

GLOBAL  
EDITION



# Supervision Today!

EIGHTH EDITION

Stephen P. Robbins • David A. DeCenzo • Robert M. Wolter



ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

---

**Eighth** Edition  
**Global** Edition

# Supervision Today!

---

Stephen P. Robbins

*San Diego State University  
San Diego, California*

David A. DeCenzo

*Coastal Carolina University  
Conway, South Carolina*

Robert M. Wolter

*Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)  
Indianapolis, Indiana*

**PEARSON**

Boston Columbus Indianapolis New York San Francisco Amsterdam  
Cape Town Dubai London Madrid Milan Munich Paris Montreal Toronto  
Delhi Mexico City São Paulo Sydney Hong Kong Seoul Singapore Taipei Tokyo

**Vice President, Business Publishing:** Donna Battista  
**Editor-in-Chief:** Stephanie Wall  
**Acquisitions Editor:** Dan Tylman  
**Program Manager Team Lead:** Ashley Santora  
**Program Manager:** Claudia Fernandes  
**Editorial Assistant:** Linda albelli  
**Vice President, Product Marketing:** Maggie Moylan  
**Director of Marketing, Digital Services and Products:**  
Jeanette Koskinas  
**Executive Product Marketing Manager:** Anne Fahlgren  
**Field Marketing Manager:** Lenny Ann Raper  
**Senior Strategic Marketing Manager:** Erin Gardner  
**Project Manager Team Lead:** Judy Leale  
**Project Manager:** Ilene Kahn  
**Senior Acquisitions Editor, Global Edition:** Steven Jackson  
**Senior Project Editor, Global Edition:** Daniel Luiz  
**Media Producer, Global Edition:** M. Vikram Kumar  
**Senior Manufacturing Controller, Production, Global Edition:** Trudy Kimber

**Operations Specialist:** Diane Peirano  
**Creative Director:** Blair Brown  
**Senior Art Director:** Janet Slowik  
**Text Designer:** Integra Software Services  
**Cover Designer:** Lumina Datamatics  
**Cover Photo:** Jules\_Kitano/Shutterstock  
**VP, Director of Digital Strategy & Assessment:**  
Paul Gentile  
**Manager of Learning Applications:** Paul Deluca  
**Digital Editor:** Brian Surette  
**Digital Studio Manager:** Diane Lombardo  
**Digital Studio Project Manager:** Robin Lazrus  
**Digital Studio Project Manager:** Alana Coles  
**Digital Studio Project Manager:** Monique Lawrence  
**Digital Studio Project Manager:** Regina DaSilva  
**Full-Service Project Management and Composition:**  
Integra Software Services/George Jacob

Credits and acknowledgments borrowed from other sources and reproduced, with permission, in this textbook appear on the appropriate page within text.

Pearson Education Limited  
Edinburgh Gate  
Harlow  
Essex CM20 2JE  
England

and Associated Companies throughout the world

Visit us on the World Wide Web at:  
[www.pearsonglobaleditions.com](http://www.pearsonglobaleditions.com)

© Pearson Education Limited 2016

The rights of Stephen P. Robbins, David A. DeCenzo, and Robert M. Wolter to be identified as the authors of this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

*Authorized adaptation from the United States edition, entitled Supervision Today!, 8th edition, ISBN 978-0-13-388486-9, by Stephen P. Robbins, David A. DeCenzo, and Robert M. Wolter, published by Pearson Education © 2016.*

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a license permitting restricted copying in the United Kingdom issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

All trademarks used herein are the property of their respective owners. The use of any trademark in this text does not vest in the author or publisher any trademark ownership rights in such trademarks, nor does the use of such trademarks imply any affiliation with or endorsement of this book by such owners.

ISBN 10: 1-292-09678-0  
ISBN 13: 978-1-292-09678-0

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

14 13 12 11 10 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Typeset in Sabon Lt Std by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

Printed and bound by Printpack in Malaysia.

# Brief Contents

---

## part 1                    Defining Supervision and Supervisory Challenges    23

---

- CHAPTER 1                    Supervision Fundamentals    24
- CHAPTER 2                    Supervision Challenges    48

---

## part 2                    Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Controlling, and Decision Making    81

---

- CHAPTER 3                    Planning and Goal Setting    82
- CHAPTER 4                    Organizing    110
- CHAPTER 5                    Staffing and Recruiting    140
- CHAPTER 6                    Controlling    170
- CHAPTER 7                    Problem Analysis and Decision Making    200

---

## part 3                    Motivating, Leading, Communicating, and Developing    229

---

- CHAPTER 8                    Motivating Followers    230
- CHAPTER 9                    Leading Followers    260
- CHAPTER 10                    Communicating Effectively    286
- CHAPTER 11                    Developing Groups    314

---

## part 4                    Appraisal, Safety, Negotiation, Change, and Labor Relations    341

---

- CHAPTER 12                    Performance Appraisal    342
- CHAPTER 13                    Workplace Health and Safety    370
- CHAPTER 14                    Conflict, Politics, Discipline, and Negotiation    398
- CHAPTER 15                    Change Management    430
- CHAPTER 16                    Supervision and Labor    450

**POSTSCRIPT: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT    473**

**ANSWERS TO COMPREHENSION CHECKS AND CROSSWORD PUZZLES    479**

**GLOSSARY    488**

**INDEX    499**

# Contents

PREFACE 17

part 1

## Defining Supervision and Supervisory Challenges 23

CHAPTER 1

Supervision Fundamentals	24
Key Concepts	24
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	25
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	26
Organizations and Their Levels	26
What Common Characteristics Do All Organizations Have?	27
What Are the Organizational Levels?	27
The Management Process	28
What Is Management?	28
What Are the Four Management Functions?	29
Do Management Functions Differ by Organizational Levels?	30
Changing Expectations of Supervisors	30
What Roles Do Supervisors Play?	30
<i>Comprehension Check 1-1</i>	31
Are Supervisors More Important in Today's Organizations?	31
Is Sustainability Important to a Supervisor?	32
Does a Supervisor Need to Be a Coach?	33
Transition from Employee to Supervisor	33
Where Do Supervisors Come from?	34
Is the Transition to Supervisor Difficult?	34
Do You Really Want to Be a Supervisor?	36
Supervisory Competencies	36
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)</i>	
<i>Becoming a Supervisor</i>	37
What Is Technical Competence?	37
<i>News Flash! The Supervisor's Role in Modern Organizations</i>	38
How Do Interpersonal Competencies Help?	39
What Is Conceptual Competence?	39
Why Must One Have Political Competence?	39
How Do Competencies Shift by Managerial Level?	40
From Concepts to Skills	41
What Is a Skill?	41
What Else Is Critical for Me to Know about Supervising?	41
<i>Comprehension Check 1-2</i>	42
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	43
Summary	43
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	43
Key Concept Crossword	44

## CHAPTER 2

<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	45
Getting to Know Yourself	45
Building a Team	45
Mentoring Others	45
Communicating Effectively	46
Thinking Critically	46
<b>Supervision Challenges</b>	48
Key Concepts	48
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	49
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	50
Global Competitiveness	51
Is There Such a Thing as “Buy American”?	51
How Does Globalization Affect Supervisors?	52
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)</i>	
<i>Who Owns What?</i>	52
Technology Enhancements	53
<i>News Flash! The Cultural Variables</i>	54
What Is Technology?	55
How Does Technology Change the Supervisor’s Job?	56
E-Business at Work	56
What Is an E-Business?	56
What Changes Can Supervisors Expect from E-Business?	57
<i>Comprehension Check 2-1</i>	60
Working in a Diverse Organization	60
What Is Workforce Diversity?	60
How Does Diversity Affect Supervisors?	61
Changing How Business Operates	63
Why Are Organizations Doing More with Less?	64
Why the Emphasis on Continuous-Improvement Programs?	64
How Does Work Process Engineering Differ from Continuous Improvement?	65
What Are the Supervisory Implications of Downsizing, Contingent Workforces, Continuous-Improvement Programs, and Work Process Engineering?	66
Thriving on Chaos	68
From Chaos to Crisis	69
The Good and Profitable Organization	69
What Is a Socially Responsible Organization?	70
How Do We Act Responsibly?	71
What Is Ethics?	71
<i>Comprehension Check 2-2</i>	73
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	74
Summary	74
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	75
Key Concept Crossword	76
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	77
Getting to Know Yourself	77
Building a Team	77
Guidelines for Acting Ethically	77
Communicating Effectively	78
Thinking Critically	78

## part 2

# Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Controlling, and Decision Making 81

---

**CHAPTER 3**

<b>Planning and Goal Setting</b>	82
Key Concepts	82
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	83
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	84
What Is Formal Planning?	85
Productivity	85
What Is Productivity?	85
<i>News Flash! The Downsides of Planning</i>	86
Why Is Productivity Important to the United States?	87
Planning and Level in the Organization	88
What Is the Breadth of Planning?	88
How Do Planning Time Frames Differ?	88
How Are Plans and Supervisory Levels Linked?	89
Can Continuous-Improvement Programs Be a Help in Planning?	89
Key Planning Guides	91
What Are Standing Plans?	91
What Are Single-Use Plans?	92
<i>Comprehension Check 3-1</i>	93
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) From the Past to the Present</i>	97
Goal Setting	98
How Were Goals Set in Years Past?	98
What Is the Key to Making Goal Setting Effective?	98
Why Might Goal Setting Work for You?	99
Self-Fulfilling Prophecy for Your Followers	99
Balanced Scorecard: The Natural Evolution of Goal Setting?	100
A Special Case of Planning: The Entrepreneurial Supervisor	100
What Is Entrepreneurship?	101
Do Entrepreneurs Possess Similar Characteristics?	101
How Do Entrepreneurs Recruit and Retain Employees?	102
What Supervisory Issues Are Faced by Entrepreneurs?	103
How Do Entrepreneurs Compare with Traditional Supervisors?	103
<i>Comprehension Check 3-2</i>	104
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	105
Summary	105
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	105
Key Concept Crossword	106
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	107
Getting to Know Yourself	107
Building a Team	107
Setting Goals	107
Communicating Effectively	108
Thinking Critically	108

**CHAPTER 4**

<b>Organizing</b>	110
Key Concepts	110
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	111
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	112
What Is Organizing?	114
Basic Organizing Concepts	114
What Is Work Specialization?	114

What Is the Span of Control?	115
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)</i>	
<i>Return to Yesteryear</i>	116
What Is the Chain of Command?	117
What Is Authority?	118
<i>News Flash! Obeying Authority</i>	118
Where Are Decisions Made?	120
What Are the Five Ways to Departmentalize?	121
<i>Comprehension Check 4-1</i>	123
From Departmentalization to Structure	124
A Simple Structure	124
The Functional Structure	125
The Divisional Structure	125
Matrix Structure	125
Project Structure	126
Team-Based Structure	127
The Boundaryless Organization	127
The Learning Organization	129
Organizing Your Employees	130
How Do You Identify the Tasks to Be Done?	130
What Is the Purpose of Job Descriptions?	130
Empowering Others through Delegation	131
What Is Delegation?	132
Isn't Delegation Abdication?	132
<i>Comprehension Check 4-2</i>	133
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	134
Summary	134
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	134
Key Concept Crossword	135
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	136
Getting to Know Yourself	136
Building a Team	136
Delegating	136
Communicating Effectively	137
Thinking Critically	138
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
Staffing and Recruiting	140
Key Concepts	140
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	141
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	142
The Human Resource Management Process	143
The Legal Environment of HRM	144
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Is It Safe?</i>	146
Employment Planning	147
How Does a Supervisor Conduct an Employee Assessment?	147
How Are Future Employee Needs Determined?	147
Recruitment and Selection	147
Where Do Supervisors Look to Recruit Candidates?	147
How Does a Supervisor Handle Layoffs?	149
Is There a Basic Premise to Selecting Job Candidates?	150
How Effective Are Tests and Interviews as Selection Devices?	151
<i>News Flash! The Realistic Job Preview</i>	153
Preparation for the Interview	153
Interview Questions You Shouldn't Ask	154
Interview Questions You Should Ask	154
<i>Comprehension Check 5-1</i>	155

- Orientation, Training, and Development 155
  - How Do You Introduce New Hires to the Organization? 155
  - What Is Employee Training? 156
- Performance Appraisals 158
- Compensation and Benefits 158
  - How Are Pay Levels Determined? 158
  - Why Do Organizations Offer Employee Benefits? 159
- Current Issues in Human Resource Management 159
  - Workforce Diversity 159
  - The Workplace: Reasonable Grounds for Romance? 159
  - What Is Sexual Harassment? 160
  - How Do “Survivors” Respond to Layoffs? 162
  - Comprehension Check 5-2* 163
- Enhancing Understanding** 164
  - Summary 164
  - Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions 164
  - Key Concept Crossword 165
- Developing Your Supervisory Skills** 166
  - Getting to Know Yourself 166
  - Building a Team 166
  - Interviewing 167
  - Communicating Effectively 167
  - Thinking Critically 168

**CHAPTER 6**

- Controlling** 170
  - Key Concepts 170
  - Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives 171
  - Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma 172
  - The Control Process 173
    - How Do You Measure Actual Performance? 174
    - How Do You Compare Results with Standards? 175
    - When Should Corrective Action Be Taken? 177
  - Types of Controls 178
    - What Is Preventive Control? 178
    - When Are Concurrent Controls Used? 179
    - What Is Corrective Control? 179
  - The Focus of Control 180
    - What Costs Should You Control? 180
    - News Flash! On the Rocks* 181
    - Comprehension Check 6-1* 182
    - Why Pay Attention to Inventories? 183
    - What Is Value Chain Management? 184
    - Why the Focus on Quality? 185
    - What Are the Characteristics of Effective Controls? 186
    - Can Controls Create Problems? 187
  - Contemporary Control Issues 189
    - Is Employee Theft Increasing? 190
    - Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Out with E-Mail* 190
    - What Is the Sarbanes–Oxley Act? 191
    - Do Controls Need to Be Adjusted for Cultural Differences? 192
    - Comprehension Check 6-2* 193
- Enhancing Understanding** 194
  - Summary 194
  - Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions 194
  - Key Concept Crossword 195
- Developing Your Supervisory Skills** 196
  - Getting to Know Yourself 196

	Building a Team	196
	Establishing Budgets	196
	Communicating Effectively	197
	Thinking Critically	197
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	<b>Problem Analysis and Decision Making</b>	<b>200</b>
	Key Concepts	200
	Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	201
	Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	202
	The Decision-Making Process	203
	How Do You Identify the Problem?	203
	How Do You Collect Relevant Information?	204
	How Do You Develop Alternatives?	204
	How Do You Evaluate Each Alternative?	204
	How Do You Select the Best Alternative?	205
	How Do You Implement the Decision?	206
	How Do You Follow Up and Evaluate?	206
	Decision Tools	206
	What Are the Conditions of Decision Making?	206
	What Is the Expected Value Analysis?	207
	How Are Decision Trees Useful?	207
	What Is Marginal Analysis?	208
	Decision-Making Styles	208
	What Are the Four Decision-Making Styles?	208
	What's the Point of These Four Decision-Making Styles?	209
	What Common Errors Are Committed in the Decision-Making Process?	209
	<i>Comprehension Check 7-1</i>	211
	Problems Versus Decisions	211
	<i>News Flash! Global Decision Making</i>	212
	How Do Problems Differ?	212
	What Is the Difference between Programmed and Nonprogrammed Decisions?	212
	Group Decision Making	213
	What Are the Advantages of Group Decisions?	213
	Are There Disadvantages to Group Decision Making?	214
	Is There a Guide for When to Use Group Decision Making?	215
	How Can You Improve Group Decision Making?	215
	<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) The Value of Diversity in Decision Making</i>	216
	Design Thinking In Decision Making	217
	Big Data In Decision Making	217
	Ethics in Decision Making	218
	What Are Common Rationalizations?	219
	What Are the Three Views on Ethics?	219
	Is There a Guide to Acting Ethically?	220
	<i>Comprehension Check 7-2</i>	221
	<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	<b>222</b>
	Summary	222
	Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	222
	Key Concept Crossword	223
	<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	<b>224</b>
	Getting to Know Yourself	224
	Building a Team	224
	Becoming More Creative	225
	Communicating Effectively	225
	Thinking Critically	226

## part 3

# Motivating, Leading, Communicating, and Developing 229

---

**CHAPTER 8**

Motivating Followers	230
Key Concepts	230
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	231
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	232
What Is Motivation?	233
Understanding Individual Differences	234
Can Personality Measures Predict Practical Work-Related Behaviors?	234
Do You Need to Develop Your Emotional Intelligence to Improve Your Supervision Skills?	235
The Early Theories of Motivation	235
How Do You Focus on Needs?	235
Do Supervisors Focus on the Nature of People?	236
What Effect Does the Organization Have on Motivation?	237
<i>Comprehension Check 8-1</i>	238
Contemporary Theories of Motivation	239
What Is a Focus on Achievement?	239
How Important Is Equity?	240
Do Employees Really Get What They Expect?	241
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Motivated to Do What?</i>	242
How Do You Create an Atmosphere in Which Employees Really Want to Work?	243
Designing Motivating Jobs	244
Motivation Challenges for Today's Supervisors	246
What Is the Key to Motivating a Diverse Workforce?	246
Should Employees Be Paid for Performance or Time on the Job?	247
How Can Supervisors Motivate Minimum-Wage Employees?	248
How Are Contingent Workers Motivated?	249
What's Different in Motivating Professional and Technical Employees?	249
What Can a Supervisor Do to Improve Employees' Work–Life Balance?	250
<i>News Flash! Maintaining Motivation on the Shoe Leather Express</i>	251
How Can Managers Use Employee Recognition Programs?	252
How Can Employee Stock Ownership Plans Affect Motivation?	253
<i>Comprehension Check 8-2</i>	253
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	254
Summary	254
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	254
Key Concept Crossword	255
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	256
Getting to Know Yourself	256
Building a Team	256
Designing Jobs That Motivate	256
Communicating Effectively	257
Thinking Critically	258

**CHAPTER 9**

Leading Followers	260
Key Concepts	260
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	261
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	262
Understanding Leadership	263
Are Leaders Born or Made?	263
What Are the Traits of Successful Leaders?	263

What Is This Thing Called Charisma?	264
What Is Visionary Leadership?	266
<i>Comprehension Check 9-1</i>	267
How Do You Become a Leader?	268
Why Does a Leader Need Technical Skills?	268
How Do Conceptual Skills Affect Your Leadership?	268
How Do Networking Skills Make You a Better Leader?	268
What Role Do Human Relations Skills Play in Effective Leadership?	269
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Growing Leaders</i>	270
Leadership Behaviors and Styles	270
What Is Task-Centered Behavior?	271
What Are People-Centered Behaviors?	272
What Behavior Should You Exhibit?	272
Effective Leadership	272
<i>News Flash! National Culture Could Affect Your Leadership Style</i>	274
Contemporary Leadership Roles	274
Do Credibility and Trust Really Matter?	274
Why Are Credibility and Trust Important?	275
What If You Play Favorites?	276
How Can You Lead through Empowerment?	276
Why Should Supervisors Engage Their Employees?	277
Leadership Issues Today	277
What Are Transactional and Transformational Leaders?	277
What Is Team Leadership?	278
What Is E-Leadership?	279
Is Leadership Always Relevant?	279
<i>Comprehension Check 9-2</i>	280
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	281
Summary	281
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	281
Key Concept Crossword	282
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	283
Getting to Know Yourself	283
Building a Team	283
Mentoring Others	283
Communicating Effectively	284
Thinking Critically	284

## CHAPTER 10

Communicating Effectively	286
Key Concepts	286
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	287
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	288
What Is Communication?	290
The Communication Process	290
Methods of Communication	291
How Do You Communicate Orally?	292
Why Do You Use Written Communication?	292
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)</i>	
<i>Do Women and Men Communicate Differently?</i>	292
Is Electronic Communication More Efficient?	293
What Issues Are Created by Instant Messaging and Text Messaging?	293
How Does Nonverbal Communication Affect Your Communication?	294
What Is the Grapevine?	295
Barriers to Effective Communication	296
How Does Language Affect Communication?	296
What Did You Say?	297

Did You Get My Message?	297
Do You See What I See?	297
What Do Roles Have to Do with Communication?	297
<i>Comprehension Check 10-1</i>	298
Is There a Preferred Information Medium?	299
How Does Honesty Affect Communication?	300
How Can You Improve Your Communication Effectiveness?	300
<i>News Flash! Twitter... Social Benefit or Social Disaster?</i>	301
A Special Communication Skill: Active Listening	304
The Importance of Feedback Skills	304
What's the Difference between Positive Feedback and Feedback for Improvement?	305
How Do You Give Effective Feedback?	305
<i>Comprehension Check 10-2</i>	307
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	308
Summary	308
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	308
Key Concept Crossword	309
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	310
Getting to Know Yourself	310
Building a Team	310
Active Listening	311
Communicating Effectively	312
Thinking Critically	312
<b>CHAPTER 11</b>	
<b>Developing Groups</b>	314
Key Concepts	314
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	315
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	316
What Is a Group?	317
Why Do People Join Groups?	317
Understanding Informal Workgroups	318
What Are Norms and How Do They Affect Work Behavior?	318
<i>News Flash! Solomon Asch and Group Conformity</i>	319
Are Cohesive Groups More Effective?	320
What Is an Emergent Leader?	320
How Can Informal Groups Be Helpful?	321
Are There Ways to Influence the Informal Workgroup?	321
<i>Comprehension Check 11-1</i>	321
The Increasing Use of Teams	322
What Are the Different Types of Work Teams?	323
Turning Groups into Teams	323
The Five-Stage Model of Group Development	324
A Model of Development for Deadline-Driven Ad Hoc Groups	326
How Do You Build Effective Teams?	327
Team Challenges for Supervisors	328
What Obstacles Exist in Creating Effective Teams?	328
<i>Something to Think about (and to promote class discussion) Fast Times!</i>	329
How Can Team Obstacles Be Overcome?	330
Contemporary Team Issues	331
Why Are Teams Central to Continuous-Improvement Programs?	331
How Does Workforce Diversity Affect Teams?	332
What Challenges Exist When Supervising Global Teams?	332
When Are Teams Not the Answer?	333
<i>Comprehension Check 11-2</i>	334
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	335
Summary	335

Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	335
Key Concept Crossword	336
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	<b>337</b>
Getting to Know Yourself	337
Building a Team	337
Developing Your Coaching Skills	338
Communicating Effectively	338
Thinking Critically	338

## part 4

## Appraisal, Safety, Negotiation, Change, and Labor Relations 341

---

## CHAPTER 12

Performance Appraisal	342
Key Concepts	342
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	343
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	344
The Purpose of Employee Performance Appraisals	346
When Should Appraisals Occur?	346
What Is Your Role in Performance Appraisals?	347
What Are the Legal Issues in Performance Appraisals?	350
Are There Appropriate Criteria for Appraising Performance?	350
How Do You Gather Performance Data?	351
Performance Appraisal Methods	351
What Are the Absolute-Standards Measurements?	351
How Do You Use Relative Standards?	354
<i>Comprehension Check 12-1</i>	355
Objectives	356
Potential Problems in Performance Appraisals	356
What Is Leniency Error?	356
How Do Halo Errors Affect Appraisals?	357
What Is Similarity Error?	357
What Is Recency Error?	357
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Evaluating Students</i>	357
How Does Central Tendency Error Affect Appraisals?	358
Are You Inclined to Use Inflationary Pressures?	358
How Can You Overcome the Hurdles?	358
Responding to Performance Problems	361
<i>News Flash! Performance Appraisals in Contemporary Organizations</i>	361
What Do You Need to Know about Counseling Employees?	362
Is Your Action Ethical?	362
<i>Comprehension Check 12-2</i>	363
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	<b>364</b>
Summary	364
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	364
Key Concept Crossword	365
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	<b>366</b>
Getting to Know Yourself	366
Building a Team	366
Conducting a Performance Evaluation	366
Communicating Effectively	367
Thinking Critically	368

**CHAPTER 13**

<b>Workplace Health and Safety</b>	370
Key Concepts	370
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	371
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	372
The Occupational Safety and Health Act	374
What Are the OSHA Enforcement Priorities?	374
How Does a Supervisor Keep OSHA Records?	375
What Are the OSHA Punitive Actions?	377
Does OSHA Work?	378
<i>Comprehension Check 13-1</i>	380
Job Safety Programs	380
What Causes Work-Related Accidents?	380
How Can Accidents Be Prevented?	381
How Do Supervisors Ensure Job Safety?	381
<i>News Flash! Causes of Workplace Violence</i>	382
A Special Case of Safety: Workplace Violence	382
Maintaining a Healthy Work Environment	384
How Do You Create a Smoke-Free Environment?	385
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Save Lives, Save Money: Make Your Business Smoke-Free</i>	385
What Are Repetitive Stress Injuries?	386
Stress	387
Are There Common Causes of Stress?	387
What Are the Symptoms of Stress?	387
How Can Stress Be Reduced?	388
Helping the Whole Employee	388
Where Did EAPs Come from?	389
Why Provide Wellness Programs?	389
<i>Comprehension Check 13-2</i>	390
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	391
Summary	391
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	391
Key Concept Crossword	392
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	393
Getting to Know Yourself	393
Building a Team	393
Developing Safety Skills	394
Communicating Effectively	395
Thinking Critically	395

**CHAPTER 14**

<b>Conflict, Politics, Discipline, and Negotiation</b>	398
Key Concepts	398
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	399
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	400
What Is Conflict?	401
Is All Conflict Bad?	401
Where Do Conflicts Come from?	402
How Do You Manage Conflict?	402
What Resolution Techniques Can You Use?	402
Which Conflicts Do You Handle?	404
How Do You Choose the Appropriate Resolution Technique?	404
How Do You Stimulate Conflict?	405
How Cautiously Should You Proceed in Stimulating Conflict?	406
<i>Comprehension Check 14-1</i>	407
Understanding Organizational Politics	407
What Is Politics?	407

Why Does Politics Exist in Organizations?	408
Can You Play Politics and Still Be Ethical?	409
How Do You Know When You Should Play Politics?	409
<i>News Flash! Status in Organizations</i>	410
The Disciplinary Process	411
What Types of Discipline Problems Might You Face?	412
Is Discipline Always the Solution?	413
Basic Tenets of Discipline	413
How Do You Lay the Groundwork for Discipline?	413
How Do You Make Discipline Progressive?	415
What Factors Should You Consider in Discipline?	416
What about the Law?	416
Negotiation	417
How Do Bargaining Strategies Differ?	417
How Do You Develop Effective Negotiation Skills?	419
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)</i>	
<i>Hand Me a Towel</i>	420
<i>Comprehension Check 14-2</i>	421
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	422
Summary	422
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	422
Key Concept Crossword	423
<b>Developing Your Supervisory Skills</b>	424
Getting to Know Yourself	424
Building a Team	424
Six Steps to Resolve Conflict	425
Disciplining an Employee	426
Communicating Effectively	427
Thinking Critically	428
<b>CHAPTER 15</b>	
<b>Change Management</b>	430
Key Concepts	430
Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives	431
Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma	432
<i>News Flash! EA Sports</i>	433
The Forces for Change	434
What Are the External Forces Creating a Need for Change?	434
What Are the Internal Forces Creating a Need for Change?	434
How Can Supervisors Serve as Change Agents?	435
Two Views of the Change Process	435
What Is the Traditional View of Change?	436
What Is the Contemporary View of Change?	436
Will You Face a World of Constant and Chaotic Change?	437
Why Do People Resist Change?	437
How Can You Overcome Resistance to Change?	438
<i>Something to Think about (and promote class discussion) Robot Doc</i>	439
<i>Comprehension Check 15-1</i>	440
Stimulating Innovation	441
How Are Creativity and Innovation Related?	441
What Is Involved in Innovation?	442
How Can a Supervisor Foster Innovation?	442
<i>Comprehension Check 15-2</i>	444
<b>Enhancing Understanding</b>	445
Summary	445
Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions	445
Key Concept Crossword	446

**Developing Your Supervisory Skills 447**

- Getting to Know Yourself 447
- Building a Team 447
- Innovation in the Workplace 447
- Communicating Effectively 448
- Thinking Critically 448

**CHAPTER 16****Supervision and Labor 450**

- Key Concepts 450
- Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives 451
- Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma 452
- What Is Labor Relations? 452
  - Why Do Employees Join Unions? 454
- Labor Legislation 456
  - The Wagner Act 456
  - The Taft-Hartley Act 457
  - Other Laws Affecting Labor–Management Relations 457
  - Comprehension Check 16-1* 458
- How Are Employees Unionized? 459
  - News Flash! When the Union Arrives* 460
- Collective Bargaining 461
  - What Are the Objective and Scope of Collective Bargaining? 461
  - What Is the Collective Bargaining Process? 462
  - What Happens When Agreement Cannot Be Reached? 464
  - Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)*
  - Can Boeing Shift the Work?* 466
  - Comprehension Check 16-2* 467
- Enhancing Understanding 468**
  - Summary 468
  - Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions 468
  - Key Concept Crossword 469
- Developing Your Supervisory Skills 470**
  - Getting to Know Yourself 470
  - Building a Team 470
  - Resolving a Grievance 471
  - Communicating Effectively 471
  - Thinking Critically 472

**POSTSCRIPT**

- Personal Development 473**
- Introduction 473
- What Is a Career? 474
  - How Do I Make a Career Decision? 474
  - Can I Increase My Chances for Getting into the Organization? 475
  - Where Can I Find Jobs Advertised on the Internet? 475
- Preparing a Résumé 475
- Excelling at the Interview 476
- Some Suggestions for Developing a Successful Career 477
- A Final Word 478

**ANSWERS TO COMPREHENSION CHECKS AND CROSSWORD PUZZLES 479****GLOSSARY 488****INDEX 499**

# Preface

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Supervision Today!* We continue to present this book in a way that our users have found useful. Many of you helped make the previous editions of this book a resounding success. In this edition, we continue that trend and make your reading experience even better.

In our quest to make this the most complete supervision text currently available, we've taken into account feedback from our readers. We continue to present a book that focuses on the basic elements of supervision—one that covers the essential and traditional concepts in effectively supervising employees; that has a strong applied, practical, and skill focus; and that is user friendly. This new edition continues to be rich in instructional aids and experiential opportunities. Let's highlight some of these elements: specifically, the basis for the content, the new features, and the “student-friendly” approach of this edition.

## Foundations of the Eighth Edition

Most of us understand concepts better when we can relate them to our everyday lives. In this edition we help you build an understanding of supervising through real-life concepts, examples, and practice. We believe that when you have an opportunity to apply what you are learning—in an educational setting that encourages risk taking—you will perform more effectively on the job. Moreover, in the process you will build your supervisory skills portfolio!

We recognize that the supervisor's job continues its rate of dramatic change. Supervisors are working with a more diverse workforce in terms of race, gender, and ethnic background. Supervisors' jobs are constantly affected by technological changes, a more competitive marketplace, and corporate restructuring and workflow redesign. Despite all of these changes, supervisors still need to understand the traditional elements of directing the work of others and the specific skills required: goal setting, budgeting, scheduling, delegating, interviewing, negotiating, handling grievances, counseling employees, and evaluating employees' performance.

A good supervision text must address both traditional and contemporary issues. We believe we've done this by focusing on relevant issues and by including lots of examples and visual stimuli to make concepts come alive. The full-color design format captures visually the reality and the excitement of the supervisor's job. We've also spent years developing a writing style that has been called “lively, conversational, and interesting.” That's just another way of saying that you should be able to understand what we're saying and feel as though we're actually in front of you giving a lecture. Of course, only you can judge this text's readability. We ask you to read a few pages at random. We think you'll find the writing style both informative and lively.

## What's New for the Eighth Edition?

We have been pleased with the response to the previous edition of the textbook. Reviewers and current adopters tell us that the content is solid and that the skill-building exercises work well in the classroom. For the eighth edition we have concentrated on refining the presentation and addressing the evolving roles that supervisors are asked to embrace in today's workplace. Significant additions to the eighth edition include the following:

- Sustainability in chapter 1
- Update on the importance of supervisors in chapter 1

- Motivating contingent workers in chapters 2 and 8
- Workplace diversity updates in chapters 2, 5, 8 and 1
- Supervisory issues faced by entrepreneurs in chapter 3
- Recruiting and retaining employees in an entrepreneurial environment in chapter 3
- Project structure for teams in chapter 4
- Teleworker updates in chapter 4
- Virtual and network organizations in chapter 4
- Workplace romance in chapter 5
- Adjusting controls for cultural differences in chapter 6
- Big data in decision making in chapter 7
- Design thinking in decision making in chapter 7
- Using employee recognition programs in chapter 8
- Work life and family balance updates in chapter 8
- Employee engagement in chapter 9
- Problem-solving, self-managed, cross-functional, and virtual work teams in chapter 11
- Supervising global teams in chapter 11
- Paired comparison appraisal in chapter 12

## Key Features of the Eighth Edition

Before you start a journey, it's valuable to know where you're headed so you can minimize detours. The same holds true in reading a text. To make learning more efficient, we continue to include the following features.

**Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives** Each chapter opens with a list of outcomes and learning objectives that describe what you will be able to do after reading the chapter. These outcomes and learning objectives are designed to focus your attention on the major issues in each chapter. Each outcome and learning objective is a key learning element.

**Key Concepts** Each chapter contains a list of the key concepts addressed in the chapter. These terms represent critical comprehension areas. And through the Key Concept Crossword you can get feedback on how well you've understood the key concepts.

**Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma** These interesting chapter-opening stories focus on an issue regarding a topic that will be discussed in the chapter. Although they have value, these vignettes are often overlooked. To address this problem, and to focus heavily on supervisory issues, all of our opening vignettes are posed as situational dilemmas. No matter where you may work as a supervisor, at some point in your career you will be faced with a difficult issue—one that goes beyond simply following the law. These opening vignettes are designed to encourage you to think about what you may face and to begin to develop a plan of action for handling workplace dilemmas. For this edition three of the opening vignettes are new, which offers a contemporary view of workplace dilemmas.

**Margin Notes** Key concepts identified at the beginning of each chapter are set boldface when they first appear in the chapter. The marginal note defines the term for quick reference.

**News Flash!** Because of the popularity of these vignettes in previous editions, we continue to include them in this new edition. Each vignette presents an issue that highlights a distinction between traditional and contemporary supervisory roles. Each chapter contains a news flash item specific to the topics included in the chapter and two are new.

**Something to Think About** Supervisors make many decisions every day. Some decisions present clear-cut answers based on legal and company rules and regulations. Other resolutions may not be so obvious. You need to evaluate and think through a number of variables to develop an answer or course of action. These sections are excellent class discussion starters and are included in each chapter to focus on the presented topics.

**Focus on Comprehension** We continue to present our second-level headings in the form of questions. Each of these questions was carefully written to reinforce understanding of specific information. After reading a chapter (or a section), you should be able to return to these headings and answer the question. If you can't answer a question or are unsure of your response, you'll know exactly what sections you need to reread or review, or where to place more of your effort. All in all, this format provides a self-check on your reading comprehension.

**Comprehension Check** This is a quick “Are-you-understanding-what-you’re-reading?” feature. In each chapter there are two Comprehension Checks with objective questions (which are answered in the “Solutions” section at the end of the book beginning on page 479) that offer quick feedback on whether you’ve understood what you’ve read. If you have problems answering these questions correctly, you should reread those sections before moving on to new material in the book. Of course, not every element of the chapter’s material can be tested—nor can simply answering these questions correctly guarantee comprehension. But answering these questions correctly can indicate that you are making progress and that learning has taken place.

**Thinking Critically** Critical thinking is also an important outcome. Several years ago, training organizations began taking a hard look at themselves. Typically, they found that their programs needed to expand language-based skills, knowledge, and abilities across the curriculum. What outcomes did this achieve? In essence, it indicated the need for all training programs to cover the basic skill areas of communication, critical thinking, computer technology, globalization, diversity, and ethics and values.

This edition of *Supervision Today!* continues this feature to help you acquire these key skills by upgrading levels of thinking from knowledge to comprehension and, finally, to application. We convey relevant supervisory knowledge, give you an opportunity to reinforce your comprehension, and demonstrate how you can apply the concepts.

## END-OF-CHAPTER FEATURES: A SKILL-FOCUSED APPROACH

Today it's not enough simply to know about supervision; you need skills to succeed in your supervisory efforts. So we've maintained our skill component in the Enhancing Understanding and Developing Your Supervisory Skills sections at the end of each chapter, which include the following features:

- Summary
- Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions
- Key Concept Crossword
- Getting to Know Yourself
- Building a Team
- A step-by-step description of how to develop your skills in the area discussed in that chapter
- Communicating Effectively
- Thinking Critically

These features are designed to help you build analytical, diagnostic, team-building, investigative, and writing skills. We address these skill areas in several ways. For example, we include experiential exercises to develop team-building skills; cases to

build diagnostic, analytical, and decision-making skills; and suggested topical writing assignments to enhance writing skills.

**Summary** Just as Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives clarify where you are going, chapter summaries remind you where you've been. Each chapter of this book concludes with a concise summary organized around the opening chapter outcomes and learning objectives.

**Comprehension: Review and Discussion Questions** These questions reinforce chapter content. If you have read and understood the content of a chapter, you should be able to answer the review questions, which are drawn directly from the material in the chapter. The discussion questions, on the other hand, tend to go beyond comprehension of chapter content. They're designed to foster higher-order thinking skills. The discussion questions enable you to demonstrate that you not only know the facts in the chapter but can also use those facts to deal with more complex issues.

**Key Concept Crossword** Crossword puzzles using the key concepts from each chapter provide another way to reinforce comprehension on a level, and in a way, that you may enjoy. Answers are provided in the Solutions section at the end of the book beginning on page 479.

**Getting to Know Yourself** Before you can effectively supervise others, you must understand your current strengths as well as areas in need of development. To assist in this learning process, we encourage you to complete these self-assessments from the Prentice Hall Self-Assessment Library 3.4, which can be packaged with the textbook.

**Building a Team** These exercises give you an opportunity to work as a team, learning and practicing the supervisory skills introduced in the chapter. By combining your new knowledge and natural talents, you will be able to practice a supervisory activity and assess your own progress.

**Chapter Topic How-To Focus** This section gives step-by-step instructions on how to develop a skill directly related to a topic addressed in the chapter.

**Communicating Effectively** In this feature, suggested writing projects help you develop writing skills. Projects can also become presentations to reinforce verbal and presentation skills.

**Thinking Critically: Case Analyses** Each chapter concludes with two case studies designed to make you think critically as you make decisions regarding a supervisory issue. These cases enable you to apply your knowledge to solve problems faced by supervisors. For this edition 28 percent of the cases have been replaced and updated with new topical situations dealing with current workplace issues.

## Supplemental Materials

### FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

At the Instructor Resource Center, [www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Robbins](http://www.pearsonglobaleditions.com/Robbins), instructors can access a variety of print, digital, and presentation resources available with this text in downloadable format. Registration is simple and gives instructors immediate access to new titles and new editions. As a registered faculty member, you can download resource files and receive immediate access to and instructions for installing course management content on your campus server. In case you ever need assistance,

our dedicated technical support team is ready to help with the media supplements that accompany this text. Visit <http://247.pearsoned.com> for answers to frequently asked questions and toll-free user support phone numbers.

The following supplements are available for download to adopting instructors:

- Instructor's Resource Manual
- Test Bank
- TestGen® Computerized Test Bank
- PowerPoint Presentation

# Acknowledgments

Writing a textbook is often the work of a number of people whose names generally never appear on the cover. Yet, without their help and assistance, a project like this would never come to fruition. We'd like to recognize some special people who gave so unselfishly to making this book a reality.

We want to thank the users of previous editions and students who provided a number of suggestions for this revision. To all who provided us feedback, please know that we take your comments and suggestions seriously. We review each comment and see how it might be incorporated into the text. Unfortunately, in a few instances, although the comments and suggestions were absolutely on target, sometimes adding specific information isn't feasible. That's not to say that we discounted what you said, but we had to balance the focus of the book with the feedback given.

Finally, we'd like to add personal notes.

From Steve's corner: To my wife, Laura Ospanik. Laura continues to be a phenomenal source of ideas and support. For that I am grateful.

From Dave's corner: I want to give special thanks to my family, who give me the encouragement and support to do my job. Each of you is special to me in that you continue to bring love and warmth into my life. Terri, Mark, Meredith, Gabriella, and Natalie, thank you. You continue to make me proud to be part of your lives.

From Rob's corner: I want to thank my wife, Sheila, for encouraging and supporting me in my work on the eighth edition of *Supervision Today!* I also thank my granddaughters Kennedy, Katherine, and Caroline for demonstrating the love of learning this book is meant to inspire. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to be part of this learning endeavor.

## An Invitation

Now that we've explained the ideas behind the text, we'd like to extend an open invitation. If you'd like to give us some feedback, we encourage you to contact us.

Send your correspondence to Dave DeCenzo at E. Craig Wall, Sr. College, Coastal Carolina University, P.O. Box 269154, Conway, SC 29528-6054. Dave is also available via e-mail at [ddecenzo@coastal.edu](mailto:ddecenzo@coastal.edu). Alternatively, you may contact Rob Wolter at [spv2day@iupui.edu](mailto:spv2day@iupui.edu). Either way, we welcome your feedback!

We hope you enjoy reading this book as much as we enjoyed preparing it for you.

Steve Robbins  
Dave DeCenzo  
Rob Wolter

Pearson wishes to thank the following people for their work on the content of the Global Edition:

### Contributors:

Steven Ng Kok Toong, Segi University, Malaysia

### Reviewers:

Noor Hazlina Ahmad, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Zoltan Buzady, CEU Business School

Hasliza Abdul Halim, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Humphry Hong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

# Defining Supervision and Supervisory Challenges

*Part 1 introduces you to the world of work and the functions of a supervisor. Emphasis in this section is placed on supervisory roles and the skills needed to be successful in today's ever-changing work environment. Supervisory positions are also being influenced by a number of environmental factors. What these factors are and how they affect the supervisory function are discussed.*

**Chapter 1** ■ Supervision  
Fundamentals

**Chapter 2** ■ Supervision  
Challenges

# 1

# CHAPTER

# Supervision Fundamentals

## Key Concepts

After completing this chapter, you will be able to define these supervisory terms:

- conceptual competence
- controlling
- effectiveness
- efficiency
- employee engagement
- first-level managers
- interpersonal competence
- leading
- management
- management functions
- middle managers
- operative employees
- organization
- organizing
- planning
- political competence
- process
- skill
- supervisors
- supervisory competencies
- sustainability
- technical competence
- top management

## Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- 1-1. Explain the difference among supervisors, middle managers, and top management.
- 1-2. Define *supervisor*.
- 1-3. Identify the four functions in the management process.
- 1-4. Explain why the supervisor's role is considered ambiguous.
- 1-5. Describe the four essential supervisory competencies.
- 1-6. Identify the elements that are necessary to be successful as a supervisor.

Acestock/Alamy



# Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma



Eric Carr/Alamy

Organizations are changing, but are organizations changing their traditional structures? By and large, the answer is no, traditional organizational structures are still evident today. However, some organizations are changing the traditional organizational structure to appeal to potential employees. One such company is Google. According to *Fortune* magazine, Google ranks in the top five best places to work and has ranked so for five consecutive years.<sup>1</sup> What makes this organization so different from others? Why are employees flocking to organizations such as Google?

The traditional organizational pyramid has operative employees at the bottom of the triangle, supervisors above them, middle managers above supervisors, and top management above all (see Exhibit 1-1). This structure is a vertical approach to management in which the decision making is done at the top and orders are sent down to the operational employees at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. Operative employees do not have much say in the organization's operations.

Google uses a cross-functional organizational structure combined with a unique philosophy. Their cross-functional organizational structure is more of a team approach to management and is structured horizontally. According to Google.com, they purposely maintain “an open culture often associated with startups, in which everyone is a hands-on contributor and feels comfortable sharing ideas and opinions.”<sup>2</sup> Google's benefits package also plays a major part in attracting employees. Google states that, from employee retirement funds to their free lunch and dinner program, they strive to offer customizable programs that suit the needs of each of their employees. What more could an employee want?

Which organizational structure do you think works best and why? Do you think the vertical structure works better in some cases, whereas the horizontal structure works better in others? Would you prefer a more relaxed working environment or do you prefer something more structured?

This book is about the millions of supervisors working in today's dynamic organizations and the jobs they do in helping their organizations reach their goals. This book will introduce you to the challenging activities and the rapidly changing world of supervision today!

## OBJECTIVE 1.1

Explain the difference among supervisors, middle managers, and top management.

## OBJECTIVE 1.2

Define *supervisor*.

## organization

A systematic grouping of people brought together to accomplish some specific purpose.

## Organizations and Their Levels

Supervisors work in places called **organizations**. Before we identify who supervisors are and what they do, it's important to clarify what we mean by the term *organization*. An organization is a systematic grouping of people brought together to accomplish some specific purpose. Your college or university is an organization. So are supermarkets, charitable agencies, churches, neighborhood gas stations, the Indianapolis Colts football team, Nokia Corporation, the Australian Dental Association, and Cedars-Sinai Hospital. These are all organizations because each comprises specific common characteristics.

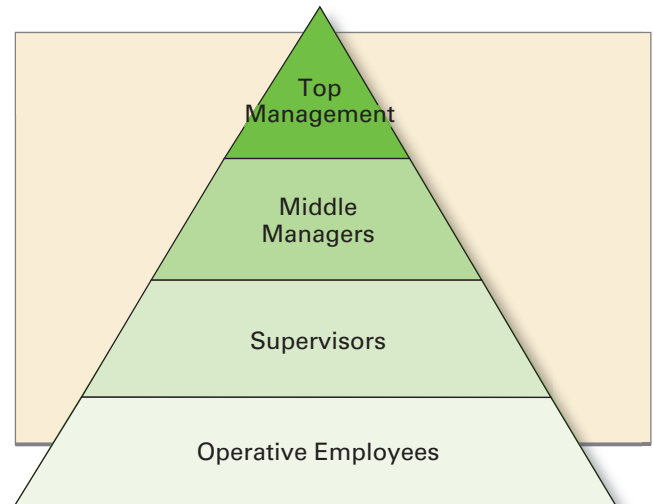
<sup>1</sup>Fortune, “100 Best Companies to Work for,” *CNN Money*, 2014, <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/best-companies> (accessed May 23, 2014).

<sup>2</sup>Google, “Our Culture,” Google.com, <http://www.google.com/intl/en/about/company/facts/culture> (accessed May 23, 2014).

## WHAT COMMON CHARACTERISTICS DO ALL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE?

All organizations, regardless of their size or focus, share three common characteristics. First, every organization has a purpose. The distinct purpose of an organization is typically expressed in terms of a goal or set of goals that the organization hopes to accomplish. Second, each organization is composed of people. It takes people to establish the purpose and to perform a variety of activities to make the goal a reality. Third, all organizations develop a systematic structure that defines the various roles of members and that often sets limits on members' work behaviors. This may include creating rules and regulations, giving some members supervisory responsibility over other members, forming work teams, or writing job descriptions so that organizational members know their responsibilities.

Although organizations and their structures vary widely, often adapting to the environment in which the organization operates, we can show—in most traditional organizations—an organization's structure as a pyramid containing four general categories (see Exhibit 1-1).



**Exhibit 1-1**

*Levels in the traditional organizational pyramid.*

## WHAT ARE THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS?

Generally speaking, organizations can be divided into four distinct levels: operative employees, supervisors, middle managers, and top management. Let's briefly look at each level.

The base level in the pyramid is occupied by **operative employees**. These employees physically produce an organization's goods and services by working on specific tasks. The counter clerk at Burger King, the claims adjuster at Progressive Insurance, the assembly-line worker at the Toyota auto plant, and the UPS representative who delivers your packages are examples of operative employees. This category may also include many professional positions: doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, and information technology specialists. The common feature these operative workers share is that they generally don't manage or oversee the work of any other employee.

Now turn your attention to the top two levels in Exhibit 1-1. These are traditional management positions. **Top management** is a group of people responsible for establishing the organization's overall objectives and developing the policies to achieve those objectives. Titles of typical top management positions in business firms include chair of the board, chief executive officer, president, and senior vice-president. Among nonprofit organizations, top management may have such titles as museum director, superintendent of schools, or governor of a state. **Middle managers** include all employees below the top management level who manage other managers. These individuals are responsible for establishing and meeting specific goals in their particular department or unit. Their goals, however, are not established in isolation. Instead, the objectives set by top management provide specific direction to middle managers regarding what they are expected to achieve. Ideally, if each middle manager meets their goals, the entire organization meets its objectives. Examples of job titles held by middle managers include vice-president of finance, director of sales, division manager, group manager, district manager, unit manager, or high school principal.

Let's again return to Exhibit 1-1. The only category that we haven't described is **supervisors**. Like top and middle managers, supervisors are also part of an organization's management team. What makes them unique is that they oversee the work of operative employees. Supervisors, then, are the only managers who don't manage other managers. Another way to think of supervisors is as **first-level managers**. That is, counting from the bottom of the traditional pyramid-shaped organization, supervisors represent the first level in the management hierarchy.

### **operative employees**

Employees who physically produce an organization's goods and services by working on specific tasks.

### **top management**

A group of people responsible for establishing an organization's overall objectives and developing the policies to achieve those objectives.

### **middle managers**

All employees below the top management level who manage other managers and are responsible for establishing and meeting specific departmental or unit goals set by top management.

### **supervisors**

As part of an organization's management team, supervisors oversee the work of operative employees and are the only managers who don't manage other managers. *See also* first-level managers.

### **first-level managers**

Managers who represent the first level in the management hierarchy. *See also* supervisors.

What kinds of titles are likely to tell you that someone is a supervisor? Though names are sometimes deceiving, people with job titles such as assistant manager, department head, department chair, head coach, foreman, or team leader are typically in supervisory positions. An interesting aspect of supervisors' jobs is that they may engage in operating tasks with their employees. The counter clerk at Burger King may also be the shift supervisor. The claims supervisor at Progressive may also process claim forms. It is important to recognize that even though they perform operative tasks, supervisors are still part of management. That was made clear in 1947, when the U.S. Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act. This act specifically excluded supervisors from the definition of *employee*. Moreover, the Taft-Hartley Act stated that any person who can “hire, suspend, transfer, lay off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline other employees while using independent judgment is a supervisor.” Because first-level managers usually have this authority, the fact that they also engage in the same kind of work that their employees perform in no way changes their management status. In reality, they are still expected to perform the duties and responsibilities associated with the management process.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3**

Identify the four functions in the management process.

**management**

The process of getting things done, effectively and efficiently, through and with other people.

**process**

The primary activities supervisors perform.

**efficiency**

Doing a task right; also refers to the relationship between inputs and outputs.

**effectiveness**

Doing the right task; goal attainment.

## The Management Process

Just as organizations have common characteristics, so, too, do managers at all levels of the organization. Although their titles vary widely, there are several common elements to their jobs—regardless of whether the supervisor is a head nurse in the Heart Center unit of the Washington Hospital Center who oversees a staff of eleven critical-care specialists, or the chief executive officer of the 82,000-plus-member Exxon Corporation. In this section, we look at these commonalities as we discuss the management process and what managers do.

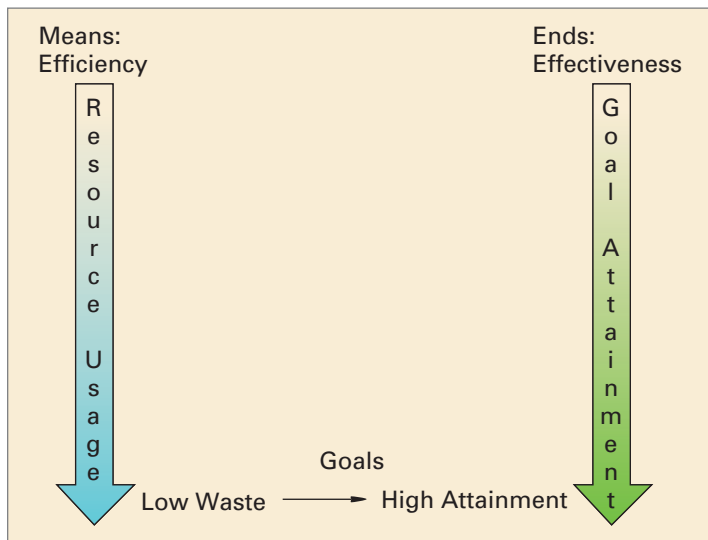
### WHAT IS MANAGEMENT?

The term **management** refers to the process of getting things done, effectively and efficiently, through and with other people. Several terms of this definition warrant some discussion: *process*, *efficiently*, and *effectively*.

The term **process** in the definition of management represents the primary activities that supervisors perform. We call these the management functions. The next section describes these functions.

**Efficiency** means doing the task right and refers to the relationship between inputs and outputs. If you get more output for a given input, you have increased efficiency. You also increase efficiency when you get the same output with fewer resources. Because supervisors deal with input resources that are scarce—money, people, and equipment—they are concerned with efficient use of these resources. Consequently, supervisors must be concerned with minimizing resource costs.

Although minimizing resource costs is important, it isn't enough simply to be efficient. A supervisor must also be concerned with completing activities. We call this **effectiveness**. Effectiveness means doing the right task. In an organization, this translates into goal attainment. Exhibit 1-2 shows how efficiency and effectiveness are interrelated. The need for efficiency has a profound effect on the level of effectiveness. It's easier to be effective if you ignore efficiency. For instance, you



**Exhibit 1-2**

Efficiency versus effectiveness.

could produce more sophisticated and higher-quality products if you disregard labor and material input costs—yet that would more than likely create serious financial problems. Consequently, being a good supervisor means being concerned with both attaining goals (effectiveness) and doing so as efficiently as possible.

## WHAT ARE THE FOUR MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS?

In the early part of the twentieth century, a French industrialist named Henri Fayol wrote that all managers perform five **management functions**: They plan, organize, command, coordinate, and control.<sup>3</sup> In the mid-1950s, two professors at UCLA used the functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling as the framework for their management textbook.<sup>4</sup> Most management textbooks continue to be organized around management functions, though these have generally been condensed to the basic four: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (see Exhibit 1-3).

Because organizations exist to achieve some purpose, someone has to define that purpose and the means for its achievement. A manager is that someone. The **planning** function encompasses defining an organization's goals, establishing an overall strategy for achieving these goals and developing a comprehensive hierarchy of plans to integrate and coordinate activities. Setting goals keeps the work to be done in its proper focus and helps organizational members keep their attention on what is most important.

Managers also have to divide work into manageable components and coordinate results to achieve objectives. This is the **organizing** function. It includes determining which tasks will be done, who will do them, how the tasks will be grouped, who will report to whom, and when decisions will be made.

We know that every organization contains people and that part of a manager's job is to direct and coordinate the activities of these people. Performing this activity is referred to as the **leading** function of management. When managers motivate employees, direct the activities of others, select the most effective communication channel, or resolve conflicts among members, they're engaging in leading.

The final function managers perform is **controlling**. After the goals are set, the plans formulated, the structural arrangements determined, and the people hired, trained, and motivated, something may still go amiss. To ensure that things are going as they should, a manager must monitor the organization's performance. Actual performance must be compared with the previously set goals. If there are any significant deviations, it's the manager's responsibility to get the organization back on track. This process of monitoring, comparing, and correcting constitutes the controlling function.

### management functions

Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

### planning

Defining an organization's goals, establishing an overall strategy for achieving these goals, and developing a comprehensive hierarchy of plans to integrate and coordinate activities.

### organizing

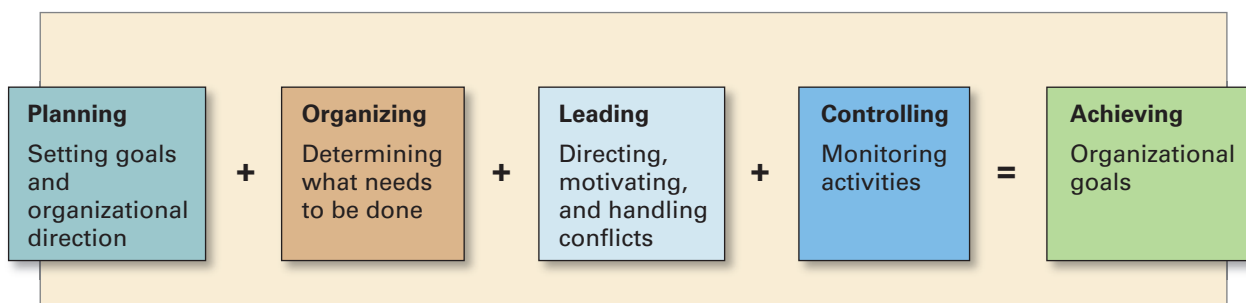
Arranging and grouping jobs, allocating resources, and assigning work so that activities can be accomplished as planned; determining which tasks are to be done, who is to do them, how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom, and when decisions are to be made.

### leading

Motivating employees, directing activities of others, selecting the most effective communication channel, and resolving conflicts among members.

### controlling

Monitoring an organization's performance and comparing performance with previously set goals. If significant deviations exist, getting the organization back on track.



**Exhibit 1-3**

Management functions.

<sup>3</sup>H. Fayol, *Industrial and General Administration* (Paris: Dunod, 1916).

<sup>4</sup>H. Koontz and C. O'Donnell, *Principles of Management: An Analysis of Managerial Functions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955).

## DO MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS DIFFER BY ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS?

A manager's level in an organization affects how these management functions are performed. A supervisor in the sales department at Black & Decker won't do the same kind of planning as Black & Decker's president. That's because although all managers perform the four management functions, there are important differences relating to their level. Typically, top management focuses on long-term strategic planning such as determining what overall business a company should be in. Supervisors focus on short-term, tactical planning such as scheduling departmental workloads for the next month. Similarly, top management is concerned with structuring the overall organization, whereas supervisors focus on structuring the jobs of individuals and workgroups.

### OBJECTIVE 1.4

Explain why the supervisor's role is considered ambiguous.

## Changing Expectations of Supervisors

Seventy years ago, if you had asked a group of top executives what they thought a supervisor's job was, you would have gotten a fairly standard answer. They would describe a man (which it was likely to be back then) who forcefully made decisions, told employees what to do, closely watched over those employees to make sure they did as they were told, disciplined them when they broke the rules, and fired those that didn't "shape up." Supervisors were the bosses "on the operating floor," and their job was to keep the employees in line and get the work out.

If you ask top executives that same question today, you'll find a few who still hold to the supervisor-as-boss perspective, but you'll also hear executives describe today's supervisor using terms such as *trainer*, *adviser*, *mentor*, *facilitator*, or *coach*. In this section, we look at some of these changing expectations of supervisory managers.

## WHAT ROLES DO SUPERVISORS PLAY?

The supervisor's job is unique in that it bridges the management ranks with the operating employees. No one else in the organization can make that claim. Yet because of this uniqueness, supervisors have an ambiguous role. Each of the following offers a different viewpoint of the supervisor's role:<sup>5</sup>

**Key person:** Supervisors serve as the critical communication link in the organization's chain of authority. They are like the hub of a wheel around which all operating activities revolve.

**Person in the middle:** Because they are "neither fish nor fowl," supervisors must interact and reconcile the opposing forces and competing expectations from higher management and workers. If unresolved, this conflicting role can create frustration and stress for supervisors.

**Just another worker:** Some people, particularly upper-level managers, see supervisors as "just another worker," rather than as management. This is reinforced when their decision-making authority is limited, when they're excluded from participating in upper-level decisions, and when they perform operating tasks alongside the same people they supervise.

**Behavioral specialist:** Consistent with the belief that one of the most important abilities needed by supervisors is strong interpersonal skills, they are looked at as behavioral specialists. To succeed in their jobs, supervisors must be able to understand the varied needs of their staff and be able to listen, motivate, and lead.

<sup>5</sup>Based on J. Newstrom and K. Davis, *Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 239.

Although each of these four role descriptions has some truth to it, each also offers a slanted view of the supervisor's job. Our point is that different people hold different perceptions of this job, which can create ambiguity and conflicts for today's supervisor.

## Comprehension Check 1-1

1. All of the following except one are characteristics of all organizations. Which one is not a characteristic?
  - a. Purpose
  - b. Profit
  - c. People
  - d. Structure
2. The term *process* in the definition of management refers to
  - a. the primary activities supervisors perform on their jobs.
  - b. the transformation of raw materials into goods.
  - c. the relationship between doing a task correctly and doing the correct task.
  - d. the means of goal attainment.
3. The management function that involves monitoring activities to ensure that targets are being met is called
  - a. planning.
  - b. organizing.
  - c. leading.
  - d. controlling.
4. A key person in a supervisory role is someone who
  - a. interacts with opposing forces to reconcile differences.
  - b. serves as the critical communication link in the organization.
  - c. is just another worker.
  - d. has a strong ability to listen and understand what is being said.

## ARE SUPERVISORS MORE IMPORTANT IN TODAY'S ORGANIZATIONS?

Regardless of what people think and the different role perceptions they hold, a case can be built that the supervisor's job will continue to become increasingly important and complex in the future. Why? We can provide at least three reasons.

First, organizations are implementing significant change and quality programs to cut costs and increase productivity. Examples of these programs include continuous quality improvements, the introduction of work teams, group bonus plans, flexible work hours, and accident-prevention and stress-reduction programs. These programs tend to focus on the work activities of operating employees. As a result, supervisors have become increasingly important because they typically assume responsibility for introducing and implementing these change efforts at the operations level.

Second, organizations are making extensive cutbacks in their number of employees. Boeing, General Motors, United Airlines, Motorola, IBM, and American Express are just a few of the major companies that have cut anywhere from 1,000 to 50,000 jobs. Organizations are constantly thinning their ranks among middle managers and staff-support personnel. "Lean and mean" continues to be a major theme for the best corporations. The implications of these cutbacks will be that supervisors have more people directly reporting

to them. Moreover, many tasks previously performed by people in support units—such as work design, process flow, scheduling, and quality control—will be reassigned to supervisors and their employees. The net effect will be significantly expanded responsibilities for supervisors.

Finally, employee training is more important than ever as organizations seek to improve productivity. New employees—many of whom are poorly prepared for work or have language or communication deficiencies—require basic training in reading, writing, and mathematics. Changes in jobs brought about by computers, automation, and other technological advances require additional skills training among current employees to prevent their skills from becoming obsolete. Supervisors will carry the primary burden for identifying these skill deficiencies, designing appropriate training programs, and in some cases, even providing the training itself.

Obviously, being a supervisor is both challenging and exciting. One thing we know for sure is that supervisors matter to organizations. The Gallup Organization, which has polled millions of employees and tens of thousands of supervisors, has found that the single most important variable in employee productivity and loyalty isn't pay or benefits or workplace environment; it's the quality of the relationship between employees and their direct supervisors. Gallup also found that relationship with their supervisor is the largest factor in **employee engagement**—which is when employees are connected to, satisfied with, and enthusiastic about their jobs—accounting for at least 70 percent of an employee's level of engagement.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, a report from Towers Watson, a global consulting firm, found that the way a company manages its people can significantly affect its financial performance.<sup>7</sup> What can we conclude from such reports? Supervisors matter, and will continue to matter, to organizations!

### employee engagement

When employees are connected to, satisfied with, and enthusiastic about their jobs.

## IS SUSTAINABILITY IMPORTANT TO A SUPERVISOR?

Organizations recognize the need to add products that will meet the challenges of a changing world and contemporary corporate action affirms that sustainability and green management have become mainstream issues for supervisors. What's emerging in the twenty-first century is the concept of managing in a sustainable way, which has had the effect of widening corporate responsibility not only to supervising in an efficient and effective way, but also to responding strategically to a wide range of environmental and societal challenges.<sup>8</sup> Although "sustainability" means different things to different people, in essence, according to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2005), it is concerned with "meeting the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." From a business perspective, **sustainability** has been defined as a company's ability to achieve its business goals and increase long-term shareholder value by integrating economic, environmental, and social opportunities into its business strategies.<sup>9</sup> Sustainability issues are now moving up the agenda of business leaders and the boards of thousands of companies. As supervisors at Walmart are discovering, running an organization in a more sustainable way will mean they have to make informed business decisions based

### sustainability

A company's ability to achieve its business goals and increase long-term shareholder value by integrating economic, environmental, and social opportunities into its business strategies.

<sup>6</sup>E. Frauenheim, "Managers Don't Matter," *Workforce Management Online* (April 6, 2010); and K. A. Tucker and V. Allman, "Don't Be a Cat-and-Mouse Manager," *The Gallup Organization*, www.brain.gallup.com (September 9, 2004).

<sup>7</sup>"WorkUSA@ 2004/2005: Effective Employees Drive Financial Results," Watson Wyatt Worldwide, Washington, DC.

<sup>8</sup>KPMG Global Sustainability Services, *Sustainability Insights*, October 2007.

<sup>9</sup>*Symposium on Sustainability—Profiles in Leadership*, New York, October 2001.

on thorough communication with various stakeholders, understanding their requirements, and starting to factor economic, environmental, and social aspects into how they pursue their business goals.

### DOES A SUPERVISOR NEED TO BE A COACH?

Today's supervisors are far less likely to be able to do all aspects of their employees' jobs. Supervisors need to know what their employees are doing, but they are not necessarily expected to be as skilled at specific job tasks as each employee. Moreover, employees don't need an authority figure to tell them what to do or to "keep them in line." Instead, they may need a coach who can listen to, guide, train, and assist them. In their coaching role, supervisors are expected to ensure that their employees have the resources they need to do a first-class job. They must also develop their employees' skills and knowledge, clarify responsibilities and goals, motivate employees to higher levels of performance, and represent their workgroup's interests within the organization.



McClatchy-Tribune/Alamy

*Like athletic coaches, today's supervisors need to get their employees "ready for the game" and cheer them on to success.*

## Transition from Employee to Supervisor

It wasn't easy making the move from being one of the quality-control specialists in the department to being the supervisor. On Friday I had been one of them. The next Monday I became their boss. Suddenly, people that I had joked around and socialized with for years were distancing themselves from me. I could see that they were apprehensive. They weren't sure, now, if I could be trusted. I didn't think our relationship was going to be much different. Hey, we were friends. We went out together every Friday after work. But I'm management now. I still think I'm like them—part of the group. But they don't see me that way. Even when I join them for drinks, it's not like it used to be. They have their guard up now. It's been a hard adjustment for me.

These comments from an individual promoted to quality-control supervisor at Monsanto capture the dilemma many new supervisors face when they're promoted from the ranks.

It's important to reflect for a moment on what this step of becoming a supervisor really means. For many in the workforce, becoming a supervisor is a major turning point in their career. It's a time when one becomes responsible not only for one's own work but also for the work of others. It's a time when authority is given to someone; and that authority can be used in a variety of ways. It's a time of added responsibility and accountability to the organization—when one becomes part of the management team.

Although for many this is an exciting time, being a supervisor can present challenges. Meeting goals, making appropriate decisions, supervising employees, and being the communication vehicle for information that needs to get to employees can be overwhelming. But they can also be rewarding when one has the skills and competencies to be an effective supervisor.

A number of recent surveys of first-time supervisors reveal a broad spectrum of reactions to, and realities of, their supervisory position. Ten percent of supervisors say they're prepared, trained and qualified, and yet 48 percent of first-time supervisors fail. Although fully 68 percent of supervisors confess they really don't like being in their position, 40 percent of supervisors are ranked in the top ninetieth percentile of effectiveness and 40 percent are reported to be in the bottom tenth percentile of effectiveness. And yet, 42 percent of new supervisors believe they know how to succeed at their jobs. Ninety percent of workers who responded to a survey said that good supervisors are



Hero Images/Corbis

*Supervisors must understand that supervising employees today is dramatically different from in the past. A supervisor must act as a coach rather than as a taskmaster. This translates into being aware of employees' needs and being willing to let them do their jobs, giving support wherever it is needed.*

effective in increasing their loyalty to the company, and 42 percent of workers responding said that communicating ideas/expectations clearly was the most important quality in a good boss.<sup>10</sup>

In this section, we look at the primary roads people take to becoming supervisors and the challenges they face in mastering a new identity.

## WHERE DO SUPERVISORS COME FROM?

Many new supervisors are promoted from within the ranks of their current employers. The second major source of supervisory personnel is new college graduates.

Occasionally, employees from other organizations are hired to become first-line supervisors; however, this is increasingly rare because if employers have an open supervisory position, they often prefer to fill it with someone they know and who knows the organization. That favors promoting from within.

Employers tend to promote operative employees to first-line management jobs for several reasons. Employees know how the operations function. They understand how things are done in the organization. They typically know the people they'll be supervising. Another advantage is that the organization knows a lot about the candidate. When management promotes "one of its own" into a supervisory position, it minimizes risk. When hiring from the outside, management must rely on limited information provided by previous employers. By promoting from within, management can draw on its full history with a candidate. Finally, and very important, promoting from within acts as an employee motivator by providing an incentive for employees to work hard and excel.

What criteria does management tend to use in deciding who to promote into first-line managerial positions? Employees with good work records and an interest in management tend to be favored. Ironically, not all "good" operative employees make good supervisors. The reason is that people with strong technical skills don't necessarily have the skills needed to manage others. Organizations that successfully promote from the ranks select employees with adequate technical skills and provide them with supervisory training early in their new assignments.

Recent college graduates provide the other primary source of candidates for supervisory positions. Two-year and four-year college programs in supervision and management provide a basic foundation for preparing for the supervisor's job. With additional organizational training, many new college graduates are equipped to step into first-line management.

## IS THE TRANSITION TO SUPERVISOR DIFFICULT?

Moving from one middle-management job to another or from a middle-management position to one in top management rarely creates the anxiety that comes when one moves from being an employee to being a supervisor. It's a lot like being a parent. If you already have three kids, the addition of one more isn't too big a deal. Why? It's because you already know quite a bit about parenting—and you've been through it before. The challenge lies in the transition from being childless to being a parent for the first time. The same applies

<sup>10</sup>Based on D. Zack, "Lead From Your Strengths," *T&D*, February 2013, pp. 72–73; M. S. Plakotnik and T. S. Rocco, "A Succession Plan for First-Time Managers," *T&D*, December 2011, pp. 42–45; D. Zack, "How to Manage When You Hate Being a Boss," [www.fastcompany.com](http://www.fastcompany.com), September 26, 2012; A. Fox, "Help Managers Shine," *HR Magazine*, February 2013, pp. 43–48; A. Fisher, "Unhappy Manager? You're Far from Alone," [management.fortune.cnn.com](http://management.fortune.cnn.com), July 20, 2012; J. Yang and P. Trap, "What Is Effective in Increasing Your Loyalty to Your Company," *USA Today*, August 14, 2012, p.1B; D. Meinert, "Executive Briefing," *HR Magazine*, May 2012, p. 18; and K. Plombino, "No. 1 Quality in a Good Boss?" [hrcommunications.com](http://hrcommunications.com), November 26, 2012.

here. The challenge is unique when one moves into first-line management; it is unlike anything managers will encounter later in their rise up the organizational ladder.<sup>11</sup>

A previous study of what nineteen new supervisors experienced in their first year on the job helps us to better understand what it's like to become a first-line manager.<sup>12</sup> Fourteen men and five women participated in this study. All worked in sales or marketing. However, what they experienced would seem relevant to anyone making the employee-supervisor transition.

Even though these new supervisors had worked in their respective organizations as salespeople for an average of six years, their expectations of a supervisory position were incomplete and simplistic. They didn't appreciate the full range of demands that would be made on them. Each had previously been a star salesperson. They were promoted, in large part, as a reward for their good performance. But good performance for a salesperson and good performance for a supervisor are very different—and few of these new supervisors understood that. Ironically, their previous successes in sales may actually have made their transition to management harder. Because of their strong technical expertise and high motivation, they depended on their supervisors less than the average salesperson for support and guidance. When they became supervisors and suddenly had to deal with low-performing and unmotivated employees, they weren't prepared for it.

The nineteen new supervisors actually encountered a number of surprises. We briefly summarize the major ones because they capture the essence of what many supervisors encounter as they attempt to master their new identity.

**Their initial view of the manager as “boss” was incorrect.** Before taking their supervisory jobs, these managers-to-be talked about the power they would have and of being in control. As one put it, “Now I'll be the one calling the shots.” After a month, they spoke of being a “troubleshooter,” a “juggler,” and a “quick-change artist.” All emphasized solving problems, making decisions, helping others, and providing resources as their primary responsibilities. They no longer conceived of their jobs as being “the boss.”

**They were unprepared for the demands and ambiguities they would face.** In their first week, these supervisors were surprised by the unrelenting workload and pace of being a manager. On a typical day, they had to work on many problems simultaneously and were met with constant interruptions.

**Technical expertise was no longer the primary determinant of success or failure.** The supervisors were used to excelling by performing specific technical tasks and being individual contributors, not by acquiring managerial competence and getting things done through others. It took four to six months on the job for most to come to grips with the fact that they now would be judged by their ability to motivate others to high performance.

**A supervisor's job comes with administrative duties.** These supervisors found that routine communication activities such as paperwork and exchange of information were time consuming and interfered with their autonomy.

**They weren't prepared for the “people challenges” of their new jobs.** The supervisors unanimously asserted that the most demanding skills they had to learn in their first year dealt with managing people. They expressed being particularly uncomfortable in counseling employees and providing leadership. As one stated, “I hadn't realized...how hard it is to motivate people or develop them or deal with their personal problems.”

Given this and similar issues that arise when one becomes a supervisor, what does it take to be an effective supervisor? What competencies or general categories of skills are needed? Are these the same, regardless of one's level in the organization? We answer these questions in the next section.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, R. D. Ramsey, “So You've Been Promoted or Changed Jobs. Now What?” *Supervision*, November 1998, 6–8.

<sup>12</sup>This section is based on L. A. Hill, *Becoming a Manager: Mastery of New Identity* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992).

## DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE A SUPERVISOR?

The fact that you're learning about supervision indicates you're interested in understanding how to supervise people. What is it about supervising people that excites you? Is it the fact that you can help an organization achieve its goals? Is it the challenge of supervising others—directing their work—that interests you? Is it the fact that supervision may lead to a management position and hopes of climbing the career ladder? Whatever your reasons, you need a clear picture of what lies ahead.

Supervisory positions are not easy. Even if you've been a superstar as an employee, this is no guarantee that you'll succeed as a supervisor. The fact that you are capable of doing excellent work is a big plus, but there are many other factors to consider. You need to recognize that supervising others may mean longer work hours. You're often on the job before your employees and leave after they do. Supervising can literally be a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week job. Now, that's not to be interpreted as being on the job every hour of every day. But when you accept the responsibility of supervising others, you really never can “get away” from the job. Things happen, and you'll be expected to deal with them—no matter when they happen or where you are. It's not unheard of to get a call while you're on vacation if problems arise. Organizational policy may require peers and subordinates to contact you via cell phone or wireless handheld device in the event of any unforeseen event. How was someone in the organization able to contact you during your getaway? You are probably required by organizational policy to provide emergency contact information and to call in periodically to see how things are going.

You also need to recognize that as a supervisor, you may have a seemingly endless pile of paperwork to complete. Although organizations are continually working to eliminate much of their paperwork, a lot remains. This may include employee work schedules, production cost estimates, inventory documentation, or budget and payroll matters.

Another matter of importance that you should consider is the effect the supervisor's job may have on your pay! In some organizations, a raise in your base pay when you become a supervisor may not translate into higher annual earnings. How so? Consider that, as a supervisor, you are generally no longer eligible for overtime pay or commission. Instead, you may get compensatory (comp) time (time off). When you are an operative employee, your organization is legally required to pay you a premium rate (typically time-and-a-half) for overtime work. That may not be true when you become a supervisor. If you get a \$6,000 raise when you become a supervisor, but earned \$6,500 last year in overtime, you're actually earning less as a supervisor. This is something that you'll need to discuss with your organization before making your decision to become a supervisor.

What are the previous paragraphs really saying? They're telling you to think about why you want to supervise. Managing others can be rewarding. The excitement is real—and so are the headaches. You need to understand exactly what your motives are for becoming a supervisor—and what trade-offs you're willing to make to become the best supervisor you can be.

### OBJECTIVE 1.5

Describe the four essential supervisory competencies.

#### supervisory competencies

Conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and political competencies.

## Supervisory Competencies

More than thirty years ago, Professor Robert Katz began a process of identifying essential **supervisory competencies**.<sup>13</sup> What Katz and others have found is that successful supervisors must possess four critical competencies: technical, interpersonal, conceptual, and political competencies. They are as relevant today as when Katz originally described them.

<sup>13</sup>R. L. Katz, “Skills of an Effective Administrator,” *Harvard Business Review*, September–October 1974, 90–102; and B. Humphrey and J. Stokes, “The 21st Century Supervisor,” *HR Magazine*, May 2000, 185–192.

## Something to Think about (and promote class discussion)

### BECOMING A SUPERVISOR

Becoming a supervisor is a challenging opportunity. Some individuals look forward to “taking the helm” of a crew of workers, whereas others are put into this situation with little advance notice or training. As you consider going into a supervisory position—or making yourself a more effective supervisor than you are today—think about the following two areas.

1. List five reasons why you want to be a supervisor.

---



---



---



---



---

2. Identify five potential problems or difficulties that you may encounter when you become a supervisor.

---



---



---



---



---

### WHAT IS TECHNICAL COMPETENCE?

Top management is composed of generalists. The activities that consume top managers—strategic planning, developing the organization’s overall structure and culture, maintaining relations with major customers and bankers, marketing the product, and the like—are essentially generic in nature. The technical demands of top management jobs tend to be related to knowledge of the industry and a general understanding of the organization’s processes and products. This isn’t true for managers at other levels.

Most supervisors manage within areas of specialized knowledge: the vice-president of human resources, the director of computer systems, the regional sales manager, and the supervisor of health claims. These supervisors require **technical competence**, which is the ability to apply specialized knowledge or expertise. It’s difficult, if not impossible, to supervise employees with specialized skills effectively if you don’t have an adequate understanding of the technical aspects of their jobs. Although the supervisor need not be able to perform certain technical skills, understanding what each worker does is part of every supervisor’s job. For example, the task of scheduling work flow requires technical competence to determine what needs to be done.

#### **technical competence**

The ability to apply specialized knowledge or expertise.

## News Flash!

### THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

For years, the role of the working or front-line supervisor has been considered by many organizations to be little more than a stepping-stone into management. Business and management schools devoted their attention primarily to teaching principles and theories applicable to upper management. Many professors figured their graduates would hold down beginning supervisory roles for a short period and then move into something more challenging. How things have changed!

Today's organizations are complex. Some of the complexity is a result, in part, of the following:

- A more culturally diverse workforce than ever before.
- Molding a productive team out of a mix of full-timers, part-timers, “temps,” and contract workers.
- Implementation of quality and productivity programs such as ISO certification and six sigma, just-in-time and lean manufacturing, and organizing work using self-directed teams.
- Enforcing the ever-growing number of employment laws pertaining to hiring and dismissal, antidiscrimination, sexual harassment, disability accommodation, workplace violence, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, worker's compensation, overtime, and ergonomics.
- Globalization and international competition, downsizing, outsourcing, and flattening of the organizational structure by removing levels of management.

#### The Good News for Supervisors

To meet all the challenges inherent in the complexity of modern organizations, the role of the front-line supervisor has changed dramatically. This is great news for someone aspiring to become a front-line supervisor because, although challenging, these changes present tremendous career and growth opportunities.

1. *The stature of the front-line supervisor has been elevated.* Instead of being a bit player at the bottom rung of the management ladder, the

supervisor has become a key position. The obvious reason is that many middle- and upper-level management positions have been eliminated. Organizations are “flattening” their organizational hierarchy. There are fewer middle- and upper-level managers in flat organizations. The flat organizational structure means that more authority, power, and responsibility are being delegated to lower-level managerial positions. The talent and skill of the supervisor in a flat organization is a major factor to its success.

2. *Empowerment of the supervisor's job is ongoing.* Some of the “power” previously held by those whose jobs have been eliminated will be delegated to the supervisors that they used to supervise. This shift means that line supervisors or “team leaders” of the past can take a more positive stance. They can submit new suggestions with more freedom and more influence. In short, the line supervisor will play a bigger role in the total management team. Upper management (those left) will have to listen more and react to what they hear.
3. *Supervisors have more autonomy.* With fewer directives to follow, fewer inspections from those above, and fewer people to please, supervisors have the power and responsibility to run their departments or “teams” more like the owner of a small business might do. Supervisors will be encouraged to operate with more authority while also being held accountable.
4. *Supervisors receive more advanced training.* As upper management shifts additional responsibilities to their front-line supervisors, they will provide more training to help them succeed. In addition, more supervisors will appoint assistants and prepare them for temporary “take-over” roles when they are absent. In other words, front-line supervisors will move closer to those upper-management leaders who remain with the firm and whose roles, in turn, will be expanded.
5. *Supervisors derive tremendous personal benefits from their role in today's business culture.* For example:
  - Effective supervisors will be easier to spot and will be “first call” on promotional possibilities.

(continued)

## Continued

- Women who excel as front-line supervisors will discover that the so-called glass ceiling is less likely to affect them.
- The challenges of front-line supervision provide a great training ground and preparation for upper-management positions.
- Supervision offers the opportunity to engage in meaningful and challenging work that will enhance one's self-respect and the respect from others.
- Supervisors will receive more immediate positive reinforcement of their contribution

to organizational success as a result of leading their employees through collaborative and team-based approaches than was possible through former top-down management methods.

- Supervisors will have greater opportunities to engage in continuous learning, which is a top motivator.

*Source:* C. Goodwin and D. B. Griffith. "The Supervisor's Role and Responsibility in the Modern Organization," *Supervisor's Survival Kit*, 11th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2006), 32–34.

### HOW DO INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES HELP?

The ability to work well with people, understand their needs, communicate well, and motivate others—both individually and in groups—constitutes **interpersonal competence**. Many people are technically proficient but interpersonally incompetent. They might be poor listeners, be unconcerned with the needs of others, or have difficulty dealing with conflicts. Supervisors get things done through other people. They must have good interpersonal skills to communicate, motivate, negotiate, delegate, and resolve conflicts.

#### **interpersonal competence**

The ability to work with, understand, communicate with, and motivate other people, both individually and in groups.

### WHAT IS CONCEPTUAL COMPETENCE?

**Conceptual competence** is the mental ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations. Strong conceptual abilities allow a supervisor to see that the organization is a complex system of many interrelated parts and that the organization itself is part of a larger system that includes the organization's industry, the community, and the nation's economy. This gives the supervisor a broad perspective and contributes to creative problem solving. On a more practical level, strong conceptual abilities help managers make good decisions.

#### **conceptual competence**

The mental ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations.

### WHY MUST ONE HAVE POLITICAL COMPETENCE?

**Political competence** is supervisors' ability to enhance their power, build a power base, and establish the "right" connections in the organization. Supervisors engage in politics when they attempt to influence the advantages and disadvantages of a situation. It goes beyond normal work activities. Whenever two or more people come together for some purpose, each has some idea of what should occur. If people try to influence the situation such that it benefits them more than the others, or keeps others from gaining some advantage, politics is "being played." But not all political behavior is negative. It doesn't have to involve manipulating a series of events, complaining about fellow supervisors, or sabotaging the work or reputation of another to further one's career. There's a fine line between appropriate political behavior and negative politics. We come back to organizational politics in Chapter 14.

#### **political competence**

Supervisors' ability to enhance their power, build a power base, and establish the "right" connections in the organization.

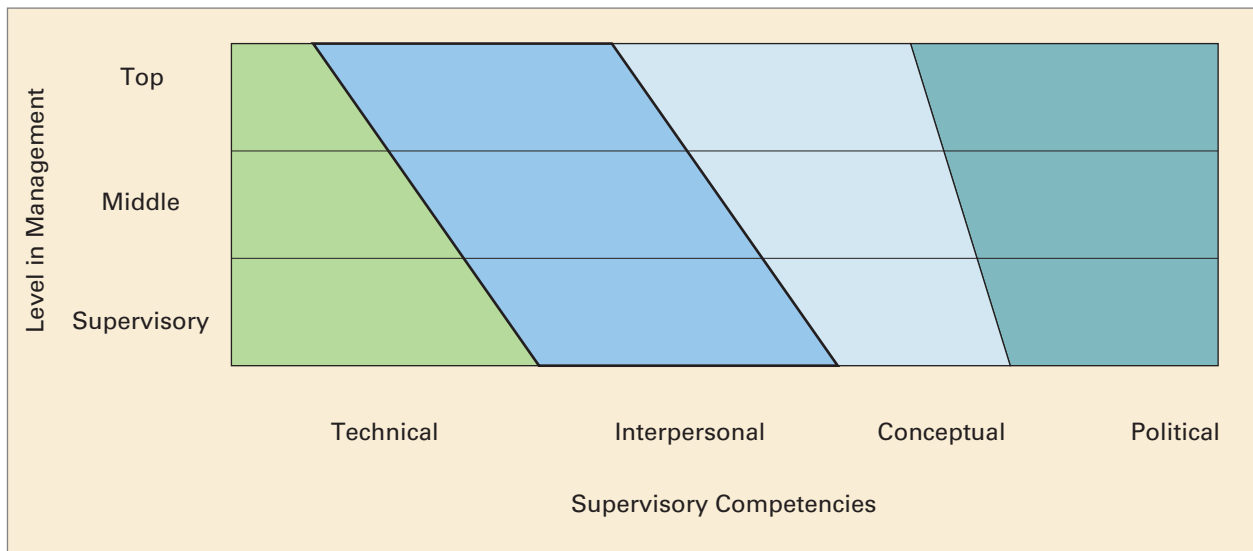
### HOW DO COMPETENCIES SHIFT BY MANAGERIAL LEVEL?

Although supervisors need to possess all the four competencies, the importance of each competency in any manager’s job varies with the individual’s level in the organization. As Exhibit 1-4 illustrates, (1) technical competence declines in importance as individuals rise in the organization; (2) interpersonal competencies are a constant for success, regardless of level in the organization; and (3) conceptual and political competencies increase in importance as managerial responsibility rises.

Technical abilities typically have the greatest relevance for first-level managers. This is true for two reasons. First, many supervisors perform technical work as well as managerial work. In contrast to other levels of management, the distinction between individual contributor and first-line manager is often blurred. Second, supervisors spend more time on training and developing their employees than do other managers. This requires them to have a greater technical knowledge of their employees’ jobs than that needed by middle- and top-level managers. There is overwhelming evidence that interpersonal abilities are critical at all levels of management. This shouldn’t come as a shock because we know that managers get things done through other people. Supervisors are particularly in need of interpersonal competencies because they spend so much of their time in leading-function activities. When we talked with dozens of practicing supervisors, the one common viewpoint they shared was the importance of people skills to the successful achievement of their units’ objectives.

The importance of conceptual competence increases as managers move up in the organization. This is because of the types of problems managers encounter and the decisions they make at higher levels. Generally speaking, the higher managers rise in an organization, the more the problems they face tend to be complex, ambiguous, and ill defined. These problems require custom-made solutions. In contrast, supervisors generally have more straightforward, familiar, and easily defined problems, which lend themselves to more routine decision making. Ill-structured problems and custom-made solutions make greater conceptual demands on managers than do structured problems and routine decision making.

Finally, the higher one climbs in the organization’s hierarchy, the more critical political competence becomes. Because resource-allocation decisions are made at higher levels in an organization, middle and top managers are “fighting” for their piece of the organizational pie. Their need to develop alliances, support one project over another,



**Exhibit 1-4**  
How competency demands vary at different levels of management.

or influence certain situations involves higher-level political skills. But don't interpret this as implying that politics are less important for supervisors. Because so much of the supervisor's job is well defined, they need strong political skills to get their unit's work completed and to survive.

## From Concepts to Skills

Knowledge about a subject is important, but just as important is whether you can do anything with that knowledge. Can you put your knowledge into practice? Just as you wouldn't want a surgeon who had never operated on anyone taking a knife to you, or to fly on an aircraft with a pilot who's never flown, it's not enough for you to just know about supervision. You should be able to actually supervise! You can learn to be an effective supervisor! No one is born with supervisory skills, although some people have a head start.

It's true that supervision comes easier to some people than to others. Individuals who are fortunate enough to have parents, relatives, or friends who supervise employees have role models to emulate and give them insights into what the job entails. Similarly, individuals whose parents helped them set realistic goals, provided positive feedback, encouraged autonomy, practiced open communication, and fostered the development of a strong self-concept have learned behaviors that will help them as supervisors. Also, those who have had the fortune to work for a good supervisor have a role model to imitate. However, those without these advantages can improve their supervisory abilities. This book will help you to be an effective supervisor by focusing on both conceptual knowledge and practical skills. In a succeeding chapter, for example, we discuss the importance of planning to a supervisor's success and show how setting goals is a key part of planning. Then, we present specific techniques for helping employees set goals and provide you with an opportunity to practice and develop your goal-setting skills.

### WHAT IS A SKILL?

A **skill** is the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behavior that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal.<sup>14</sup> No single action constitutes a skill. For example, the ability to write clear communications is a skill. People who have this skill know the particular sequence of actions to take to propose a project or summarize a report. They can separate primary from secondary ideas. They can organize their thoughts in a logical manner. They can simplify complex ideas. None of these actions is by itself a skill. A skill is a system of behavior that can be applied in a wide range of situations.

Which key skills are related to supervisory effectiveness? Although there is no unanimous agreement among teachers and trainers of supervision, certain skills have surfaced as being more important than others. Exhibit 1-5 lists key supervisory skills, organized as they are presented in this text. In aggregate, they form the competency base for effective supervision.

### WHAT ELSE IS CRITICAL FOR ME TO KNOW ABOUT SUPERVISING?

By now you may be somewhat amazed by what supervisors have to do and the skills they must have to succeed in an organization, but you should consider several other elements. Specifically, what personal issues should you address? Let's look at these.

One of the first things you'll need to do is to recognize that you are part of management as a supervisor. This means that you support the organization and the wishes of management above you. Although you might disagree with those wishes, as a supervisor,

#### OBJECTIVE 1.6

Identify the elements that are necessary to be successful as a supervisor.

#### skill

The ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behavior that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal.

<sup>14</sup>R. E. Boyatzis, *The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance* (New York: Wiley, 1982), 33.

## Related to Planning and Control

- Goal setting
- Budgeting
- Creative problem solving
- Developing control charts

## Related to Organizing, Staffing, and Employee Development

- Empowering others
- Interviewing
- Providing feedback
- Coaching

## Related to Stimulating Individual and Group Performance

- Designing motivating jobs
- Projecting charisma
- Listening
- Conducting a group meeting

## Related to Coping with Workplace Dynamics

- Negotiation
- Stress reduction
- Counseling
- Disciplining
- Handling grievances

you must be loyal to the organization. You must also develop a means of gaining respect from your employees, as well as your peers and boss. If you're going to be effective as a supervisor, you'll need to develop their trust and build credibility with them. One means of doing this is to keep your skills and competencies up to date. You must continue your education, not only because it helps you, but also because it sets an example for your employees. It communicates that learning matters.

You'll also have to understand what legitimate power you have been given by the organization because you direct the activities of others. This legitimate power is your authority to act and expect others to follow your directions. Yet ruling with an iron fist may not work. Accordingly, you'll need to know when to assert your authority and how to get things done without resorting to "Because I told you so." In the latter case, you need to develop interpersonal skills that help you influence others. This is particularly true when dealing with organizational members whom you don't supervise.

Finally, you'll need to recognize that organizational members are different—not only in their talents, but as individuals. You'll need to be sensitive to their needs, tolerate and even celebrate their differences, and be empathetic to them as individuals. Success, in part, begins with understanding what being flexible means. Throughout this text, we address each of these areas. For instance, in the next chapter, we introduce you to the diversity of the workforce and what that may mean for you. In Chapter 9, we introduce trust and credibility and their role in your leadership effectiveness.

**Exhibit 1-5**

*Key supervisory skills.*

## Comprehension Check 1-2

5. *True or false?* The transition from middle manager to top-level manager creates about as much anxiety as going from worker to supervisor.
6. Which one of the following is an interpersonal competency?
  - a. Specialized knowledge
  - b. Motivating others
  - c. Analyzing skills
  - d. Enhancing one's power base
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behavior that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal.
  - a. planning effort
  - b. political competency
  - c. skill
  - d. successful planner
8. Which one of the following items does not relate to stimulating individual and group performance?
  - a. Listening
  - b. Conducting group meetings
  - c. Interviewing
  - d. Projecting charisma

## Enhancing Understanding

### SUMMARY

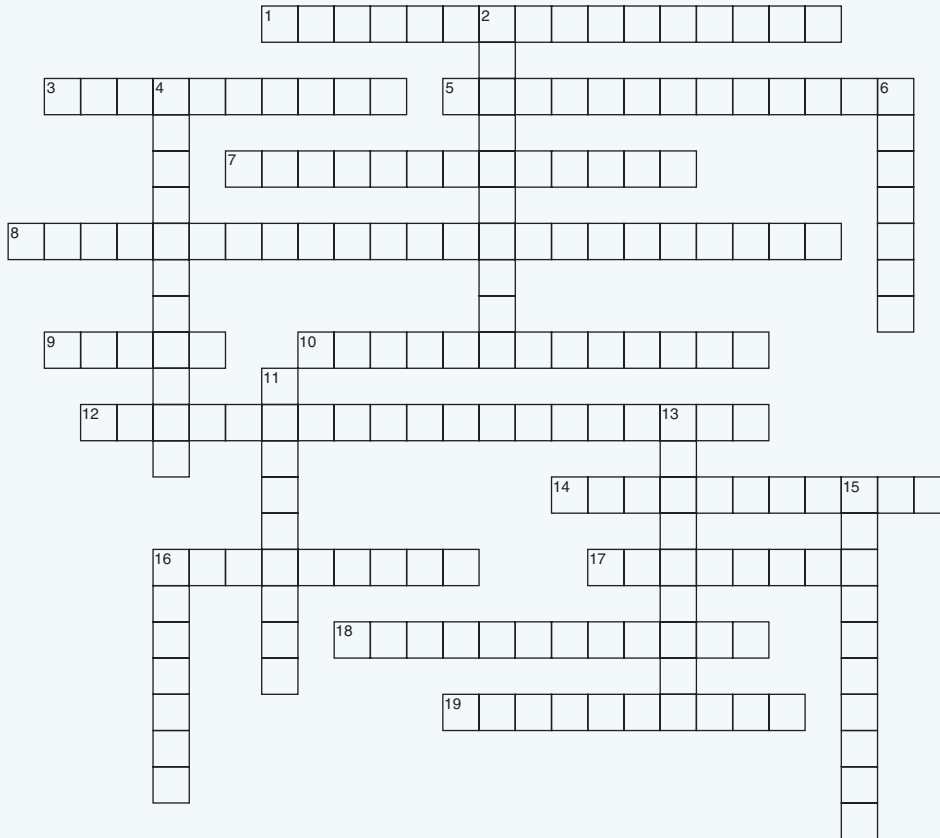
After reading this chapter, I can:

1. **Explain the difference among supervisors, middle managers, and top management.** Whereas all are part of the managerial ranks, they differ by their level in the organization. Supervisors are first-level managers—they manage operative employees. Middle managers encompass all managers from those who manage supervisors up to those in the vice-presidential ranks. Top management is composed of the highest-level managers—those responsible for establishing the organization’s overall objectives and developing the policies to achieve those objectives.
2. **Define *supervisor*.** A supervisor is a first-level manager who oversees the work of operative or nonmanagement employees.
3. **Identify the four functions in the management process.** Planning, organizing, leading, and controlling make up the management process. Planning involves establishing the overall strategy and setting goals. Organizing involves arranging and grouping jobs, allocating resources, and assigning work so that activities can be accomplished as planned. Leading involves motivating employees, directing the activities of others, communicating properly, and resolving conflict among organizational members. Controlling involves monitoring the organization’s performance and comparing it with previously set goals.
4. **Explain why the supervisor’s role is considered *ambiguous*.** A supervisor is (1) a key person (a critical communication link in the organization); (2) a person in the middle (interacting and reconciling opposing forces and competing expectations); (3) just another worker (decision-making authority is limited, and supervisors may perform operating tasks alongside the same people they supervise); and (4) a behavioral specialist (able to listen, motivate, and lead).
5. **Describe the four essential supervisory competencies.** The four essential supervisory competencies are technical, interpersonal, conceptual, and political competence. Technical competence reflects one’s ability to apply specialized knowledge or expertise. Interpersonal competence is the ability to work with, understand, and communicate with others both individually and in groups. Conceptual competence is one’s mental ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations. Political competence is the ability to enhance one’s power by building a power base and establishing the right connections in the organization.
6. **Identify the elements that are necessary to be successful as a supervisor.** Several elements are necessary to become a successful supervisor, including understanding that you’re part of the management team, handling legitimate power properly, and recognizing differences in employees.

### COMPREHENSION: Review and Discussion Questions

- 1-1. What is the difference between an efficient supervisor and an effective supervisor?
- 1-2. Is the owner–manager of a small store with three employees an operative employee, a supervisor, or a top manager? Explain.
- 1-3. What specific tasks are common to all managers, regardless of their level in the organization?
- 1-4. Contrast time spent on management functions by supervisors versus top management.
- 1-5. “The best rank-and-file employees should be promoted to supervisors.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
- 1-6. Why is interpersonal competence equally important in all the three main levels of management?
- 1-7. Describe the multi-dimensional functions performed by supervisors that demonstrate their ambiguous role.

**KEY CONCEPT CROSSWORD**



**ACROSS**

- 1. people who manage other managers
- 3. competency in the ability to analyze and diagnose complex situations
- 5. competency in the ability to work with and communicate with others
- 7. people responsible for establishing an organization's overall goals
- 8. conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and political
- 9. the ability to demonstrate a behavior related to attaining a performance goal
- 10. doing the right task
- 12. planning, organizing, leading, and controlling
- 14. first-line managers
- 16. competency in the ability to enhance one's power
- 17. defining an organization's goals
- 18. the systematic grouping of people to accomplish a specific purpose
- 19. doing a task right

**DOWN**

- 2. the process of getting things done, effectively and efficiently through and with people
- 4. monitoring activities
- 6. motivating employees
- 11. competency in the ability to apply specialized knowledge or expertise
- 13. an employee who physically produces goods and services
- 15. arranging and grouping jobs
- 16. the primary activities supervisors perform

## Developing Your Supervisory Skills

### GETTING TO KNOW YOURSELF

Before you can effectively supervise others, you must understand your present strengths and areas in need of development. To assist in this learning process, we encourage you to complete the following self-assessments from the Prentice Hall Self-Assessment Library 3.4.

- How Motivated Am I to Manage? (III. B. 4.)
- What's My Basic Personality? (I. A. 1.)

- What's My Jungian 16-Type Personality? (I. A. 2.)
- What's My Emotional Intelligence Score? (I. E. 1.)

After you complete the assessment, we suggest you retain the results and store them as part of your “portfolio of learning about yourself.”

### BUILDING A TEAM

#### 1-8. An Experiential Exercise: Sharing and Receiving Information

When you begin a new course, do you have specific expectations of what you want from the class? You probably do, but how often do you communicate them to the instructor?<sup>15</sup> This information is important to both of you. As a supervisor, you will need to become accustomed to sharing and receiving information about your expectations and the expectations of others. You can begin by defining your expectations for this course. First, take out a piece of paper and place your name at the top. Then, respond to the following questions:

A. What do I want from this course? Why?

B. Why are these things important to me?

C. How does this course fit into my career plans?

D. What is my greatest challenge in taking this class?

When you have finished answering these questions, pair up with another class member (preferably someone you do not already know) and exchange papers. Get to know each other (using the information on these sheets as a starting point). Prepare an introduction of your partner, and share your partner's responses to the four questions with the class and your instructor.

### MENTORING OTHERS

A mentor is someone in the organization, usually more experienced and in a higher-level position, who sponsors or supports another employee or student (frequently called a protégé). A mentor can teach, guide, and encourage the protégé as that person is socialized to the culture of the organization. Some organizations have formal mentoring programs, but even if your organization does not, mentoring is an important supervisory skill for you to develop. Increasingly, students are asked to participate in providing service to the community by mentoring K–12 students, as well as college-level peers. Check with your program or department chair to determine whether mentoring opportunities are available within your school or community.

#### STEPS IN PRACTICING THE SKILL

**STEP 1: Communicate honestly and openly with your protégé.** If your protégé is going to learn from you and benefit from your experience, you're going to have to be open and honest as you talk about what you've done. Bring up the failures as well as the successes. Remember that mentoring is a learning process, and for learning to take place, you're going to have to be open and honest in “telling it like it is.”

**STEP 2: Encourage honest and open communication from your protégé.** You need to know as the mentor what your protégé hopes to gain from this relationship. You should encourage the protégé to ask for

<sup>15</sup>The idea for this exercise came from B. Goza, “Graffiti Needs Assessment Involving Students in the First Class Session,” *Journal of Management Education* 17, no. 1 (February 1993), 99–106.

information and to be specific about what he or she wants to gain.

**STEP 3: Treat the relationship with the protégé as a learning opportunity.** Don't pretend to have all the answers and all the knowledge. But do share what you've learned through your experiences. And in your conversations and interactions with your protégé, you may be able to learn as much from that

person as he or she does from you. So, be open to listening to what your protégé is saying.

**STEP 4: Take the time to get to know your protégé.** As a mentor, you should be willing to take the time to get to know your protégé and his or her interests. If you're not willing to spend extra time, you should probably not embark on a mentoring relationship.

## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

1-9. Develop a portfolio document on the changing work expectations between traditional supervisors and the supervisors of today. List and discuss the main

changes and why they are important to the latter. How could organizations prepare supervisors to face these challenges?

## THINKING CRITICALLY

### ► Case 1-A: Transition to Supervisor

Tristan came in on the ground floor in his company and had excelled in his position for several years when he was promoted to a supervisory position. He was excited about the increased responsibility and money, and he also enjoyed the status and respect that came with the new title.

Tristan's position was to supervise a new production department at a new plant site of his small regional company. In preparation he was ordered to attend a two-week supervisor's training program at headquarters. As he expected, the training was focused on human resources (HR) concerns, customer satisfaction issues, and corporate quality production expectations. Because the new location was intended to showcase the company's strength in quality manufacturing, he was allowed to recruit his own team from among the company's statewide employee pool. Several seasoned workers, acquainted with him as a result of his time with the company, expressed interest in the startup department.

Lauren was hired as the departmental administrative assistant and William was hired as the new line foreman. Tristan was elated and felt that things were moving ahead quickly enough for his superiors to be pleased with the progress he was making. He continued to fill the necessary positions. Within a month the department was ready to get going. Everyone was excited, attitudes were positive, and he was looking forward to the inaugural production run.

Tristan had never held a supervisory position before, yet he knew Lauren and William were both strong employees with great work ethic. He was certain everyone he selected possessed a similar work ethic and was driven to succeed. However, this quickly proved erroneous, and when it became obvious the hoped-for production quality was nonexistent, everything became a

dismal failure all at once. The department failed to produce at the expected quality level, and turmoil among the employees was widespread. During the nearly two years he was supervisor, Tristan was never able to earn the respect of his employees or experience the success in production quality envisioned by the company.

In reality, many first-time supervisors earn their position by simply doing well at their job; however, without proper training, in both supervision and leadership, disappointing outcomes like Tristan's are more common than you would imagine. Just because an employee is good, or even great, it does not mean he or she will be a great supervisor.

### RESPONDING TO THE CASE

- 1-10. If you envision transitioning into a supervisory position, what can you do to ensure you don't end up like Tristan?
- 1-11. What supervisory competencies should you work to develop? Why?
- 1-12. Which of the four management functions do you believe most supervisors need help with? Why do you think this is the case?
- 1-13. The role of supervisor can be considered a first step toward management. What are the benefits and potential disadvantages of pursuing a management career?

### ► Case 1-B: Build a Better Boss

Dave couldn't have been more excited. Working for Google he knew they didn't do anything halfway. So when he had the opportunity to be part of a new supervisor training

project intended to “build a better boss,” he couldn’t wait to get started. During the training to understand what a great boss is and does, Google trainers helped Dave and his fellow supervisors compare their appraisal data to performance reviews, feedback surveys, and supporting papers turned in for individuals rated as top-supervisors. They soon found out the training materials were developed from Google’s “Project Oxygen,” which identified eight characteristics or habits of Google’s most effective supervisors.

The “big eight” characteristics listed for Dave and the others were: 1. Provide an unambiguous vision of the future; 2. Help individuals to reach their long-term work goals; 3. Express interest in employees’ well-being; 4. Ensure you have the necessary technical abilities to support employee efforts; 5. Display effective communication skills, especially listening; 6. Provide coaching support when needed; 7. Focus on being productive and on end results; and 8. Avoid over-managing; let your team be responsible. Initially Dave and the others were underwhelmed and thought these eight attributes seemed pretty simplistic and obvious. In fact Dave wondered why Google spent all this time and effort to uncover these at all. He later learned that even Google’s vice-president for people operations, Laszlo Bock, said, “My first reaction was, that’s it?”

However, as Dave and the other supervisors continued to work through the training they began to realize there was more to this list than met the eye. The next step in training was for them to look closer and see how Google ranked the eight items by importance. As they did so the results of Project Oxygen became surprising and a lot more interesting! As supervisors, Dave and the others knew that Google’s approach to management since being founded in 1999 was for them to leave people alone and let them do their stuff. If workers got stuck, Google believed they would ask their bosses, whose deep technical expertise propelled them to supervision in the first place. It wasn’t hard for Dave and the others to see that Google wanted its supervisors to be outstanding technical specialists. The surprise for Dave was that previously in the Google context they were always reminded that to be a supervisor, particularly on the engineering side, they needed to be as deep or deeper a technical expert than the people who worked for them. Now, Project Oxygen turned that idea upside down as Google revealed that the importance of technical expertise was ranked number eight (very last) on the list.

Here is the complete list provided to Dave and his fellow supervisors and ranked from most important to least important, along with what each characteristic entails.

- Provide coaching support when needed (provide specific feedback and have regular one-on-one meetings with employees; offer solutions tailored to each employee’s strengths)
- Avoid over-managing; let your team be responsible (give employees space to tackle problems themselves, but be available to offer advice)

- Express interest in employees’ well-being (make new team members feel welcome and get to know your employees as people)
- Focus on being productive and on end results (focus on helping the team achieve its goals by prioritizing work and getting rid of obstacles)
- Display good communication skills, especially listening (learn to listen and to share information; encourage open dialogue and pay attention to the team’s concerns)
- Help individuals to reach their long-term work goals (notice employees’ efforts so they can see how their hard work is furthering their careers; appreciate employees’ efforts and make that appreciation known)
- Provide an unambiguous vision of the future (lead the team but keep everyone involved in developing and working toward the team’s vision)
- Ensure you have the necessary technical abilities to support employee efforts (understand the challenges facing the team and be able to help team members solve problems)

Now, Dave and the other supervisors at Google aren’t just encouraged to be great supervisors, they know what Google expects them to do to be great supervisors. The company continues to do its part with ongoing supervisory training, as well as individual coaching and performance review sessions for Dave and the others. Google believes Project Oxygen breathed new life into their supervisors, and vice-president Bock says the company’s efforts paid off quickly, allowing them to see a statistically significant improvement in quality for 75 percent of their worst-performing supervisors.

*Sources:* Based on R. D’Aprix, “A Simple Effective Formula for Leadership,” *Strategic Communication Management*, May 2011, p. 14; R. Jaish, “Pieces of Eight,” *e-learning Age*, May 2011, p. 6; M. L. Stallard, “Google’s Project Oxygen: A Case-Study in Connection Culture,” [www.humanresourcesiq.com](http://www.humanresourcesiq.com), March 25, 2011; J. Aquino, “8 Traits of Stellar Managers, Defined by Googlers,” [www.businessinsider.com](http://www.businessinsider.com), March 15, 2011; and A. Bryant, “Google’s Quest to Build a Better Boss,” *New York Times Online*, March 12, 2011.

## RESPONDING TO THE CASE

- 1-14. Are you surprised at what Google found out about “building a better boss?” Explain your answer.
- 1-15. What’s the difference between encouraging supervisors to be great supervisors and knowing what being a great supervisor involves?
- 1-16. Do you agree with Google’s rank ordering of the eight characteristics of most effective supervisors? Why or why not? How would you order them and why?
- 1-17. How do Google’s eight characteristics of most effective supervisors align with Katz’s list of supervisory competencies? With the four management functions?

# 2

# CHAPTER

## Supervision Challenges

### Key Concepts

After completing this chapter, you will be able to define these supervisory terms:

- baby boomers
- code of ethics
- collectivism
- continuous improvement
- cultural environments
- cyberloafing
- downsizing
- e-business
- e-commerce
- ethics
- individualism
- *kaizen*
- parochialism
- power distance
- quality of life
- quantity of life
- social obligation
- social responsibility
- social responsiveness
- technology
- telecommuting
- uncertainty avoidance
- workforce diversity
- work process engineering

## Chapter Outcomes and Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- 2-1. Explain how globalization affects supervisors.
- 2-2. Describe how technology is changing the supervisor's job.
- 2-3. Explain the concept of e-business and e-commerce.
- 2-4. Identify the significant changes that have occurred in the composition of the workforce.
- 2-5. Explain why corporations downsize.
- 2-6. Understand the concept of continuous improvement and identify its goals.
- 2-7. Describe why supervisors must be able to “thrive on chaos.”
- 2-8. Define *ethics*.

Berc/Fotolia



# Responding to a Supervisory Dilemma



Robert Kneschke/Fotolia

Technology is any equipment, tool, or operating method designed to make work more efficient. Technology is making it possible to better serve customers in many industries. Technology in the workplace has enormous benefits, but it can also have downsides.

Employees have always been susceptible to distractions at work, and the Internet has only broadened these distractions. Workers admit to spending more than two hours wasting their time at work, and almost half of that time is spent online. Some employees have access to social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter and spend company time looking at what their friends are doing. Shopping on websites such as Amazon and writing blogs are all serious timewasters while on the job. Some companies have blocked such websites so that employees are not allowed to use them while at work. However, with the use of smartphones, employees can just as easily view Facebook and other sites while at their desk. The biggest shopping day—the day after Thanksgiving—is called Black Friday. Now there is a new term for the Monday following Thanksgiving—Cyber Monday. Employees return to work following the holiday and do their shopping while at work. Hours of employee time and company money are spent doing everything but work.

There are two conflicting perspectives regarding surfing the Internet while at work: (1) that time wasted costs employers billions of dollars and (2) that occasional diversions from the work are necessary to refresh workers and to stimulate their creativity, thus actually boosting the employer's "bottom line."<sup>\*</sup> As a supervisor, combating Web surfing or cyberloafing can be a difficult task. Although the supervisor could make the job more interesting, provide breaks to use the Internet, and establish clear guidelines for employee's Internet usage, employees will, most likely, still go online at their own discretion.

Do you think surfing the Internet is a timewaster resulting in loss of money, or is it necessary for employees to remain focused? Do you use company time to go online for personal use? How much time do you spend going online at work? Do you think the key to keeping employees off of the Internet is to block popular social media websites? Do you feel that it would prevent employees from wasting work hours? As a supervisor what would your approach be to employees that are caught using Facebook and Twitter on company time?

<sup>\*</sup>S. Opperman, "'Surfin' USA'—Accessing the Net at Work and Other Time-Wasting Activities—Are They a Cost or a Benefit to Your Agency," *FedSmith*, July 11, 2007, [www.fedsmith.com/article/1298](http://www.fedsmith.com/article/1298) (accessed February 15, 2011).

It has been said often that the only thing that remains constant in our lives is change. Most people would undoubtedly agree that this statement is true. Supervisors must always be prepared for changing events that may have a significant effect on their lives. Changing events have always helped shape the interactions between supervisors and their employees, and undoubtedly will continue to do so. Some of the more recent changes include global market competitiveness, technology and e-business enhancements, workforce diversity, continuous-improvement programs, downsizing, and the issue of ethics. Let's look at how these changes are affecting supervisors in organizations.