

Successful Supervisor Part 93

Create Your Own Development Plan

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

If you are an active supervisor, most likely you have discussed a development plan with your manager. A key responsibility of all managers is to document a specific plan to improve the capability of their employees. Included in the plan would be training on things like compliance, ethics, safety, and health, as well as operational concepts like Lean Thinking or Six Sigma.

You need a Personal Development Plan

I recommend that each supervisor also have a plan for personal development that is separate from the corporate plan and contains a different set of concepts. Some possible things to consider might be improving your patience, becoming less judgmental, handling stressful situations, and creating greater team cohesion.

How to develop your Plan

First, identify areas in your own performance where more seasoning would improve your effectiveness. Have a chat with your supervisor to get some additional ideas. There are numerous free resources you can use to develop your plan. There are many YouTube instructional videos on specific skill areas, such as [becoming less judgmental](#). The internet has an infinite supply of articles, and there are many educational periodicals such as "The Harvard Business Review."

How will having a personal development plan help you?

It is human nature to identify the things that other people need to do to shape up, but it is less easy to see what you must do to improve yourself. Focusing some energy on your own developmental opportunities makes your approach to others more balanced. Having improvement goals helps you focus and be more aware of the direction in which you are moving.

Many supervisors get into a pattern of constantly showing body language that signals the individual workers need to make improvements. That mindset conveniently overlooks the fact that the supervisor needs to improve as well. If you would brainstorm things you need to do in order to be a better manager, it would soften your stance on

what other people need to do to be more perfect. Let's take a specific and classic example to contrast the two modes of operating.

Suppose the supervisor notices that some employees are less respectful of their peers than she would like. One obvious course of action would be to have some team building activities and maybe some reading or videos on treating others respectfully. If that thought pattern dominates her conscious thinking, she may be perceived as being impatient.

If that same supervisor had a personal goal to become less judgmental, then her approach to the workers might be better received. The slight shift to acknowledge that she is not perfect either makes her appear to be more reasonable and helpful. The workers would likely respond positively to the change in body language.

Another approach might be for the supervisor to do some reading or watch some videos on respect to see if she is adequately modeling respect herself. Change starts at the top.

How this process helps your employees and organization

By showing the humility to invest in your own growth, your employees can see a person who has no illusion of being perfect. This attitude will make you more of a human being, and your increasing skills will make both your employees and your organization more effective in the long run. A more cohesive team means less drama, higher trust, and greater productivity for the group. You are also modeling good behaviors for your employees, which increases your credibility as their mentor.

This is a part in a series of articles on "Successful Supervision." The entire series can be viewed on www.leadergrow.com/articles/supervision or on this blog.

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