

# The Supervisor's Role in Creating a Positive Workplace

## Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- 1.1 Describe the nature of the supervisor's position in a management team.
- 1.2 Identify the key principles of management and explain how the supervisory role differs from other levels of management.
- 1.3 Describe the major competencies supervisors are expected to bring to their work, the resources supervisors must manage, and the results to be obtained from them.
- 1.4 Discuss the need for balancing a concern for output and a concern for the people who perform the work, while avoiding the tendency to abuse the supervisor's power.
- 1.5 Discuss the general expectations employees have for their jobs, and explain how and why different people have different perceptions of the nature of their work.



## Pretest

Before reading this chapter, check your existing knowledge of the materials to be covered by answering these 10 questions to the best of your ability. Then proceed to study the material in Chapter 1.

1. **T or F** Supervisors perform the same five functions that other managers and executives do.
2. **T or F** The managerial function of leading includes staffing, motivating, and communicating.
3. **T or F** Unity of direction and unity of command mean the same thing.
4. **T or F** The most important skill set for first-line supervisors lies in the area of technical skills.
5. **T or F** Most supervisors have been appointed from within the organization, rather than hired from outside.
6. **T or F** Supervisors should be mostly concerned with outputs, not inputs.
7. **T or F** Most days in the life of a typical supervisor are highly predictable and relatively interruption-free.
8. **T or F** Workplace bullying is quite rare, and even if present, it doesn't usually result in substantial consequences.
9. **T or F** The vast majority of employees report that they do their very best on their jobs.
10. **T or F** Telecommuting provides substantial benefits for both the employee and the organization.

## 1.1

**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.** The major managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling, as carried out by all managers in a repetitive sequence, for the attainment of results.

# Members of a Unique Team

## 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 and guide 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). 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, the results. 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.

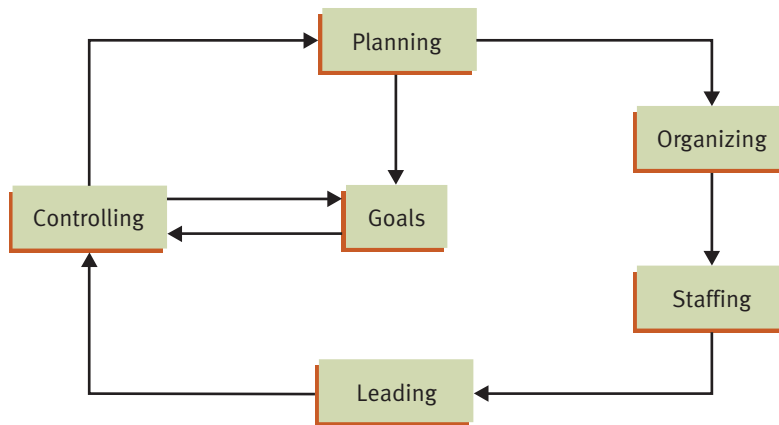
**Organizing.** In performing this function, a supervisor lines up all available resources, including departmental tools, equipment, materials, and—especially—the workforce. It is at this stage that the organizational structure of a department is designed and its work is divided up into jobs.

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



### Internet Connection

**A Source for Management Development.** The American Management Association (AMA) is a nonprofit organization that provides educational forums and other resources for managers. For more information on the AMA, please visit [www.mhhe.com/newstrom10e](http://www.mhhe.com/newstrom10e).



**FIGURE 1-1**  
 Functions in the management process.  
**Which function demands the most of a supervisor's time?**

**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.

## How do managers differ by organizational level?

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.

## Quips & Quotes

Managers on the front line (i.e., supervisors) are critical to sustaining quality, service, innovation, and financial performance.

Linda Hill



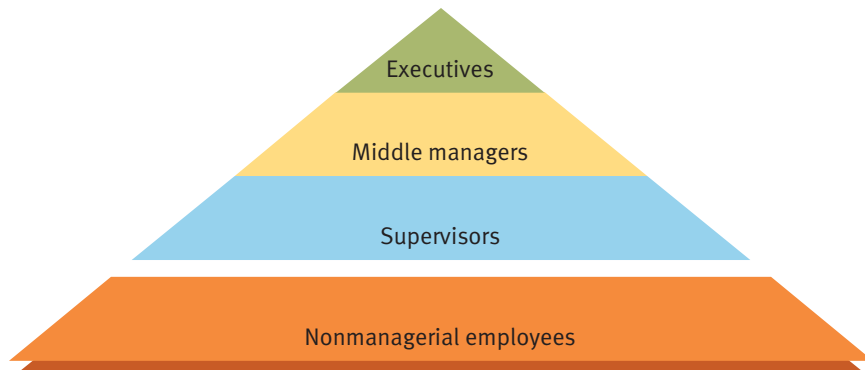
**Executive.** A top-level manager in charge of a group of subordinate managers; this person establishes broad plans, objectives, and strategies.

**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.

## FIGURE 1-2

Managerial levels.

Where do first-level supervisors fit into the 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.

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

**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 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. It is important to note that these definitions are not necessarily universal, in that some organizations develop and use their own descriptive terms to detail the various types of managers.

In many organizations, the relative number of middle managers has shrunk significantly in recent years. 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

## ? 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, and he set the pace for the rest of the workers.

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).

the exercise of such authority is not merely of a routine or clerical nature, but requires the use of independent judgment.

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



## 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.

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 such as lead worker. Carried to an extreme, this trend may result in untrained individuals acting as supervisors but at a lower salary, which would likely provoke legal action (especially if women or minorities—as “team leaders”—are not given the same salary and benefits as their male supervisory counterparts). 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 (who often rise to managerial positions), as well as to current supervisors.

## 1.2

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

## A Body of Knowledge from Which to Draw

### How can a supervisor become a manager?

The best way is to start thinking and acting like one (in addition to excelling in his or her current responsibilities). 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.

### 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 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 can you make a successful transition to a supervisory role?

Here are some valuable tips from a variety of managers for those persons newly appointed to supervisory positions:

- Accept that your prior relationships with co-workers will be different now.
- Recognize that change creates problems for people; introduce it slowly and carefully.
- Be careful not to play favorites among your employees.
- Do your homework so as to provide a factual basis for your decisions.
- Invite and encourage knowledgeable employees to take initiative.
- Thoroughly communicate in all directions, but listen intently for at least the first three months.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help from formal or informal mentors.
- Take good care of yourself—mentally, emotionally, and physically—to forestall stress.

## What are the basic 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 classic 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 will work on the cabin and another will make

### 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 books such as *Supervision: Managing for Results*; they broaden their knowledge about business by scanning publications such as Bloomberg *Businessweek* and *Fortune*; and they stay in touch with what's happening in the corporate world by reading the business section of their local metropolitan newspaper or 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!

**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.

- sails. This **division of work** provides clarity in job assignments and helps workers increase their skill levels.
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 and be accountable for their actions and use of resources.
  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 yourself.
  4. An individual should have only one boss. This is called **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 the idea that all individuals, especially managers, place their personal interests second to those of the total organization.
  7. Pay and rewards 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. In the same way, 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, so that employees feel a sense of 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 refuses to do so. This classic principle forms the basis for the modern practice of empowerment (to be discussed in Chapter 7).



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

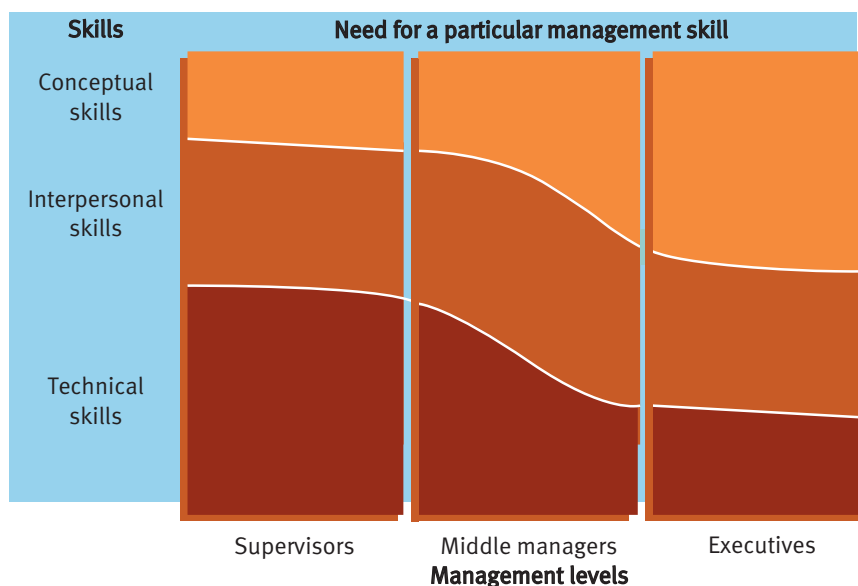
They differ only in degree. Higher-level managers spend more time planning and less time directing, for example. The people who studied this matter came up with several useful conclusions. They first divided all the tasks and responsibilities we have listed so far in this text into three kinds of roles. *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 conceptual 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!

## How do time horizons differ?

Higher-level executives are, rightfully, more concerned with the long-term future than are supervisors. Executives and most middle managers are paid to plan for and create results that will happen next month or next year. Supervisors, who are on the firing line, have a shorter time horizon.



**FIGURE 1-3**

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

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

A delay of 15 minutes in the arrival of operating supplies can loom large in importance when 15 employees are idled by it. Consequently, supervisors keep their eyes on hour-by-hour and day-to-day problems. For most supervisors, a “month from now” is a long look ahead.

## 1.3

**CONCEPT** Supervisors must bring to their managerial work a broad range of personal characteristics, as well as an understanding of how their performance will be judged.

# Many Competencies Required

## Where do new supervisors come from?

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 performers 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 or conceptual aspects of the job.

Other than 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 does the transition into supervision take place?

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



Management—at any level—is a challenging, yet rewarding job.  
**How can you best prepare yourself for a career in supervision?**

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 creative 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

### 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



## 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.

- Internet experts predict that powerful new technologies will emerge that will further revolutionize (and integrate) communications.
- 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.

## 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.

## 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, to be discussed further in Chapter 10, is **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 facility.

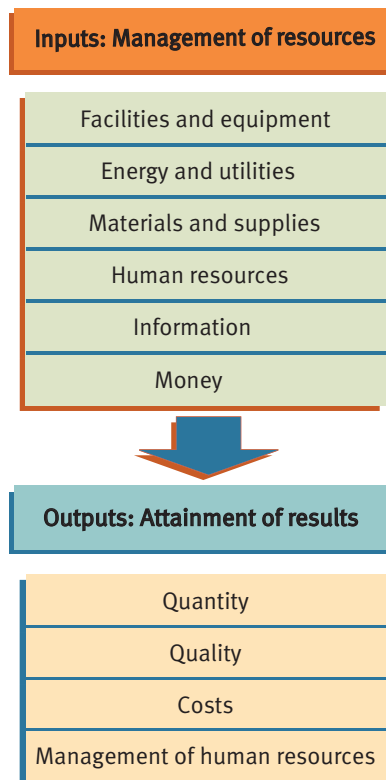
It may become the raw material for use in another manufacturing plant. Or it may be ready, like a pair of shoes, to be sold directly to a consumer without further work performed on it.

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

**FIGURE 1-4**

System inputs and outputs.  
**Will more resources (e.g., more people, more money) necessarily assure better results?**



*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*.

## What do supervisors need to know about systems?

All organizations are systems with inputs and outputs, and every department and every individual plays a role in making those systems work. When supervisors take a systems perspective, they use their analytic skills to understand better the broad range of factors that influence the results. Elements of a systems approach include:

- Recognition of the many variables in operation.
- Causal connections among parts of the system (interdependencies).
- Subsystems nested within larger systems.
- Cyclical repetition of inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback.
- Consequences (results) that may be positive or negative, intended or unintended, and short- or long-term in nature.
- Recognition that there are often multiple paths to the same end result.

A systems perspective encourages supervisors to engage in analytical and critical thinking, search for causes that underlie problems (instead of just symptoms), and see problems from a holistic and integrative viewpoint.

## 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 facilities and equipment, utilities, materials and supplies, human resources, information technologies, and money. Supervisors are expected to use these resources effectively by holding waste to a minimum while focusing on cost savings and improvements in efficiency.

**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 work 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.

## 1.4

**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.

### Quips & Quotes

My position on soft management comes down to this: I believe that candor, sensitivity, and being vulnerable makes us more human, credible, and open to change.

William H. Peace



## A Concern for Both Work and People

### Supervisory balance: What does it mean?

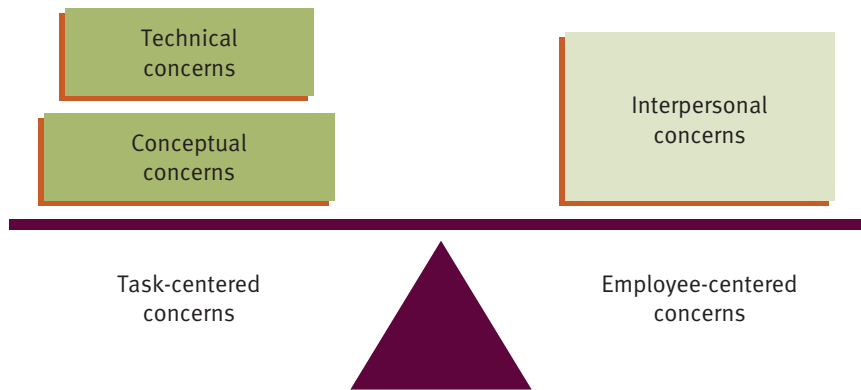
Simply this: Pay as much attention to interpersonal factors as to technical and administrative matters combined.

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 building and 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 cater too much to 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?

There is no such thing as a typical 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. Anything supervisors can do to put order and system into their days is strongly encouraged. Fortunately, a variety of technological aids are available to help supervisors



**FIGURE 1-5**

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

**How do these concerns differ?**

manage their days. These include personal digital assistants (PDAs), cell phones, two-way radios, and GPS tracking systems for monitoring the movement of materials, products, and even employees.

### 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.

There are also major differences in perspectives across levels in the organization. Higher-level executives tend to be outward-oriented and focus on macro and longer-range issues. They are likely to be influenced more by forces and events outside the company or institution than by those within it. Supervisors, in contrast, are more inside-oriented (though they must be aware of external events too). They are more focused on micro and short-range issues.

In particular, supervisors are concerned with, and constrained by, a number of environmental factors, including the following:

1. Technology, existing and changing.
2. Legal restrictions.
3. Organizational policies and procedures.
4. Pressures for meeting quantity, quality, and cost control goals.
5. Competition with other supervisors for scarce resources.
6. A sometimes overwhelming amount of information.
7. Rising expectations of employees for meaningful work, work-life balance, and opportunities to participate in decision making.



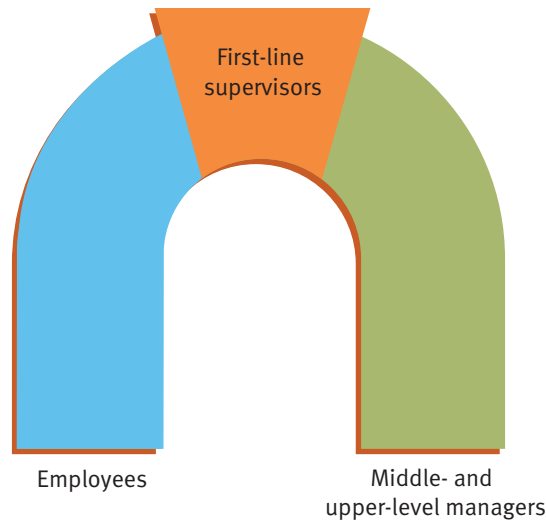
The supervisor's workday can be hectic.

**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?**



8. Globalization of business, with employees, operations, and markets thousands of miles away.
9. Changes in the composition of the workforce.
10. Economic uncertainty.

In addition to manager vs. employee role differences and the influence of organizational levels, 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.

## Workplace bullying: What is it and what are its effects?

The pressures discussed above can, unfortunately, contribute to toxic behaviors by supervisors and employees alike. **Workplace bullies** are people who verbally and intentionally humiliate, ridicule, and intimidate others on a regular basis. They may utter deliberate insults, make unreasonable demands, belittle others, falsely blame others for their own mistakes, bark orders, or verbally harass individuals. Bullies are often described as nasty, rude, insensitive, tyrannical, self-centered, and oblivious to their effects on people. One astute observer noted that

**Workplace bullies.** Persons (supervisors or employees) who humiliate and abuse others through their words and actions.



when bullying exists, “you can taste it, feel it, smell it, and especially hear it in every transaction between two people.”

The costs and effects of workplace bullying are detrimental and far-reaching for its victims. The consequences include:

- Psychological distress (worry, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion).
- Performance declines (lowered job interest, mistakes, work slowdowns, sabotage).
- Undesirable behaviors (absenteeism, turnover, lowered commitment, lessened cooperation and helpfulness).
- The spread of bullying by recipients toward their co-workers, suppliers, and customers.

The solution to bullying lies in confronting the behavior and demanding that it cease, while working to create a positive culture in which all individuals are treated with respect.

## Quips&Quotes

Administrators bear a duty to build and protect an environment where everyone feels safe and secure, an environment in which all organizational members can work to their fullest. Such environments do not permit bullying under any circumstances.

Catherine M. Dalton



## Understanding Employee Expectations and Perceptions

### How widespread is employee job satisfaction?

According to a number of authoritative studies, about 50 percent of all employees are reasonably satisfied with their jobs. This doesn't necessarily mean that they are ecstatic about them; it just means that on balance the positives outweigh the negatives. An important conclusion is that job satisfaction tends to improve with age. Younger people are by far the most dissatisfied with their work. Why is this? Perhaps because their expectations are much higher regarding the rewards of working. They have been raised in an era of abundance.

Despite some recent declines, the general level of job satisfaction is still high enough to give supervisors an even chance in attempting to move employees toward organizational and departmental goals.

### What do today's workers expect from their jobs?

Something that challenges their skills, provides autonomy and flexibility, creates an opportunity for balance between work pressures and home life, and offers fair pay in return for extra effort. According to Daniel Yankelovich, a noted surveyor of public opinion and director of the nonprofit Public Agenda Foundation, most people can choose either to work hard or to just get by. Only one person in five, reports Yankelovich, says he or she does his or her very best. For one thing, workers assume that an increase in output may not benefit them but only the consumers, stockholders, or management. Down deep, however, most employees will work harder and better, says Yankelovich and other observers, if the work they do makes sense to them and is truly appreciated by their bosses. In fact, 8 of 10 Americans say their jobs are too easy. They'd prefer a challenging job to an

## 1.5

**CONCEPT** The majority of employees are reasonably satisfied with their work, but individuals still have differing perceptions of their work, and they differ in their responses to it.



## Thoughts To Ponder

### Easy Ways to Create Dissatisfaction

Adele Lynn suggests that there are many ways for supervisors to destroy the spirits of employees at work. Worst of all, some supervisors aren't even aware that they are doing so. Topping her list of inappropriate actions are insincere gratitude, mismatch between promises and action, bullying of workers, and what she calls "celebrity egos." Other contributors to employee dissatisfaction are failing to follow through on promises, inequitable treatment across employees, and always finding someone else to blame for mistakes. Why would *any* reasonable supervisor act in these ways?

Source: Adele Lynn, *In Search of Humor: Lessons from Workers on How to Build Trust*. Belle Vernon, PA: BajonHouse Publishing, 1998.

easy one where they merely "put in their time."

How should supervisors respond to this information? First, they can make sure that employees have enough to do, especially of the kind of work that capitalizes on their talents and skills. Second, supervisors can live up to their promises about promotions or relief from boring assignments for those who do commit all their energies to do a good job.

### What should supervisors call subordinates, and why does it matter?

The dictionary term for an employed person, at any level, is *employee*. It has also been a common practice to think of employees at lower levels of an organization as *workers*. These two terms (employee and worker) have traditionally been used to differentiate lower-level, nonexempt employees from managerial (or exempt) employees. You should recognize too that overuse of the term "subordinate" implies a lesser status and may be offensive to some employees.

In recent years, however, a trend has emerged for designating employees—at whatever level—as *colleagues* or *team members* or *associates*. This reflects a recognition of the wisdom in considering the status of nonmanagement employees as *collegial* (to be in partnership) with management. Walmart stores in particular have popularized the use of the term *associates*. Not every organization, of course, uses this terminology. Progressive employers do, however, recognize that each employee—regardless of rank or designation—(1) shares a responsibility for helping an organization attain its goals, and furthermore (2) has the potential to contribute not only the prescribed physical and mental effort but also ideas of value. Consequently, the term used should be selected with care, used consistently, and backed up by daily actions consistent with it. In short, it has to be more than a slogan.

### What should supervisors know about employees in general?

Let's begin with two important factors—individual differences and the role of perceptions. Extensive research on employee characteristics shows that they vary substantially—despite obvious similarities—in many ways. People differ in physical dimensions and appearance as well as in emotional and intellectual capacities, and this produces predictable differences in their desires for jobs and rewards. Each employee further develops a unique set of perceptions about the work itself (and his or her supervisor), affected by

past experiences, mental models, and even trivial events. Therefore, it is likely that there will always be some dissatisfied employees (perhaps 1 or 2 out of 10), an equal proportion who are readily satisfied, and a broad group in between.

Some employees place the burden of their need for job satisfaction on the supervisor. In turn, the supervisor needs all the skills and patience he or she can muster to motivate today's workers to perform at the levels that society—to say nothing of their employer—expects of them.

### What causes employees to perceive similar kinds of work differently?

The way people perceive things, including their jobs or the work they are asked to do, is influenced by five factors:

1. **Past experience with similar work.** If the work has been unpleasant with another company or a different supervisor, an employee may anticipate that the experience will repeat itself everywhere. The opposite will be true for a person whose experience with this work has been favorable.
2. **Assumptions about the motivation of others.** An unhappy person may blame her or his problems on the actions of aggressive co-workers or an unfair supervisor. For some unfortunate people, this becomes a guideline in dealing with *all* interpersonal relations. In contrast, a person who views others as supportive and friendly may perceive every work situation in that light.
3. **Expectations about what will happen.** “It’s a foregone conclusion,” we hear people say. This is based somewhat upon past experience and somewhat upon our beliefs about the motivation of others. Unfortunately, it reflects a rigidity of mind and the unwillingness of some employees to give a new job or a different assignment a fair try.
4. **The reliability of information.** Some employees make judgments about their work on the basis of what others tell them. This knowledge may be correct, or it may be unreliable hearsay or bitter prejudice. Supervisors can deal with this problem by providing accurate information upon which employees can then make valid decisions.
5. **The present state of mind.** All of us are subject to mood swings. If the supervisor proposes a new task, for instance, on a day when an employee feels good, the reaction is likely to be more positive than it would be if the idea were proposed on one of those inevitable “bad days.”



## Ethical Perspectives

### WHO GETS TO ENJOY FLEXIBILITY? WHO HAS TO ACCEPT IT?

Your company is trying to improve the quality of work life for its employees, and it has begun offering new initiatives to do so. Specifically, the company is promoting the use of flexible work schedules and telecommuting. However, when you attended the companywide question-and-answer session today, you learned that (a) not all employees would be allowed to “flex” their schedules, and (b) telecommuting would be mandatory for some employees, optional for some, and unavailable for the remainder. The company also heavily promoted the organizational merits of such programs, while not mentioning the impact on employees at all. After some thought, you have concluded that the new policies on “flexibility” are unfair and unethical. Identify the ethical issues you would like to raise with your manager.

## What programs or systems can improve employees' perceptions of their work environment?

**Flexible work schedule (flextime).** A system by which employees can choose—and periodically change—the blocks of time in which they work.

**Job sharing.** The process of taking one job and splitting its duties into two so that the combined time and efforts of two persons will satisfy all the work demands.

**Telecommuting.** Working at one's home, while being connected electronically to the employer's office.

**Task-based work.** Jobs that allow employees to work away from the office, while still making them accountable for results and staying connected via technology.



### Internet Connection

Interested in working off-site someday? Visit the Online Learning Center at [www.mhhe.com/newstrom10e](http://www.mhhe.com/newstrom10e) for information you might use to persuade your supervisor to allow you to telecommute.

**Flexible work schedules** (sometimes called *compressed work-weeks*) can. As pressures rise for better use of the organization's facilities (space in particular), as workers wish to explore new lifestyles and pursue recreational interests, as the numbers of single-parent and dual-career households increase, and as cost and time associated with commuting rise, flexible work schedules can help. Many forms of these compressed schedules exist, with the more common ones being four 10-hour days or even the use of 12-hour shifts (three days one week and four days the next). Under *flextime* systems, employees have the chance to tailor their work schedules to their personal needs and reduce the number of commutes per week; employers benefit from fewer daily start-up and shut-down cycles and the broader band of hours available for customer service. Another flexible approach is **job sharing**, in which two people divide the duties in one job and split the total time at work according to mutually negotiated agreements with their supervisor.

**Telecommuting** has also become increasingly popular in recent years, with the availability of computers, voice mail, fax machines, and e-mail. Telecommuters work in their homes and usually have electronic connections with their place of work. They avoid the hassles of commuting, experience fewer interruptions, and can spend more time with family members. Employers like the results, too, as productivity often rises 10 to 20 percent, space needs are reduced, and new applicants become interested in the jobs available. Of course, not all jobs, and not all employees, are well suited for telecommuting. Supervisors need to make a special effort to provide resources, give clear instructions, keep telecommuters in the information "loop," be available for questions, and provide frequent feedback.

A third type of program that appeals to Generation Y workers is called **task-based work** (or virtual work). Popularized by firms such as Best Buy and IBM, where as many as half the employees have no permanent desks, task-based work is less concerned with spending a set number of hours in the office ("face time" with colleagues and the supervisor) than with results—no matter where they are attained. The basic requirements of task-based jobs are as follows:

- Specify the results expected and make employees accountable for attaining them.
- Allow employees to work from anywhere they choose, depending on contemporary technological networking capabilities.
- Assess employee performance based on the quantity and quality of work produced.



Millions of employees (telecommuters) now work out of their homes.

**What challenges does this create for their supervisors?**

- Make physical attendance at the office voluntary.
- Reduce the number and length of meetings.



## Practical Guidelines for Supervisors

1. *Maintain a focus on your key tasks* (planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling) despite the presence of daily crises.
2. *Recognize that your job*, although somewhat different in emphasis, *must mesh with the priorities, demands, and goals of higher management.*
3. *Find ways to involve employees* in key tasks and use their inputs.
4. *Study the characteristics of organizational systems*, and ask yourself how they apply to your situation.
5. *Be patient* with your own developmental progress, remembering the stages of transition you probably will go through.
6. *Find creative ways to achieve the multiple results* you are accountable for with the inputs you are provided.
7. *Watch for tell-tale signs of workplace bullying* in yourself and others; take immediate steps to eliminate that behavior.
8. *Take the initiative*—even before employees request it—to *explore the possibilities of using a variety of systems* (flexible work schedules, job sharing, and telecommuting) to improve employee perceptions of the workplace.
9. *Discover what each of your employees uniquely desires from work*, and then monitor that portrait for changes across time.
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.



## Posttest

Now that you have read and studied the information in this chapter, check yourself on your understanding and retention of some major points by answering the following 10 questions to the best of your ability.

1. **T or F** Supervisors perform the same five functions that other managers and executives do.
2. **T or F** The managerial functions of leading includes staffing, motivating, and communicating.
3. **T or F** Unity of direction and unity of command mean the same thing.
4. **T or F** The most important skill set for first-line supervisors lies in the area of technical skills.
5. **T or F** Most supervisors have been appointed from within the organization, rather than hired from outside.
6. **T or F** Supervisors should be mostly concerned with outputs, not inputs.
7. **T or F** Most days in the life of a typical supervisor are highly predictable and relatively interruption-free.
8. **T or F** Workplace bullying is quite rare, and even if present, it doesn't usually result in substantial consequences.
9. **T or F** The vast majority of employees report that they do their very best on their jobs.
10. **T or F** Telecommuting provides substantial benefits for both the employee and the organization.

Now turn to the answers to the Pretest/Posttest at the very end of this chapter and score yourself on each test from 0-10 correct. Did your score improve from the Pretest to the Posttest? If so, by how much did you improve? If you missed any questions on the Posttest, in what areas would you benefit from another review?

# 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. 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.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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, conceptual (planning, implementing, innovating) skills, and interpersonal (communication, motivational, counseling) skills. Supervisors use a systems approach to draw upon a variety of inputs to produce results that are measured in terms of quantity, quality, costs, and effective use of human resources.
- 4. 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. They must be alert to the existence of workplace bullies and their negative consequences, and intervene immediately and decisively to prevent bullying.
- 5. Understanding Employee Expectations and Perceptions.** Most employees are reasonably satisfied with their jobs. Many good employees, however, would be more productive and better satisfied if their work required more of them and, as a result, was more challenging. Individuals perceive their work differently for different reasons. An employee's perception of the job is affected by past experience, assumptions about the intentions of others that will affect the situation, expectations about what will happen, the reliability of information about the job and its prospects, and the employee's present state of mind.

## 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. What is most surprising to you about the characteristics of systems?
7. Energy, good health, and self-control are among the characteristics looked for in a supervisor. Why are these qualities important?
8. What factors distinguish a supervisor's work environment from that of a higher-level manager? In particular, explain the difference in their time horizons.
9. Have you ever witnessed, or directly experienced, workplace bullying? If so, how did it feel to the recipient? How was it resolved?
10. Ralph has been asked to perform a rather nasty and undesirable task. Surprisingly, he accepts it without hesitation and does it well. Ted, when given the same assignment, tries to duck it. When forced to accept it, Ted botches the job. What factors might explain the differing responses to this assignment?

## 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.

	<b>Good description</b>	<b>Poor description</b>
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	

# Chapter 1 Review (continued)

## 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 Appendix A.

### 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 can be—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 \_\_\_\_\_



## 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 the 10 classic principles of management as presented in the text.
- Step 2:** Arrive at a group consensus on which one of the 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

## Chapter 1 Review (continued)

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?"

### 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.

## 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.

#### **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."

#### **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 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.

## Chapter 1 Review (continued)

“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?

## Chapter References

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## Answers to Pretest and Posttest

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|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. T | 3. F | 5. T | 7. F | 9. F  |
| 2. F | 4. T | 6. F | 8. F | 10. T |