

OUTLINE TO EFFECTIVENESS AS A GREEN INDUSTRY SUPERVISOR

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In the past eight years, I have had the opportunity to supervise four different groupings of people. These groupings ranged from five to fifty people; professional and non-professional; volunteer and paid staff; trained and untrained. I am also the "supervisor" of a family of seven. During this time I have learned and continue to learn much about my role as a supervisor and leader. What I have learned I will share with you in a simple outline format.

In planning

1. Have a calendar marked with known work projects for the season or year. Both you and your staff should keep such a calendar.
2. Write out a general work plan for each week for yourself and your staff.
3. Have a written daily work plan with specific projects and personnel responsible along with a designated supervisor.
4. Whenever possible, give specific written instructions for each new task and equipment and/or tool needs, to the worker in charge.
5. Schedule vehicle and equipment needs in advance with those responsible for such.
6. Make your expectations of completion time for each task well known.
7. Be able to discern each worker's abilities and achievements and give them tasks matching their abilities where they are likely to succeed. Work from employee's strengths, not weaknesses.
8. Define your goals and objectives early. Start with realistically achievable objectives with matching personnel.
9. Consult others periodically in planning work schedules, assessment of procedures, personnel, and accomplishments.

In Task Mastering

1. Give clear, precise instructions. Who? What? Where? How? When? Who is to do the job? Who is in charge? What, specifically, do you want done? Where is the job located? Where do you want things or personnel to go? How, specifically, is the task to be done? When do you want the job started and finished?
2. Be understanding of the need for work slowdowns. For example, during a particularly hot day or after a hard task, you might expect lower productivity. This can be turned into a reward system by mentally lowering your standards of productivity temporarily, by telling employees that they can take it easy on this task since they worked exceptionally hard on the last one, or by designating easier tasks or lengthening the required time for completion of the task. This can be viewed as an exchange for work speed-ups and high levels of productivity during peak needs. This is a better alternative to undirected slow-downs initiated by the workers which would put them in

control of the situation, foster insubordination and poor work habits.

3. Continually assess your own role, goals, effectiveness, and progress.
4. Be willing to back up and change an approach to a task when something is not working out.
5. Never belittle, embarrass, or holler at an employee, and especially not in front of other workers. Rather, take the employee aside and specifically point out your expectations of him in that situation where he is falling short and how he can meet your expectations. If a worker tries hard to meet your expectations but falls short because of skill deficiencies, then try to channel his efforts into learning the task or an area of work more appropriately matching his present abilities. If a worker is unwilling to meet your expectations when they are just, then the consequences of his unwillingness should be clearly made known to him.
6. Accept different ways and approaches to getting a job done. For the most part, be understanding and tolerant of an atypical work performance which does not influence the work of others, inhibit a task from completion, or violate safety rules, and does not reflect unfavorably upon the organization. Praise behavior and performance you want to continue.
7. Motivate workers through positive feedback and tangible rewards (a thank-you note, buying coffee, public recognition of appreciation or achievement, etc.).

In Delegating Authority

1. Make your delegation of subordinate authority clearly known to that person and those he will be supervising and the area of his responsibility. Keep your subordinate leadership well defined and consistent wherever and whenever possible.

In Problem Prevention and Solving

1. Make your expectations for each employee clearly known to that employee.
2. Nip all complaints in the bud—be willing to admit mistakes you've made and apologize for things you did which cause fellow workers consternation or adversely affect worker morale. Promote reconciliation in worker disputes.
3. Let no complaint go unanswered. However, avoid debates over the rightness of your decision if you have appropriately weighed all approaches and consequences. Whenever appropriate, satisfy a worker's genuine desire to know the importance of his task and why he's doing it this way.
4. Deal with employee problems promptly and decisively. Bring in additional people when necessary and appropriate, especially supportive people, such as your supervisor, and the other persons in question.

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5. Give warnings but not threats. However, a worker should be clearly aware of the consequences for his unwillingness to meet the expectations set for him.

6. Give a worker frequent feedback and thanks for his help and progress. Positive feedback on shortcomings and progress, along with encouragement, build a strong working relationship.

7. Get your own emotions under control before entering a confrontation situation.

8. Do not holler, bully, or manipulate a worker into doing something. But calmly and decisively direct a worker into the area of achievement and performance you desire.

9. Avoid threatening situations. Do not suggest organizational changes which affect personnel or areas of major work or leadership responsibility without first consulting those workers who will be affected.

10. Learn to perceive employee problem situations before they manifest themselves, and take decisive, preventive action. First, check the job situation—the task involved, yours or another's supervision, co-workers, etc.—to see how that might be influencing a worker's attitude and performance. Lastly, be aware of things outside the job which may be affecting a worker's attitude and/or performance. If a worker can confide in you as a

friend, then you can point out how his work performance has been altered, help him define the problem influencing his performance, and perhaps help direct him toward a solution. Depending on the seriousness of the problem, it may be necessary to bring other supervisors or administrators into the situation. Do not try to diagnose the problem or counsel the employee.

11. Be willing to withdraw a person from a task or responsibility that is clearly beyond his present capabilities and tell him why, without demeaning him or his efforts.

In Working and Teaching.

1. Demonstrate by doing—be a working supervisor wherever and whenever possible.

2. Be willing to be a teacher. Share your knowledge and skills.

3. Allow for (expect and tolerate) mistakes; that's how we all learn.

4. Foster a working climate which permits a worker to question, suggest, invent, learn, and change.

5. Be a friend. Be willing to get involved with a co-worker. But clearly have in mind the limits of your own ability and responsibility.

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