

Effective Communication Skills for Supervisors

According to research conducted by management experts of all school of thoughts, 15% of the reason you get and keep a job is determined by your technical knowledge, skills and expertise.

Where does that leave the other 85%

85% of the reason you move ahead in your job is related to your people knowledge and people skills.

It goes without any shadow of doubt that, as a manager/supervisor, you must become aware of the critical need for a specialized knowledge on how you can manager yourself and your subordinates for peak performance. If you study professional supervisors / managers in various industries, you will notice a common problem in many (**if not all**) of the different situations men and women are facing – and the common denominator in all problems is always the same:

PEOPLE.

Managing people starts with self-management, and it is one of your top-most priorities if you really want to be successful in your supervisory/managerial role. According to Tom Peter, author of the best-selling book ‘A Passion for Excellence’, the real challenge is retraining managers, not retraining workers. With this in mind, the sole objective of this article is to develop excellence in you, and to provide you with fundamentals and motivation to professionally develop and utilize your team mates.

The foundation for developing yourself and others is wrapped up in the very word **M.A.N.A.G.E.R.**: Motivator, Activator, Negotiator, Achiever, Goal-setter, Educator or Evaluator, Risk Taker (that is, Courageous).

The above is a foundational truth in managing yourself and your team members. It highlights a principle and not a tactic. As a tactic, this definition would be ineffective; but as a principle, the concept works because it makes others want your supervision/management.

All professional supervisor/managers know well that when they put people first, their effectiveness and efficiency multiply. Lee Iacocca, the past chairman who elevated the Chrysler Corp. from the rock-bottom failure to one of the top ten auto leaders, remarked: *“My philosophy is that people make business; technology is a distant second.”*

Utilize All Your Strengths & Resources

You will agree that the basic and the simplest definition of management is **‘getting things done through people’**.

The story of a teenager explains the point: a young, growing boy was trying his best to pull his bi-cycle out of the mud, but failed over and again. His father stood nearby and said to him: Son, why are you not using all your strengths and resources?. The little boy replied”: I’m using all my strengths and resources, dad!, whereupon his father lovingly told him that he was not at all using all his strengths and resources, because he had not asked him (his father) to help.

The moral of the story is that all successful managers/supervisors utilize their strengths and resources by identifying, developing and utilizing the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual talents of their subordinates.

Undoubtedly, the **greatest untapped natural resource** and the most expensive one in terms of performance/reward ratio, is **people**. Motivating staff to make their full contribution is the only and the fastest way that a manager/supervisor can professionally play his role. Exhaustive research proves that a majority of staff members just await someone to come along and set them on fire.

Consequently, all managers and supervisors need to develop their ability to bring out the very best in their subordinates by:

1. Learning what makes your staff tick

Talk to your staff, understand your employees, and develop a rapport with them to find out what hinders them from great success and what can make them succeed more. If you go ‘under the hood’ of your own motivations, you can also discover how you can relate to your employees.

2. Understanding your staff’s ‘buying motives and hot buttons’

And then they transfer their own aspirations and enthusiasm to those who follow their footsteps. This demands them to be an excellent salesperson, an igniter who gets job done by working with and through staff. Besides, he/she should also have a proper understanding of the idiosyncrasies that make staff members different from one another – why they are valuable to the organization.

3. Speed of the leader is the speed of the follower

Regardless of your department or division, the following self-analysis will enable you to explore your managerial/supervisory capabilities. By now you should be ready to go – so fasten your seatbelts and grab your marking pen, because the following exercise will take you to an action-and-information journey you have ever undertaken!

Take our self-test to gauge your supervisory management levels.

Score 15-29 – You are proactive with your effective communication skills. Keep it up!

Score 30-59 – You generally keep team spirits high. Focus on listening, then responding.

Score 60-75 – You and your team have poor communication. Change your style quick!

Supervisory Management Levels

Ask Yourself the Following Questions	Your Self-Test Score				
	High				Low
I always listen to my team members more than I talk to them and I'm open to their thoughts and suggestions	1	2	3	4	5
I set short and long range goals, involve all my team members in the goal-setting process and then organize a clear plan to reach them.	1	2	3	4	5
I focus on planning, organizing and motivating my team players, and I don't assign these tasks to others	1	2	3	4	5
I delegate a project to help my team members develop their skills and expertise, and I hold them responsible for their results	1	2	3	4	5
I always plan an agenda to find a solution to a challenging project, and I openly and honestly consider my workers' ideas as a valuable input	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to keep control over all of my team members without ever suppressing their self esteem and self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly spend time analyzing reports to identify my workers' deficiencies and opportunities for improvement	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to increase the efficiency of my department by understanding the motives and needs of each teammate	1	2	3	4	5
I provide team spirit by encouraging my staff to work together, and I always appreciate their individual talents and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
I always ensure that my staff members have the required training, and know how to apply it to their job	1	2	3	4	5
I impartially consider the opinions and needs of all of my workers when resolving a conflict and I work hard to resolve it	1	2	3	4	5
I always set and follow ground rules for the office meeting, and I properly complete each point before moving to the next one	1	2	3	4	5
I implement a change and then give my team members time to adjust themselves to it	1	2	3	4	5
I can overcome any work pressure, enjoy making tough decisions and have the desire to become an outstanding leader	1	2	3	4	5
I am a visionary, believe in risk-taking and always seek and accept bigger challenges	1	2	3	4	5