	The function of leading includes staffing, motivating, and communicating.

## 2

### Supervisors Versus Managers

#### CONCEPT

The role of managers differs from organization to organization, but the supervisory role is clearly defined by federal laws.

**Executive.** A top-level manager in charge of a group of subordinate managers; this person establishes broad plans, objectives, and strategies.

**Middle manager.** A person who reports to an executive and who directs supervisory personnel toward the attainment of goals and the implementation of plans of an organization.

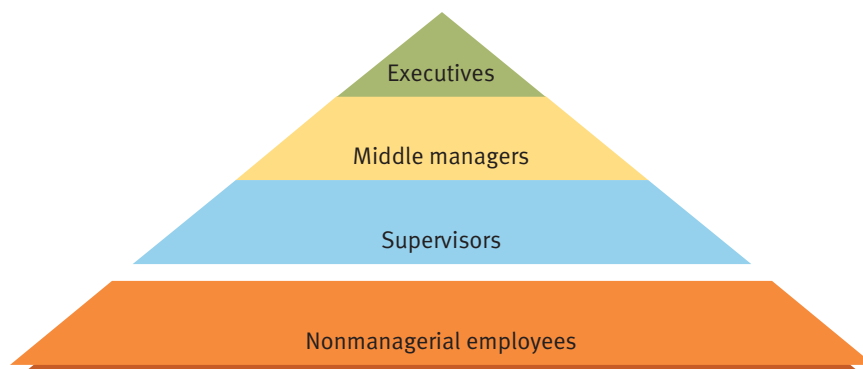
**Supervisor.** A manager who is in charge of, and coordinates the activities of, a group of employees engaged in related activities within a unit of an organization.

#### Are all managers alike?

No. Managers, and the work they do, differ somewhat by the organization they are in (for example, for-profit versus nonprofit organizations), the size of the firm, their industry, their country's cultural norms, their personal values and experiences, and especially their level in the organization's hierarchy. This latter difference is illustrated in Figure 1-2. At the top of an organization are its executives (often a chief executive officer—the CEO—and some vice-presidents). **Executives** are in charge of, and responsible for, a group of other managers. Executives establish a vision for the organization, define its mission, develop broad strategies, set objectives and plans, and implement broad policy guidelines. Then they motivate, direct, and monitor the work of the managers who report to them.

**Middle managers** plan, initiate, and implement programs that are intended to carry out the broader objectives set by executives. Middle managers motivate, direct, and oversee the work of the supervisors (and any other managers and employees) who report to them.

**Supervisors** are managers who normally report to middle managers. Supervisors are responsible for getting the “line” employees to carry out the plans and policies set by executives and middle managers. Supervisors plan, direct, motivate, and monitor the work of *nonmanagerial*



**FIGURE 1-2**  
Managerial levels.  
**Where do first-level supervisors fit into the diagram?**

**employees** at the operational level of the organization. Examples of line employees include production workers, bank tellers, short-order cooks, lab assistants, programmers, nurses, and thousands of other “hands-on” and knowledge (e.g., professional) workers. Some supervisors—about half the total—are called *first-level supervisors*, as they have only nonmanagerial employees reporting to them. Others are called *second-level supervisors*, because they supervise a combination of other supervisors and nonmanagerial employees.

In many organizations, the relative number of middle managers shrank significantly during the 1990s and the early twenty-first century. This was due mainly to a desire to cut administrative costs through the process of “restructuring,” the increasing use of computer-based information systems to fulfill the middle manager’s former role, a desire to “flatten” the organizational hierarchy, and the growing capacity and desire of many employees to take on greater responsibilities. As a consequence, supervisors now have greater challenges and expanded roles in planning and controlling their employees’ work. In turn, supervisors have become increasingly dependent on the information provided by management information systems.

### Legally, what makes a supervisor a supervisor?

The federal laws of the United States provide two definitions of a supervisor.

**1.** The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 says that a supervisor is

. . . any individual having authority, in the interest of the employer, to hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline employees, or responsibility to direct them or to adjust their grievances, or effectively to recommend such action, if in connection with the foregoing the exercise of such authority is not merely of a routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

**Nonmanagerial employees.** Often referred to as employees or associates; workers who receive direction from supervisors and then perform specific, designated tasks.

### Did You Know

#### Origin of the Term Supervisor

In earlier days, the supervisor was the person in charge of a group of towrope pullers or ditchdiggers. That person was literally the “fore man,” since he was up forward of the work crew. His authority consisted mainly of chanting the “one, two, three, up” that set the pace for the rest of the workers. In Germany, the supervisor is still called a *vorarbeiter* (“fore worker”); in England, the term *charge hand* is used. Both terms suggest the lead-person origin.

The term *supervisor* has its roots in Latin, where it means “looks over.” It was originally applied to the master of a group of artisans. Today, the supervisor’s job combines some of the talents of the “foreman” (or leader) and those of the “master” (skilled administrative artisan).

## Ethical Perspectives



### Salary Versus Overtime

Assume that you have worked in a three-person office for several years. Recently, the supervisor of the unit retired. The manager came to you and explained that a “budget crunch” prevents the company from replacing the supervisor, but that you have been selected to assume some of the supervisory roles while still performing most of your previous duties. Your job will consist of about 70 percent technical tasks (as before) and about 30 percent supervisory tasks (including overseeing the work of the other two employees). You will receive the title of “Supervisor” and switch to a salaried position, but you will no longer qualify for overtime. According to the FLSA, is there a legal or ethical issue involved here? Explain.

The act specifically prohibits supervisors from joining a union of production and clerical workers, although they may form a union composed exclusively of supervisors.

2. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 (or Minimum Wage Law) as amended set the tone for the above by defining a supervisor as

... an executive whose primary duty consists of the management of a customarily recognized department or subdivision; who customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more employees; who has the authority to hire or fire other employees or whose suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring or firing and as to the advancement and promotion or any other change in status will be given particular weight; who customarily and regularly exercises discretionary powers; and who does not devote more than 20 percent of his (or her) hours of work to activities which are not closely related to the (managerial) work described above.

The law also stipulates that supervisors be paid a salary (regardless of how many hours they work). This provision makes some supervisors unhappy, since it exempts them from the provision of the law that calls for overtime pay after a certain number of hours have been worked. Many employers, however, voluntarily recognize the reality of supervisory overtime by providing them with compensatory time off or other benefits.

The key thrust of these two laws was to make supervisors a key part of management.

### Are supervisors permitted to do the same work as the people they supervise?

Within the 20 percent stipulation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, there is no law preventing this. Most companies with labor unions, however, have a contract clause that prohibits a supervisor from performing any work that a union member would ordinarily do (except in clearly defined emergencies, in which the supervisor would do as she or he sees fit).

This is a valid and practical point. Few companies want supervisors to do the work their other employees are hired to do. Supervisors are most valuable when they spend 100 percent of their time supervising. It makes little sense for a well-paid supervisor, for instance, to do the work of an employee who is paid at a lower rate.

### Do employees ever do the work of supervisors?

Yes! An increasingly common trend, discussed in Chapter 13, is for members of self-managed teams to share many of the responsibilities (and perform many of the roles) that supervisors previously performed. This has resulted in a blurring of the supervisor-employee distinction and

vastly increased the need for supervisors to become better coaches to develop these skills in their employees. Some observers even predict that the title *supervisor* will be replaced by *team leader* and other descriptors. Other commentators assert that supervisors play a more important organizational role than ever before. Whichever direction is true, much of the material in this book will be highly relevant to nonmanagerial employees as well as current supervisors.

3	T or F	Supervisors are commonly considered middle managers but not executives.
4	T or F	Supervisors are the types of employees most likely to be downsized in a cost-reduction effort (restructuring).

### QUICK TEST 2

## A Body of Knowledge from Which to Draw

3

### What does it take for a supervisor to become a manager?

Thinking and acting like one. Management is characterized by a professional—or disciplined—approach to the work environment. Individuals who move into supervision must begin to think in a systematic way. They need to approach their work positively, rather than passively. They should accept the responsibility of making things happen for the better in an organization. They shift their roles from those that entail just following orders, to those that require making task assignments, helping others solve problems, and making decisions. They become increasingly aware of their involvement in a complex system of organizational activities, and they act accordingly.

#### CONCEPT

Supervisors become active in the management process by applying established management principles and practices to operating problems.

### Where can one learn about management?

Newly appointed supervisors are not left alone without guidance. Fortunately, they have a vast background of management experiences to draw upon (see Job Tip.) First of all, supervisors can begin their new assignments by immersing themselves in the five responsibilities outlined for them in the management process. They can look next for guidance to a set of 10 basic management principles. And they can learn many “tricks of the trade” about effective supervision by interacting with a managerial *mentor*—an experienced person willing to engage in frequent dialogue to provide

## JOB TIP!

### You Need to Read

Did you know that supervisors who wish not only to succeed in their current positions but achieve future promotions *read widely*? They obtain practical ideas by reading publications such as *Supervision*; they broaden their knowledge about business by scanning publications such as *Business Week* and *Fortune*; and they stay in touch with what's hap-

pening in the corporate world by reading the business section of their local metropolitan newspaper or even scanning selected portions of the *Wall Street Journal*. Here's some valuable advice: Talk to a couple of managers and ask them what they read, and what they recommend you read. They'll be impressed, and you'll gain some valuable information!

developmental guidance and support. Over a period of time, supervisors finally acquire a sense of the many factors at play in their spheres of influence. And from this sensitivity, they develop an invaluable flexibility. This enables them to do the right things at the right times for each situation they face.

### How do management principles relate to the management process?

They stem from the same source, according to Henri Fayol, an especially effective chief executive of a French mining company. Fayol was the first person to conceive of management as a separate "process of administration," consisting of several distinct functions and based on certain "principles." Fayol's writings (1916) led to the current generally accepted notion of the management process. His *management principles* as stated in those writings are acknowledged as widely applicable guidelines for carrying out the management process.

**Management principles.** A set of guidelines established by Henri Fayol and others for carrying out the management process.

### Exactly what are the principles of management?

They consist of a number of practical guidelines that many authorities think contain the "essence of management." Here, arbitrarily numbered, are the principles that appear to have the greatest value for today's supervisors:

1. Work should be divided so that each person will perform a specialized portion. In making a sailboat, for instance, one person will lay up the hull, another caulk, and another make sails. This *division of work* provides clarity in job assignments and helps workers increase their skill levels.



[www.brunel.ac.uk/~bustcfj/bola/competence/fayol.html](http://www.brunel.ac.uk/~bustcfj/bola/competence/fayol.html)

**Fayol's Principles.** Read more details about Henri Fayol and his principles of management, and compare them to the shorter discussion in the text.



2. Managers must have the right (*authority*) to give orders and instructions, but they must also accept *responsibility* for whether the work is done correctly.
3. Managers are responsible for exacting *discipline* and building morale among members of their workforce, but they must reciprocate by offering something of value. Said another way, if you want loyalty and cooperation from employees, you must be loyal and cooperative in return.
4. An individual should have only one boss. Fayol called this *unity of command*. Experience bears this out: If an employee reports to more than one superior, confusion and conflict are likely to result.
5. Every organization should have only one master plan, one set of overriding goals. Such *unity of direction* is lost if the purchasing department, for example, slows down the production department's output by buying materials from a less costly but undependable supplier when the company's overall commitment is to ship orders on time.
6. Similar to the principle of unity of direction is Fayol's insistence that all individuals, especially managers, place their personal interests second to those of the total organization.
7. Pay and rewards (remuneration) should reflect each person's efforts and, more important, each person's contribution to the organization's goal. Each employee should be paid according to individual worth rather than at the whim of a manager who might be inclined to play favorites.
8. Orders and instructions should flow down a *chain of command* from the higher manager to the lower one. Fayol also said that formal communications and complaints should move upward in the same channel. In practice, however, it has proved to be a good idea to permit and encourage the exchange of work information sideways between departments as well. The real trouble seems to occur when a manager bypasses a supervisor with instructions to an employee or when an employee goes over a supervisor's head to register a complaint. This is known as *blindsiding*.
9. Employees should be treated equally and fairly. Fayol called this equity. It invites dissatisfaction and conflict among employees, for example, when a supervisor gives one employee a break while sticking to the rules for another.
10. Managers should encourage initiative among employees. Other things being equal, a manager who allows some flexibility on the part of subordinates is infinitely superior to one who cannot do so. This classic principle forms the basis for the modern practice of empowerment (to be discussed in Chapter 8).

**Division of work.** The principle that performance is more efficient when a large job is broken down into smaller, specialized jobs.

**Unity of command.** The principle that each individual should report to only one boss.

**Unity of direction.** The principle that there should be a single set of goals and objectives that unifies the activities of everyone in an organization.

**Chain of command.** The formal channels in an organization that distribute authority from top to bottom.

### QUICK TEST 3

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 5 | T or F | Unity of direction and unity of command mean pretty much the same thing. |
| 6 | T or F | The chain of command principle should always be adhered to rigidly.      |

## 4

### Many Competencies Required

#### CONCEPT

Supervisors must bring to their managerial work a broad range of technical and interpersonal competencies, along with certain personal characteristics.

#### How does a person become a supervisor?

Three out of four supervisors are promoted from the ranks of the organization in which they serve. Typically, they have greater experience, have held more different jobs in the organization, and have significantly more education (formal or informal) than do the employees they supervise. Usually, it is apparent that supervisors are chosen from among the best and most experienced employees in the organization. This isn't necessarily a good thing. Demonstrated knowledge and skill in the technology at hand is very helpful to a supervisor, of course. It says nothing, however, about the management skills that are needed, too. Just as many superior athletes fail as coaches while lesser athletes succeed, there is a similar pattern among supervisors who can't handle the interpersonal aspects of the job.

Other than the supervisors who rise from the ranks, about 10 percent enter the position directly from a college or technical institute or are specially prepared by a company-sponsored training program. Another 15 percent are hired into the position from another company or organization.

#### How long does the transition into supervision usually take?

The fact that someone is named to be a supervisor doesn't mean the complete change takes place overnight. The transition from worker to supervisor often moves through five overlapping stages over several months (or even years):

1. **Taking hold.** This is usually a short phase, where the focus is on learning how to run the department, establishing personal credibility, and beginning to build a power base.
2. **Immersion.** This lasts longer, while a supervisor gets to know the real problems of the department and becomes fully informed about the operations there.
3. **Reshaping.** During this period, a supervisor gradually rebuilds the department to fit his or her style, makes meaningful contributions



to operating procedures, and begins to place an “imprint” on the way of doing things.

4. **Consolidation.** In this phase, the supervisor works to remove deeply rooted problems while perfecting the changes made in previous periods.
5. **Refinement.** This is an opportunity for fine-tuning the operations, consolidating the gains, and seeking new opportunities for making improvements.

### What personal characteristics does higher management look for in selecting supervisors?

The job of supervision is so demanding that higher management tends to look for *super*people to fill the role. Most firms, however, establish a set of criteria against which supervisory candidates are judged. The most sought-after qualities in a supervisor include the following:

Job-related technical competence:

- Job knowledge
- Grasp of financial information
- Results orientation

Management—at any level—is a challenging, yet rewarding job.

**How can you best prepare yourself for a career in supervision?**

### Thoughts to ponder

The world is changing—rapidly. A wide variety of trends are emerging (or are already in place), and many of them will directly affect the role of supervisors.

- As dramatically as e-mail has affected the world of work, Internet experts predict that powerful new technologies will emerge that will further revolutionize (and integrate) communications by e-mail, voice mail, fax transmissions, and the like.
- Despite the decline in manufacturing jobs, unions are still a strong and potent force in many workplaces.
- Workplace discontent is pervasive, with as many as 40 percent of employees reporting feeling “trapped” in their jobs.
- Severe shortages of skilled workers will create major problems for recruiting and retaining qualified employees.
- Interest in “spirituality” at work is rising as workers seek meaning and purpose in their jobs in addition to adequate compensation.

Source: Caroline Louise Cole, et al., “25 Trends That Will Change the Way You Do Business,” *Workforce*, June 2003, 43–56.

Career-related skills:

- Problem solving
- Communication
- Leadership
- Teachability (rapid and willing learner)
- Ability to adapt to change
- Capacity to build a cohesive team
- Demonstrated ability to get along with people
- Capacity to present oneself professionally in public

Personal characteristics:

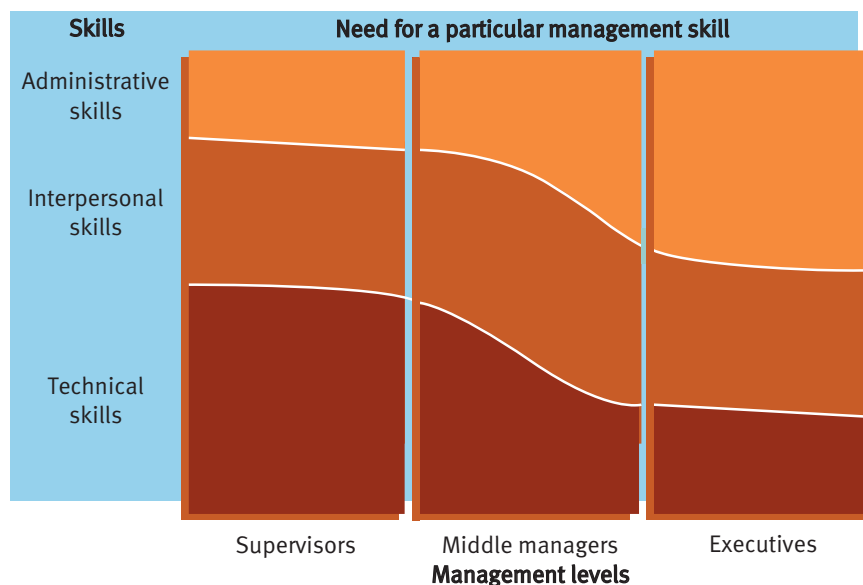
- Integrity and credibility
- Tenacity, dedication, and perseverance
- Flexibility
- Risk-taking propensity
- Willingness to take initiative
- Tolerance for stress
- Positive attitude
- Dependability and reliability
- Creativity
- Energy and good health

### How do supervisory job roles differ from those at other levels of management?

They differ only in degree. Higher-level managers spend more time planning and less time directing, for example. The people who studied this matter came up with several useful conclusions. They first divided all the tasks and responsibilities we have listed so far in this text into three kinds of roles. *Roles* are the parts played by actors on a stage; they are also the real-life parts played by managers and supervisors in an organization. These three roles can be classified as those requiring the following:

- **Technical skills.** Job know-how; knowledge of the industry and its particular processes, equipment, and problems.
- **Administrative skills.** Knowledge of the entire organization and how it is coordinated, knowledge of its information and records system, capacity to interact with key constituents (often called stakeholders), and ability to plan and control work.
- **Interpersonal skills.** Knowledge of human behavior and the ability to work effectively with individuals and groups—peers and superiors as well as subordinates.

The observers then concluded that the role of the supervisor emphasizes technical and interpersonal skills most and administrative skills least. This emphasis tends to reverse itself with higher-level managers, as illustrated in Figure 1-3. Note the importance of interpersonal relations at all levels!



**FIGURE 1-3**

How the need for managerial skills varies at different levels of management.

**Why are interpersonal skills so important to a supervisor?**

### What main supervisory behaviors are associated with results?

Though they vary somewhat from job to job and firm to firm, there are a number of regularly performed duties of the supervisory job that require attention. The broadest category could simply be called *performance management*. This is an ongoing process of clarifying and communicating performance expectations to employees, and then providing coaching and feedback to reinforce the desired actions. In addition, supervisors need to engage in personal time management, attend meetings and conferences, solve problems, provide training to employees, and handle a wide range of communications.

### What two major end results are supervisors seeking?

The purpose of the management process is to convert the resources available to a supervisor's department into a useful end result. Said another way, a supervisor is in charge of seeing that inputs are transformed into outputs in his or her department, as illustrated in Figure 1-4. This end result, or output, is either a product or a service.

A *product* might be a pair of shoes, a loaf of bread, a bicycle, or steel strings for a guitar. Your product may be partially complete, so that it becomes the material resource for the next department in your factory. It may become the raw material for use in another manufacturing plant. Or, it may be ready, like a pair of shoes, to be sold directly to a consumer without further work performed on it.

### Quips & Quotes

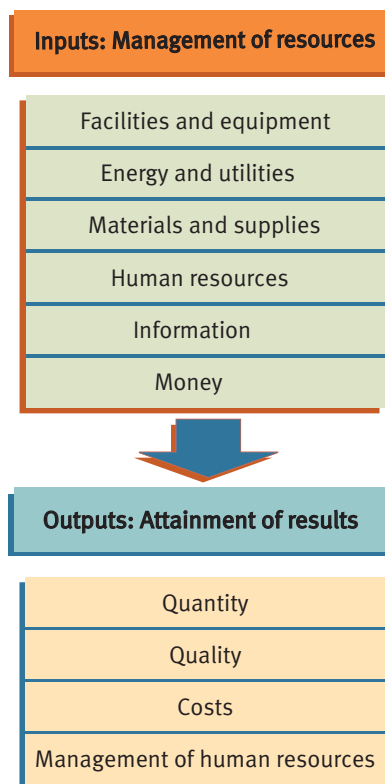
*The most-desired management skill is good communication, followed by a sense of vision, honesty, decisiveness, and ability to build good relationships with employees.*

Right Management Consultants

#### Performance management.

The ongoing process of clarifying and communicating performance expectations to employees, and then providing coaching and feedback to ensure the desired actions.

**FIGURE 1-4**  
Measurement of supervisory performance.  
**Will more resources (e.g., more people, more money) necessarily assure better results?**



A *service* may be providing accounting information for a production department, inspecting a product as it is being made, or creating a schedule for others to follow. A service may be provided directly for a consumer, as in supplying an insurance policy or handling cash and checks for a bank customer. It may be maintaining machinery in a plant or washing windows in a shopping center.

Whether the endpoint is a product or a service, the management process is designed to make sure that the result is at least as valuable as the combined cost of the initial resources and the expense of operating the process. In a business enterprise a *profit* is made when the result can be sold at a price that is higher than the total cost of providing it. If the reverse is true, the business assumes a *loss*.

### How is supervisory performance judged by higher management?

It is judged by two general measures: (1) how well you manage the various *resources* made available to you to accomplish your assignments and (2) how good the *results* are in terms of several criteria (see Figure 1-4).

**Management of resources.** Resources are the things that, in effect, set you up in business as a supervisor. They include the following:

- **Facilities and equipment.** Examples are a certain amount of floor space, desks, benches, tools, production machinery, and computer terminals. Your job is to keep these resources operating productively and prevent their misuse.
- **Energy, power, and utilities.** Among these resources are heat, light, air-conditioning, electricity, gas, water, and compressed air. Conservation is the principal measure of effectiveness here.
- **Materials and supplies.** Included are raw materials, parts, and assemblies used to make a product and operating supplies such as lubricants, stationery, computer disks, paper clips, and masking tape. Getting the most from all your materials and holding waste to the minimum are the prime measures here.

- **Human resources.** This refers to the workforce in general and to your employees in particular. Your biggest job is to see that these people are present, trained, productively engaged, and challenged at all times.
- **Information.** Examples are the information made available by staff departments and found in operating manuals, in specifications sheets, and on computer screens. Your success often depends on how well you can utilize the data and know-how made available to you through these sources.
- **Money.** All these resources can be measured by how much they cost, although the actual cash will rarely flow through your hands. Nevertheless, supervisors are expected to be prudent in decisions that affect expenditures and often have to justify those decisions in terms of savings or other benefits.

**Attainment of results.** It follows that if you manage each of your resources well, you should get the desired results. Whatever your particular area of responsibility and whatever your organization, you can be sure that you will be judged in the long run by how well you meet these four objectives:

- **Quantity.** Specifically, your department will be expected to turn out a certain amount of work per day, per week, and per month. It will be expected that this will be done on time, to specifications, and within budget.
- **Quality and workmanship.** Output volume alone is not enough. You will also be judged by the quality of the work your employees perform, whether it is measured in terms of the number of product defects, service errors, or customer complaints.
- **Costs and budget control.** Your output and quality efforts will always be restricted by the amount of money you can spend to carry them out. Universally, supervisors are asked to search for ways to lower costs even further.
- **Management of human resources.** You will face many potential problems in the areas of employee turnover, theft, tardiness, absenteeism, discipline, and morale. Managing these dimensions of employee satisfaction and behavior will be a key element of your overall success.

7	T or F	Most supervisors have risen to their positions from within the organization.
8	T or F	The most important skill set for supervisors lies in the administrative domain.

#### QUICK TEST 4

## 5

## A Concern for Both Work and People

### CONCEPT

Effective supervisors balance the application of their skills between the work to be done and a concern for the people who perform the work.

#### Employee-centered supervision.

A method of supervision that places an emphasis on a genuine concern and respect for employees, and on the maintenance of effective relationships within a work group.

#### Task-centered supervision.

A method of supervision that places an emphasis on the job or task that employees are expected to perform to produce results.

### Supervisory balance: What does it mean?

Simply this: Pay as much attention to interpersonal factors as to technical and administrative matters combined.

In other words, be as *employee centered* as you are *job* or *task centered* in your interests. Or, said still another way, spend as much time maintaining individual satisfaction, group cohesiveness, direction, and morale as you do pushing for productivity or task accomplishment.

It would be misleading to conclude that being nice is the answer to employee productivity. It isn't. As in sports, nice players often finish last. The important conclusion from research is that supervisors who focus on job demands to the exclusion of their interest in the welfare and the development of their people don't get the long-term results they are looking for. Conversely, supervisors who bend over backward to make work easy for their employees don't get good results either. It takes a balance between the two approaches, as shown in Figure 1-5.

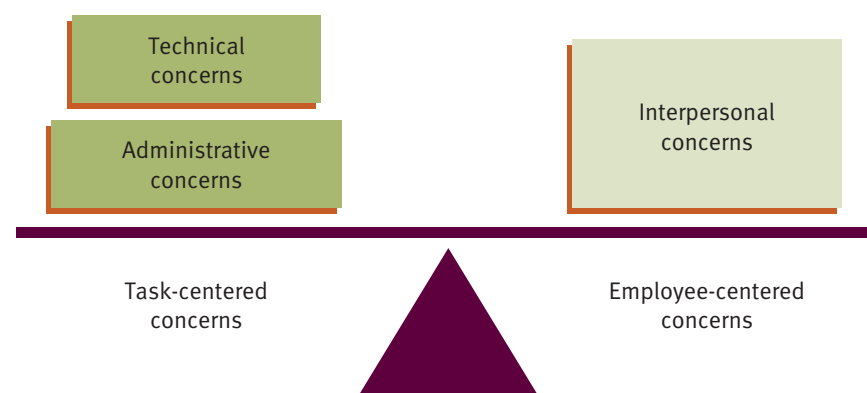
### What's a normal day in the life of a supervisor?

Many supervisors say that there is no such thing as a normal day. One thing is certain, however: A supervisor's day is full of interruptions. Estimates are that a typical supervisor handles from 50 to 80 problems a day. Thankfully, many of these problems are simple or short-lived. Nevertheless, solving problems quickly and systematically is the name of the game. Accordingly, anything supervisors can do to put order and system into their days is strongly encouraged.

**FIGURE 1-5**

Supervisors must balance their task-centered concerns with their employee-centered concerns.

**How do those concerns differ?**



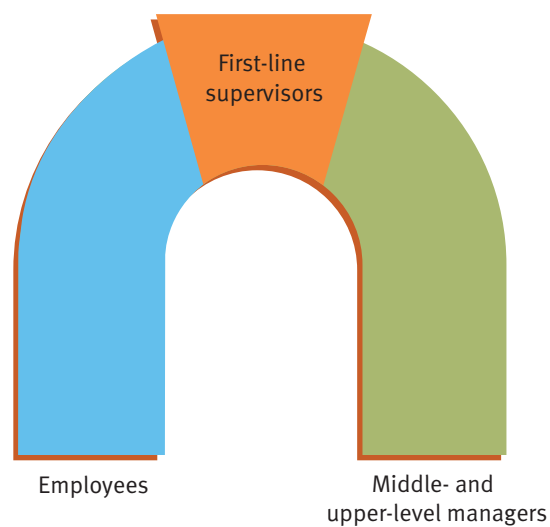


## What kinds of pressures do new supervisors face?

Both internal and external forces bear on supervisors. Internally, a person who is promoted to a supervisory position makes a major transition from one mode of thinking to another. As an employee, an individual's concerns are with self-satisfaction in terms of pay, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. As a manager, the same person is expected to place the organization's goals above all other job-related concerns. This means that a supervisor worries first about meeting quotas, quality, and cost standards; second about the employees who do the work; and last about herself or himself. The difference in priorities is enormous, and requires a substantial realignment of thinking.

In addition to role differences, a new supervisor faces conflicting external pressures initiated by two groups. Higher managers have their expectations, and lower employees have their needs and demands. The supervisor takes pressure from both sides, much as a keystone in an organizational arch does (Figure 1-6). Without the keystone, however, the arch would collapse, and so the supervisor's role is highly crucial. The pressures felt can be handled best when a supervisor:

- Admits the need for help, and seeks it from peers, boss, and employees.
- Provides a strong role model for employees by demonstrating good work habits.
- Anticipates both changes and crises, and prepares for them.
- Listens a lot and minimizes arguments with others.
- Learns to handle the inevitable stress from the job.



The supervisor's workday can be hectic. **How important is multitasking for supervisory success?**

**FIGURE 1-6**

Supervisors as the keystone in the organizational arch. **What kinds of pressure will each group exert on the supervisor?**

### QUICK TEST 5

9	T or F	Supervisors should focus on their employees more than on the tasks to be accomplished.
10	T or F	Most days in the life of a supervisor are highly predictable and relatively interruption-free.

## Practical Guidelines for Supervisors

1. *Study the job of managing* and keep learning.
2. *Maintain a focus on your key tasks* (planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling) despite the presence of daily crises.
3. *Recognize that your job*, although somewhat different in emphasis, *must mesh with the priorities, demands, and goals of higher management*.
4. *Find ways to involve employees* in key tasks and use their inputs.
5. *Follow the chain of command* whenever possible.
6. *Treat employees fairly*.
7. *Be patient* with your own developmental progress, remembering the stages of transition you probably will go through.
8. *Display integrity, consideration, energy, patience, and flexibility*.
9. *Find creative ways to achieve the multiple results* you are accountable for with the inputs you are provided.
10. *Strive for balance*—between being employee-centered and task-centered, between the pressures from employees and those from higher management, and between your work and your personal life.

# Chapter 1 Review

## Key Concepts to Remember

**1. Members of a Unique Team.** Supervisors occupy the vital first level of management that interacts directly with the workforce. Managerial work is different from nonmanagerial work in that managers, including supervisors, devote most of their time and energy to planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling.

**2. Supervisors Versus Managers.** Supervisors are on the first rung on the managerial ladder. They usually direct multiple employees, can hire and fire, do not qualify for overtime pay, and have discretionary use of resources. Increasingly, they share some responsibilities with employees.

**3. A Body of Knowledge from Which to Draw.** Supervisors are expected to act professionally, think positively, and be rational as they solve problems. They draw from a vast body of accumulated knowledge about the management process and principles (such as division of work, unity of command, subordination of their interests to those of the organization, chain of command, and equity). These principles are general in nature and are subject to interpretation and judgment in their application.

**4. Many Competencies Required.** Supervisors often rise from employee ranks, and then go through a five-stage transitional process. To be able to learn and perform well in their roles, supervisors must bring to the position a wide range of skills, personal qualities, and technical competencies. The characteristics most often expected of supervisors include integrity, perseverance, stress tolerance, energy, and a positive attitude. They improve their effectiveness by developing their technical (know-how) skills, administrative (planning, implementing, innovating) skills, and interpersonal (communication, motivational, counseling) skills. Supervisors draw upon a variety of inputs to produce results that are measured in terms of quantity, quality, costs, and effective use of human resources.

**5. A Concern for Both Work and People.** In carrying out their responsibilities, supervisors must be careful not to be overzealous by either (a) pushing employees too hard for production or better service or (b) being overly protective of their employees. Supervisors face a variety of pressures and stresses in the workday, and must also learn to juggle competing demands from management and employees.

## Reading Comprehension

1. There is one clear distinction between managers and their employees. What is it?
2. How many levels of management are there in a typical organization? At which level are supervisors found?
3. What characteristics of a supervisory management job are stressed by the two laws that define this position?
4. What is the purpose, or objective, of the management process?
5. Give a specific example of an activity that might be included in each of the five functions of the management process.
6. Why did Henri Fayol advise that an organization should have unity of direction?
7. Energy, good health, and self-control are among the characteristics looked for in a supervisor. Why are these qualities important?

## Chapter 1 Review Continued

8. Which two broad categories of performance are typically used to judge the effectiveness of supervisors at their work?
9. How is supervisory management similar to higher-level management? How is it different?
10. Why are supervisors advised to achieve “balance” in the application of their skills?

## Application

### Self-Assessment

#### How Good Are Your Supervisory Skills?

Read the following statements carefully. Circle the number on the response scale that most closely reflects the degree to which each statement describes you. Add up your total points and prepare a brief action plan for self-improvement. Be ready to report your score for tabulation across the entire group.

	Good Description	Poor Description
1. I am good at setting goals and working to achieve them on time.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
2. I can define a problem and work it through to completion.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
3. I enjoy assigning tasks to others and holding them responsible for results.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
4. I am an attentive listener; I don't interrupt others.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
5. I am able to stimulate others toward task achievements without offending them.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
6. I am willing to criticize the work of others when their work is not acceptable.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
7. I have consciously chosen a style of leadership that I will use.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
8. I enjoy training people how to do things and coaching them to success.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
9. I am good at explaining things to others in a clear fashion.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	
10. Once a goal is set, I strive hard to meet it on schedule.	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	

### Scoring and Interpretation

#### Scoring

Add up your total points for the 10 questions. Record that number here, and report it when it is requested. \_\_\_\_\_

Also, insert your score on the Personal Development Plan in the Appendix.

#### Interpretation

*81 to 100 points.* You seem to have a basic set of skills that are appropriate for supervisory positions.

*61 to 80 points.* Take a close look at some of your skills and discuss them with current supervisors and managers to see if they need improvement.

*Below 60 points.* Some of your supervisory skills may be substantially inconsistent with current organizational practices and could be detrimental to a career in supervision.

Identify your three lowest scores and record the question numbers here: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Action

Write a brief paragraph detailing an action plan for how you might sharpen each of these skills. Then pay particularly close attention to the chapters that follow that provide key information about those topics.

## Skill Development

### Improving Your Capabilities

Assume that you want to become one of the best supervisors you know—one who is truly outstanding. According to an earlier discussion in this chapter, this might require strong capabilities in several of the following qualities. Identify three key people whose opinions you value and who have had an opportunity to observe you closely (e.g., your supervisor, your spouse, a co-worker). Ask each of them for specific suggestions for how you could improve in some of these areas:

1. Physical health \_\_\_\_\_
2. Personal energy \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ability to get along with people \_\_\_\_\_
4. Technical competence \_\_\_\_\_
5. Self-control under pressure \_\_\_\_\_
6. Dependability \_\_\_\_\_
7. Teachability \_\_\_\_\_
8. Communications \_\_\_\_\_
9. Problem solving \_\_\_\_\_
10. Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 1 Review Continued

### Action

Commit yourself to a 1-month, 3-month, and 12-month plan of improvement by following these suggestions. At the end of each time period, return to the three people and ask them if they've seen any change in you on any of the 10 criteria.

### Group Exercise

#### Reaching a Consensus

- Step 1:** Form small groups of about five persons each. Jointly consider Fayol's 10 principles of management as presented in the text.
- Step 2:** Arrive at a group consensus on which one of Fayol's principles you would rank as the highest (and the lowest) priority.
- Step 3:** On the list below, rank the 10 principles from 1 (highest priority) to 10 (lowest priority). Use each number from 1 to 10 only once.
- Step 4:** Present your results to the class, and discuss the reasons for any substantial differences among groups.

Principle (or Concept)	Group Rank
Specialization of jobs	_____
Authority of managers	_____
Need for discipline	_____
Unity of command	_____
Unity of direction	_____
Subordination of personal interest to that of the organization	_____
Pay according to individual worth	_____
Chain of command	_____
Equitable treatment of employees	_____
Encouragement of initiative	_____

## Cases for Analysis

### Case 1

#### The Brand-New Supervisor

Sheryl had just the kind of personality you'd like in a supervisor. She was focused, energetic, and friendly. She was brand new on the job, however. She had just received an associate degree in business from a nearby community college, where she had worked her way through as a teller at a local branch bank. Based on her good work there and her grades in college, the bank selected her to replace the retiring day supervisor of its eight-person data processing department.

From the start on her new job, things did not go quite right for Sheryl. For instance, almost immediately Sheryl spotted several inequities in the existing distribution of assignments. Accordingly, she prepared a more efficient—and more equitable—assignment schedule. She was disappointed, however, that her employees did not recognize how fair the new assignments were. Instead, they found all sorts of ways to make the schedule inoperable. Similarly, when Sheryl tried to show the operators some of the new techniques she had learned in college, they watched politely but continued to function as before. Then, after a few weeks, Sheryl discovered that the employees had arranged their own system of coffee and lunch breaks, without regard to the rules set forth in the bank’s human resource manual. When Sheryl insisted that the employees conform to the rules in the manual, there was almost a rebellion.

Try as she might, things did not improve for Sheryl. The cruelest blow, however, fell at the end of Sheryl’s first month on the job, when the bank manager called her into the office to review her progress. The manager said, “What’s going on out there? I’m hearing all sorts of vague complaints from your employees. Furthermore, our records show that the output and quality from your department have fallen off sharply since you took over. What do you intend to do about it?”

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### Analysis

If you were Sheryl, which of the following actions would you consider most effective for you to take? Rank the alternatives on a scale of 1 (most preferable) to 5 (least preferable). You may add another alternative if you wish. Be prepared to justify your ranking.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Ask for the bank manager’s help and support in enforcing rules and changing the assignments in your department.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Rethink your approach by placing an emphasis on establishing cooperative relations equal to what you now place on technical and administrative matters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Back off on the changes you have tried to initiate, and learn to “go with the flow.”
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Make a concerted effort to build a better relationship with your staff, based on a mutual understanding of the department’s goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Crack down now on enforcing rules and assignments before you completely lose control.

## Chapter 1 Review Continued

### Case 2

#### The Rejected Refrigerators

“You’ve got to get your department in order!” That’s the word Dave received from his boss yesterday. Dave supervises a spot-welding department in an appliance manufacturing plant. His boss’s complaint was twofold: Not only was Dave’s department producing too many refrigerator bodies that were later rejected at inspection, but the cost of raw materials consumed by the department was also far more than expected. Dave couldn’t understand the connection. He did know, however, that to speed up their production rates, his welders did damage a lot of raw materials. He also knew that often in their haste, the welders jammed the spot-welding equipment.

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#### Analysis

- a. How might there be a connection between the rejects and overconsumption of raw materials and jamming of the welding equipment?
- b. What should Dave do to “straighten out his department”?

### Case 3

#### Which Comes First—Departmental Performance or Employee Development?

Fred supervises the accounts receivable section in the accounting division of a public utility in the Northeast. He is a stickler for performance, and places a major emphasis on his staff’s ability to meet monthly output quotas. Accordingly, he was disturbed when one of his more effective employees asked whether Fred could arrange her assignments so that she could learn something about billing operations in the division. “What do you want to do that for?” he asked. “I want to improve my chances for advancement,” the employee said. “I’ll have to think about it,” said Fred. “I don’t want to do anything that interferes with your meeting your production quotas.”

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#### Analysis

- a. What do you think of the employee’s request? Will it interfere with her output or productivity?
- b. What answer do you think Fred should give?



## Case 4

### Too Much to Keep Up With

Tami, supervisor of the word processing section of a federal agency, was having one of those days. She had been pressing her staff of keyboard specialists to complete a major report in time for distribution to the press by the next morning. She was interrupted, however, by a call from the human resources department. “Would you come up here, please,” said the personnel officer. When Tami arrived, she was irritated to find that one of her employees had registered a grievance related to Tami’s continuing pressure for performance.

“Your handling of people leaves much to be desired,” said the personnel officer.

“What am I supposed to do,” responded Tami, “hold every employee by the hand all day? We’ve got work to do out there, and I expect each person to pitch in.”

“Few people will complain about that,” said the personnel officer, “It’s the way you go about it that causes the trouble. You’re getting a reputation for being too heavy-handed.”

“I’ve got all I can do to keep up with the details of this job,” said Tami. “Every day, I’m handling problems involving letter, memo, and report writing; telephone techniques; resource and reference materials; calculating, transcribing, and copying machines; and now this new baby—electronic filing. I was put into this job because of my know-how, wasn’t I? Without it, the department would be in a hopeless mess. I can’t help it if one or two employees are unhappy.”

“It’s more than one or two employees who are unhappy,” said the personnel officer, “and it’s up to you now to do something about it.”

### Analysis

- What do you think of Tami’s view of her responsibilities as a supervisor?
- What are her strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor?
- What might Tami do to improve her overall effectiveness?

Quick Test 1	Quick Test 2	Quick Test 3	Quick Test 4	Quick Test 5	ANSWERS TO QUICK TESTS
1. T 2. F	3. F 4. F	5. F 6. F	7. T 8. F	9. F 10. F	