

Supervision

Supervision involves getting things done through others. To the person who has been traditionally involved in the operational end of the farm, adjusting to the role of supervisor can be difficult. Yet managers can do their farm a great disservice by over-involving themselves in operational work.

Managerial Functions

Managers perform five major functions:

- **Planning** - deciding on business philosophy, goals and strategies - determining what to aim for and why
- **Organizing** - deals with how to achieve the goals; it entails dividing work for assignment into structure units (e.g. ranches, departments, crews and jobs) and establishing means of co-ordination among them
- **Staffing** - getting, developing, retaining people able and willing to perform the jobs as organized
- **Leading** - influencing and directing the behaviour of those people, usually through interpersonal communications
- **Controlling** - assessing actual results against objectives - seeing what was done compared to what had been planned - and taking corrective action where required.

Here's a tongue-in-cheek way of describing these management functions:

As nearly everyone knows, a manager has practically nothing to do except to decide what is to be done; to tell somebody to do it; to listen to reasons why it should not be done, why it should be done by someone else, or why it should be done in a different way; to follow-up to see if the thing has been done; to discover that it has not; to inquire why; to listen to excuses from the person who should have done it; to follow-up again to see if the thing has been done, only to discover that it has been done incorrectly; to point out how it should have been done; to conclude that as long as it has been done, it may as well be left where it is; to wonder if it is not time to get rid of a person who cannot do a thing right; to reflect that he or she probably has a family, and that certainly any successor would be just as bad, and maybe worse; to consider how much simpler and better the thing would have been done if one had done it oneself in the first place; to reflect sadly

that one could have done it right in 20 minutes, and, as things turned out, one had to spend two days to find out why it had taken three weeks for somebody to do it wrong.

While the solution to the above process may seem to be to do the work yourself, this is not the answer. The solution is to be an effective supervisor so that the job gets done as you would want.

Supervisory Skills

Who makes a good supervisor? A good supervisor:

- can lead - adapts to getting a job done with others
- can organize - keeps a daily schedule
- can motivate - a positive-type coach
- has initiative - makes own decisions
- is assertive - gets started on own

How do you think you rate as a supervisor? Rate yourself on each of the following points. These are qualities that employees list as being important in their supervisors.

How Do You Rate as a Supervisor?		Yes	No
Are you on top of your job? Do you command respect for your experience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have the ability to "put on your worker's shoes" in discussing problems that come up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you fair? Do you avoid playing favorites? Do you keep on an even keel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have great patience?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have a sincere interest in learners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you firm, but supportive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you considerate, especially of the worker's job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

The more "yes" answers you could honestly give to the above questions, the better the job of supervising you're likely to do.

A supervisor gets results through people. Good people relations is the key.

Key Functions of a Supervisor

- Function 1:** Deputize: give the worker a job to do
- Function 2:** Supervise: develop his or her ability to do the job
- Function 3:** Energize: provide an environment in which the worker will want to do the job and do it well.
- Function 4:** Counselling, corrective action, dismissal

Using this deputize/supervise/energize model should encourage each employee's positive feelings about working for you. If people do not feel satisfied with their work situation, they cannot perform effectively.

Foundations for Good Relations

- Let workers know how they are getting along
 - figure out what you expect of them
 - point out ways to improve
- Give credit when due
 - look for extra or unusual performance
 - give the credit right at the time
- Tell people in advance about changes that will affect them
 - tell them why if possible
 - get them to accept the change
- Make the best of each person's ability
 - look for ability not now being used
 - never stand in a person's way

*Definition of a diplomat:
A diplomat is a person who can tell you "to go to hell" in such a way that you are looking forward to the trip.*

Good supervision is getting people to do what you want done, when it should be done and how you want it done because they want to do it.

Building and Supervising Teams

It's a well recognized fact that often a group of people working co-operatively can accomplish more than the same people working independently. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts is a maxim that can be used by supervisors.

The challenge to a supervisor is to get a team of people to work together smoothly and efficiently. First, the supervisor needs to know the characteristics of a well functioning team.

Characteristics of a Well Functioning Team

- each individual ought to feel independent in that he or she is capable of doing the the job assigned to them.
- each individual must feel a responsibility to the whole group to look at overall goals and to seek help when needed.
- each individual needs to be tuned in to others to know when an offer of help would be in order but must resist "rescuing" or "protecting" others from their own responsibilities.

The challenge for the team leader is to develop, among your team members, the skills and attitudes of behaving in an interdependent manner .

Tips for Team Building

1. Encourage all members to function interdependently so they:
 - notice when someone else needs help and offer assistance
 - are responsible for finding out how their part fits into the whole process
 - are reliable in meeting deadlines and schedules where others are counting on them

As a group leader you can assist in this process by doing the following:

- Be sure group efforts are rewarded, not just individual successes.

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- Recognize individuals who could be “stars” but, in the team’s best interest, put aside their need to shine.
 - Communicate your desire for the group to count on each other and you.

2. Keep communications open in the group

As a group leader, there are two key communications skills you’ll need to practice.

- a) good questioning techniques. Concentrate on asking open questions - those questions which can’t be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”. Examples of open questions are, “What should we do?” and “What’s your main concern right now?” Open questions encourage team members to think and invite them to talk.
- b) be a good listener. Stop talking and listen; don’t interrupt; concentrate and take notes; listen for ideas not words. To check that you’ve understood correctly, paraphrase what the person has said.