Becoming a Supervisor

Learning Objectives
By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify the requirements for making the transition from team member to first-line supervisor.
- List four reasons why first-line supervisors are important to an organization.
- Describe the paradoxes encountered by first-line supervisors.
- Explain what is meant by situational leadership.

When you are promoted to first-line supervisor, you become the boss. You may not be the "big boss" in charge of the whole organization, but you definitely have your own area of responsibility. Being the boss and being in charge brings with it many opportunities for success--and failure. Now you're the one who has to worry about things that don't get done. Your responsibility goes beyond just putting in your time. You are responsible for results--your own results as well as those of your employees.

MAKING THE TRANSITION TO FIRST-LINE SUPERVISOR

First-line or first-time supervisors usually worry whether they have the qualities needed to be successful. For many, this is their first promotion, and they may have doubts about their ability to meet their new responsibilities and requirements.
Take a few minutes to complete the following self-assessment to determine how prepared you are to make the transition to first-line supervisor.

**Activity 1: Making the Transition: A Self-Assessment**

Read each of the statements below. Circle the number that is nearest to your confidence level on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being “Not Confident” and 10 being “Very Confident”) in being able to make the transition from employee to first-line supervisor.

1. I can shift the focus from my area of technical or functional expertise to supervising other people.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

2. I can make the transition from being a doer to ensuring work gets done.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

3. I can handle multiple priorities at one time.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

4. I can shift my focus from my job and my department to become aware of the entire organization and the role of individual departments and the relationships among departments.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

5. I can shift my focus from the quality of my own performance to the quality and performance of the entire team.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

6. I can handle working the extra hours that may be required in my new role.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

7. I can make the transition from being an information receiver to being an information provider.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

8. I can make the transition from being concerned about my own personal satisfaction to a concern for motivating and developing my employees.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

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9. I can make the transition from being a team member to being a team builder.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I can maintain a positive attitude when more demands are placed on me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add the numbers you have circled for the ten statements.

Total Score: __________

Scoring:
85-100: You are confident in your abilities and should be able to make a successful transition to first-line supervision.
70-85: You have some work to do as you make the transition.
Less than 70: Your score indicates that you are not sure about your ability to supervise others effectively. Use this course to provide you with the confidence to make a successful transition.

Exhibit 1-1 contrasts the items in the self-assessment between what an employee does and what a supervisor does. Here's a brief summary of what those differences mean to a first-line supervisor.

**Focus**
Good employees have the skills required to do their jobs in an effective and productive manner. Their focus each day is on using their specific technical

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**Exhibit 1-1**
**Differences between Employees and First-Line Supervisors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees Must:</th>
<th>First-Line Supervisors Must:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on their specific job skills</td>
<td>Focus on supervising people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the work</td>
<td>Ensure work gets done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on specific priorities</td>
<td>Be involved with multiple priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to the department’s success</td>
<td>Contribute to the entire organization’s success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be most concerned about the quality of their own work</td>
<td>Be concerned about the quality of the entire team’s work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work a specified number of hours</td>
<td>Be willing to work overtime and on a scheduled day off knowing there may not be any extra pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive information from others</td>
<td>Share information with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be personally motivated and satisfied</td>
<td>Motivate and develop other employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be an effective team member</td>
<td>Be an effective team builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a good attitude, but can “get away” with having a bad attitude from time to time</td>
<td>Maintain a positive attitude even when circumstances would make it easy to be negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
skills—such as engineering, accounting, or advertising. As a first-line supervisor, on the other hand, you will no longer spend all of your time using your technical skills, but instead devote a portion of your time to supervising your employees. Depending on the organization and the number of people in your work group, you may spend anywhere from 15 to 35% of your time supervising (see Exhibit 1-2).

**The Work**

Employees do the work and first-line supervisors ensure work gets done. Although as a first-line supervisor you will still have specific responsibilities of your own, you also assume responsibility for making sure your employees get their work done as well. To be effective you have to learn to split your time between doing your own specific tasks and following up on the work of your employees. Very often as a first-line supervisor you must function in both roles at the same time.

**Number of Priorities**

No matter how many priorities individual employees have, supervisors have responsibility for all the priorities of their employees. For example, say you have six people in your work group and each of them has four projects. You now have ultimate responsibility for twenty-four projects (6 X 4) plus any specific projects that you must complete by yourself. In other situations all your employees may have the same ten major responsibilities and your job is to ensure that they all meet their responsibilities. These additional responsibilities and their associated time commitments can be a big challenge as you become a first-line supervisor.

**Seeing the Big Picture**

First-line supervisors have to move out from their little corner of the world and begin to see the big picture. You will have to go beyond thinking about what’s happening in your own department and begin to think about how your

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**Exhibit 1-2**

First-Line Supervision Time Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervising Others</th>
<th>Using Technical Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exec 75-90%</td>
<td>Executive 10-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supv 15-35%</td>
<td>Supervisor 65-85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mgmt 0-5%</td>
<td>Non-Mgmt 95-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher one moves up the organization ladder, more time is spent supervising and less time using technical skills. At the executive level, managing and interacting with others may take as much as 80 to 95% of an executive’s time and the direct use of technical skills may virtually be non-existent. At the other end of the spectrum, non-management employees will spend nearly 100% of their time using technical skills.

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department's work contributes to the entire organization's success. In your new role you will have to spend a considerable amount of time interacting with and learning to work with people from other parts of the organization.

**Work Quality**

Many new first-line supervisors are promoted because they are good at their specific employee job requirements. They are the best cook, best salesperson, best riveter, best electrical engineer, or the best accountant. You probably were good at your technical or functional responsibilities. In your new supervisory role you may have to work with people who are not as skilled as you are. As frustrating as this can be at first, you must resist the temptation to do the work for your employees. In the long run, you will be successful when you get your employees to produce work that meets your quality standards.

**Time Commitment**

Some employees may think that if they could just get promoted to first-line supervisor, their lives would be a whole lot easier. They would have more control over their work and time. In reality, the opposite is usually true. First-line supervisors normally have more demands placed on them and their time. As a result, they may spend most of their regular hours supervising and find that they have to stay later or come in early to get their own work done.

**Dealing with Information**

Employees typically are on the receiving end of information. They get the information that their supervisors share with them. In contrast, as a first-line supervisor you will often become the "gatekeeper" of information because you are between your employees and upper management. You will have to decide what information you receive from upper management that you communicate to your employees. Since complaints about communication (or lack of) dot the landscape of many organizations, to be effective you must learn how to deal with the information that comes your way.

**Motivation**

Chances are you were promoted to be a first-line supervisor because you were viewed as being self-motivated. The ability to keep yourself motivated was seen as a positive attribute. Once promoted, it becomes your responsibility to motivate others as well as yourself. As a new supervisor, you must learn what motivates your employees and then provide them with the opportunity to motivate themselves and keep yourself motivated at the same time.

**Role on the Team**

Effective team members are important to every organization. Often those who make the best individual contributions are tapped to move up to be a first-line supervisor. In their new roles, they are expected to build teams with a variety of employees—not all of whom have the same degree of commitment that you have to doing the best possible job. Transforming a group of individuals into a functional team presents its own set of challenges.
Attitude
Employees with positive attitudes are a plus in any organization. Those who can see the bright side of any situation can have a positive impact on those around them. New first-line supervisors normally assume their responsibilities with a positive attitude. As the realities of their new responsibilities become apparent, however, they become challenged to maintain the positive attitude they had when they were promoted. To be successful you will have to learn to maintain a positive attitude—even during those times when you would rather vent your own frustrations—so your positive attitude rubs off on your employees.

Activity 2: Getting Ready to Make the Transition
Now that you have read about the requirements for being a successful first-line supervisor, go back and review your score for each of the items on the self-assessment. Fill in your scores on the grid that follows. For each item where you had a score of seven or less, list what action you plan to take to improve your ability to make the transition to first-line supervisor. Sample responses are listed for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep a time log for the first month to see how I'm spending my time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid taking on responsibilities that employees should have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make sure the department workload is balanced among all employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing the Big Picture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read the company's strategic plan and review department objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Help people do quality work without having to be perfect all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Be flexible and open to working extra hours when necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make a concerted effort to keep my employees informed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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IMPORTANCE OF FIRST-LINE SUPERVISION

Efficient and effective first-line supervision is one of the primary needs of practically every organization. In most cases, the ultimate execution of corporate plans and objectives comes down to the supervisory level and depends on the supervisor's skills and abilities. First-line supervisors are responsible for the results and performance that upper management needs for survival and growth. There are four reasons why first-line supervision is important:

1. Day-to-Day Operations
2. First Line of Contact for Employees
3. Span of Control
4. Development of Management Talent

Day-to-Day Operations

Whether an organization's primary activity is wholesale, retail, hospitality, service, manufacturing, non-profit, or some other type, the responsibility for day-to-day operations falls to first-line supervisors. If a customer or client has a problem, the first management person they come in contact with is the first-line supervisor. The level of service and the quality of the work produced each day depends on the employees and the direction they receive from you—their first-line supervisor. This is where the "rubber meets the road" and where customers or clients develop their perceptions of an organization. You are the one who has to make it happen customer-by-customer and task-by-task if the organization is going to be successful.

First Line of Contact for Employees

If upper management wants to make a change in policy or procedure, first-line supervisors must introduce the change. If employees have questions about what the organization is doing, you need to know the answers or where
to get them. The workforce's impression of the organization and of upper management is often a reflection of their impression of their first-line supervisor. Similarly, how employees treat customers or clients often reflects how upper management treats its employees. Thus, your actions as the first-line supervisor can have a significant impact on how customers and/or clients are treated and, how they, in turn, perceive the organization.

Span of Control
First-line supervisors are needed to maintain an appropriate span of control. While the span of control will vary from organization to organization and from job to job, there is a point at which a person is needed to supervise either a certain number of employees or a certain number of tasks. When that point is reached, a first-line supervisor position is created. Even though there has been a trend in recent years to flatten organizations, most of the flattening has occurred at the middle management ranks. Effective first-line supervisors are always in demand in those organizations that want to maintain good customer and employee relations.

Development of Management Talent
First-line supervision is the first step up the management ladder. Success at this level can often lead to opportunities in middle management and perhaps even to upper management in the future. Organizations often use entry-level supervisory positions as "testing" grounds for moving up in management. While success at the first-level may not necessarily translate into success higher up in the organization, failure at the first-level is likely to mean failure at higher levels as well. Use this development opportunity wisely and take advantage of the situation to learn as much as you can about the organization. Demonstrate to those in upper management how you can have a positive impact when given even greater responsibilities.

Activity 3: Having a Positive Impact as a First-Line Supervisor
Think about each of the four reasons why first-line supervision is important. Write down some specific things you can do to have a positive impact as a first-line supervisor. Sample responses are listed for each item.

1. Day-to-Day Operations
*Make sure my interactions with customers are handled in a professional manner that reflects positively on the company.*
PARADOXES OF FIRST-LINE SUPERVISION

There are several paradoxes that first-line supervisors face as they make the transition from being an employee to being in charge. Effective supervisors are aware of these paradoxes and are proactive in addressing them.

Little Effort Is Devoted to Training

The first paradox is that while competent management is needed, often not enough effort is devoted to training supervisors and improving their management and leadership skills. Since supervisors are expected to be primarily task-oriented, the emphasis often is on getting the job done and not on learning better management and leadership skills.

Rather than waiting for someone to provide training, be proactive and make it your own responsibility to learn all you can about your new role. For example, there are several books listed in the Bibliography of this book that can be helpful. Be on the lookout for more books, such as this one, which focus on some of the specific skills for improving the effectiveness of first-line supervisors.
Getting the most out of people is not easy, nor is it done by merely giving orders. Regardless of your present level of experience, there is always room to improve your supervisory skills. There are seminars and training courses that will provide you with assistance. You can overcome this paradox by taking the initiative to develop your supervisory skills.

The Way Work Is Organized

A second paradox is evident in the way a first-line supervisor's work is organized. The emphasis is frequently on "getting the work out," and the goals are expressed in terms of quotas, standards, units, or some measure of productivity or performance. Some businesses place the emphasis on getting out new products, bringing in new customers, or providing quality customer service. The fact is that things get done through the efforts of people. As a result, the development of people skills may not be given enough emphasis when preparing first-line supervisors to assume their new responsibilities.

As with the training paradox discussed earlier, the key is to be proactive. While you may not be involved in setting organizational goals, budgeting, and making many other managerial decisions, first-line supervisors are still important to an organization's success. If this were not the case, there would be no need for a first-line supervisor position. As a first-line supervisor, you are always involved with the day-to-day operations that directly affect an organization's product or service. Do what you can to ensure the work is organized in a manner than enables you and your team to be most efficient and effective.

Supervising Tasks and Learning Skills

A third paradox is that you constantly must choose between supervising specific job tasks and learning new skills. You also have to decide how much time to spend on each area. There are literally hundreds of questions and only a limited number of resources you can turn to. In the end, a great deal of your success will depend on your own efforts at self-development.

Use the results of the self-assessment you completed earlier to identify the skills you need to develop. Determine where you can put your efforts to get the most return on the time and energy you invest. Look at self-development as just that—an investment. What you learn and the skills you develop now will pay future dividends. Don't wait, the sooner you invest in your own self-development the sooner you'll reap the rewards.

Activity 4: Addressing the Paradoxes of First-Line Supervision

What can you do to proactively address the paradoxes just described? Take a few minutes to write down some specific actions you can take. Sample responses are listed for each item.
1. Lack of Training
Be aware of supervisory training classes that are offered and ask to attend those that would be beneficial.

2. The Way Work Is Organized
Keep focused on my relationship with my employees as well as how much work they get done.

3. Supervising Tasks and Learning Skills
Take the initiative to develop myself by asking questions of other experienced, successful supervisors.

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND BEHAVIOR
You have just learned what it takes to be an effective first-line supervisor and the importance of the first-line supervisor's role. Also, you are now aware of the paradoxes, or challenges, associated with being a first-line supervisor. The next thing you need to consider is: "How do I want to supervise others?" In other words, what leadership style do you want to adopt? Leadership style refers to the general way you deal with your work group. Some supervisor-leaders are authoritarian and domineering; others are supportive and participative. There is no absolutely correct style. Your style will be determined partly by your personality and partly by how effectively you can adapt to various situations.

Your first inclination may be to adopt the style of a previous boss whom you respected or admired. If that person's style seemed to get results, that style may be the logical way to supervise. If you consider your previous boss to be a bad example, you may have learned only what not to do, rather than what to do. Either way, if your style is rigidly based on what you have observed in others, problems may arise if the situation changes. A style that works in one situation may not get the job done in another.
Task versus People
As a first-line supervisor you are responsible for getting the work done through your people. How you approach that responsibility is a reflection of your leadership style. Some supervisors tend to put most of the emphasis on getting the work done and less emphasis on their relationships with people. These supervisors are viewed as having a task-oriented leadership style. Other supervisors tend to put more emphasis on their relationships with their people and less emphasis on getting the job done. These supervisors are viewed as having a people-oriented leadership style. Whether you tend to be more task-oriented or more people-oriented will affect the way you supervise others.

Activity 5: What's Your Leadership Style?
Read each of the statements below. Circle the number on the scale from 1 to 10 that best reflects how you would behave in the situation described.

I explain exactly how I want the work to be done.  
I let people make suggestions on how to do the job.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My primary concern is getting the job done.  
My primary concern is how people feel about their work.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I establish the standards for people.  
I let the people set their own standards.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I make the decisions for my work group.  
I let people make their own decisions.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I tell people how much time they have to complete a task.  
I ask people to tell me how long a task will take.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I expect people to ask me questions before they act.  
I expect people to answer their own questions.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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I expect people to make work their first priority.    I understand people have things more important than work.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0

I want frequent progress reports about work status. I only want to know when a job is completed.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0

The less discussion about a job the better.    I like thorough discussions before work starts.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0

I expect people to be working with minimal socializing. It’s okay for people to socialize while they are working.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 0

Add the numbers you have circled for the ten statements.
Total Score: __________

Scoring:
0-35: You tend to be more task-oriented and want to make sure the job is done the way you want it done.
36-69: You tend to have a balanced leadership style. You want to get the job done, but you are also concerned about people.
70-100: You tend to be more people-oriented. You give people more freedom in deciding what to do and how to do it.

Are you more task-oriented or more people-oriented? People who are extremely task-oriented are likely to be those who provide a lot of direction, make most of the decisions, and keep things under tight control. Their unspoken phrase is "my way or the highway." People who are extremely people-oriented, on the other hand, may appear to be wishy-washy. They may avoid making decisions for fear of making someone unhappy. They want the group to make the decisions. Their unspoken phrase is "do whatever you think is best." Supervisors who tend to rely on either of these extremes will likely experience problems because using the same style all the time and with all people will not be effective.

Generally, the best leadership style is one that is balanced--where there is a concern for both getting the job done and taking care of the people. A balanced approach requires choosing a leadership style that takes into account the needs of the employee and the circumstances at any given time. The effective supervisor recognizes that there are times when a task-oriented
approach is best and there are other times when a people-oriented approach is best. Their choice of a leadership style depends on three primary factors: experience level, the information available, and the time available.

**Experience Level**
How much experience an employee has should influence your choice of a leadership style. For example, a new employee who has little or no experience about a job will need more direction and guidance than an experienced employee will. With new employees, you normally will need to be more task-oriented. They want and need to be provided with lots of direction. On the other hand, experienced employees can resent being told exactly how to do a job, especially if they have developed their own methods based on their experience. A more people-oriented leadership style would probably be more appropriate with an experienced employee.

**Information Available**
You also should consider how much information is available regarding the job. Are all the facts, figures, and expectations well known or are there lots of unanswered questions? Is the job similar to one that has been done before? Are the standards clear? Is there a definite time when it has to be done? If the employee is unable to answer these questions, a more task-oriented approach would be best as more direction will be required to get the job done correctly. However, if there are few questions and the standards are clear, you can allow the employee more latitude in deciding how to get the job done.

**Time Available**
The third consideration is how much time is available to get the job done. If there is a short turnaround time you may need to take a more task-oriented approach and make most of the decisions yourself. There may not be enough time to discuss alternatives or involve other people in making decisions. You will have to decide what to do and how to do it. If you are not under pressure to get the job done immediately, you can take time to get input from your people. They may be able to provide suggestions on how best to get the job done. As you consider the time factor, keep in mind the old saying "Haste makes waste." In some cases, even when you have a short time frame to get a job done, you may want to invest part of that time in getting input from your people. If they have some say in what is to be done, they are likely to be more committed to helping you get it done in the time available.

In the end, your leadership style will depend on how you view your people and the task to be done. When possible, take a balanced approach that matches the needs and skills of the employees with your preferred leadership style. Exhibit 1-3 shows the relationship among the factors to consider when selecting a leadership style.

**Other Considerations**
First-line supervisors usually have questions about how hard or easy they should be in dealing with their employees. In addition, there is usually considerable pressure from superiors to "Get the job done and don't worry about..."
offending someone." You will see rude, rough people succeeding, and sincere, nice people failing. You will likely hear comments such as "Nice guys finish last," and "Winning is the only thing."

Keep in mind that there is a middle ground in most situations. The best advice is to be yourself and don’t forget that you need your employees to get the job done. Your people want and need you to be an effective leader. In the long run, learning to adapt your style to different employees and different situations will help you achieve the results you want.

Here are three things you should consider when selecting your leadership style:

1. Delegation Skill
2. Organizational Constraints
3. Power Centers and Formal Structure

Delegation Skill Is Critical to Leadership
Few things are more important than developing the ability to delegate effectively. Like most new supervisors you may have difficulty deciding exactly what should and should not be delegated. When under pressure to complete a job, you may decide that it would be quicker to do it yourself. If this happens, a delegation opportunity is lost, and the chance to develop your leadership skills is forfeited. A lost delegation opportunity is also a missed opportunity to build employee competence and skills.
**Organizational Constraints**

You have to be aware of the predominant leadership style in your work environment. The nature of the organization will influence how you are expected to supervise. Learn to work within those organizational constraints and develop a leadership style that enables you to bring out the best in others and to deliver quality work.

For example, if the organization is critical of mistakes and failures, people will avoid risks. In this situation, focus on learning and continuous improvement. This will enable you to help others see mistakes as learning opportunities and encourage them to try new things without fear. If your organization wants to maintain the status quo, focus on helping people master their current job and use cross-training to build greater skill breadth. This provides an opportunity for you to use your coaching and delegation skills for personal growth and to build organizational capability.

If the organization is highly "change" oriented, there may not always be procedures to follow; innovative leadership may be a prized commodity. Organizations that encourage internal competition need first-line supervisors who provide coaching and supportive leadership. As a coach, you will help employees focus on doing high quality work and support their progress. As a supporter, you will help your team make good decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, customers, and the team.

**Power Centers and Formal Structure**

Power centers are the people within the organization who shape its informal attitudes. In different organizations, certain departments have varying degrees of power. Depending on what drives the organization—sales, marketing, accounting, or production—that group may predominate.

Your influence may be impacted by what the power centers within the organization normally allow to happen. You will have to be very clear about the effect of your group on other areas. Where there is a lot of internal conflict, the supervisor often gets caught up in other people's warfare. Be extra careful in these situations; you may win a battle and lose a war.

Be very sure that personal and group goals are aligned with those of your boss. Don't get involved in high-level warfare. Identify what is most important and concentrate your efforts in that direction. In hostile organization environments, there may be only limited opportunities for leadership. Under these circumstances, performance and productivity then are mainly dependent on the amount of interdepartmental cooperation necessary to get the work done.

**Activity 6: Leadership Style Considerations**

Based on your knowledge of your organization and your own leadership preferences, what will you consider when choosing your leadership style? What action can you take to minimize any negative impact these considerations might have on your style? One example is given to get you started.

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This chapter lays the foundation for making the transition from employee to first-line supervisor. Several important issues were discussed. First, you must be prepared to make the transition to first-line supervisor. Your confidence in being able to make the transition can affect your potential for success as a first-line supervisor.

Second, you need to be aware of the importance of first-line supervisors to an organization. They perform several valuable functions such as supervising the day-to-day operations, being the first line of contact for employees, impacting the span of control, and developing themselves for middle- and upper-management positions.

Third, first-line supervisors must deal with the paradoxes that go along with the job. For example, although management and supervisory skills are required, often very little formal training is provided. Also, the way the work is organized often puts a premium on getting the work out rather than preparing first-line supervisors for their new responsibilities. In the end supervisors often have to choose between supervising specific tasks or learning new skills.

And fourth, we discussed the selection of a leadership style. Successful supervisors select a leadership style that takes into account both the task to be done and the people involved. They try to take a balanced approach whenever possible that considers the experience of their employees, the amount of information available, and the time available. The most successful supervisors try to match their preferred leadership style with the needs and skills of their employees.
**Review Questions**

1. How much time do new first-line supervisors typically spend supervising their employees?
   (a) 5 to 25%
   (b) 15 to 35%
   (c) 25 to 45%
   (d) 35 to 55%

2. The phrase "where the rubber meets the road" refers to:
   (a) the supervisor's responsibility for day-to-day operations.
   (b) the supervisor being the first line of contact for employees.
   (c) having the right span of control to ensure happy customers.
   (d) whether or not the supervisor moves up the organization ladder.

3. Which of the following is a paradox of first-line supervision?
   (a) Part of your job is to train your employees to do their jobs.
   (b) Developing your people skills is necessary to be successful.
   (c) Having goals and objectives expressed in quotas, standards, and units.
   (d) Deciding between developing your skills and working on a project.

4. Which leadership style would be most appropriate to use when making a job assignment to a new employee?
   (a) Task-oriented
   (b) People-oriented
   (c) Balanced
   (d) Any leadership style can be used with new employees
5. Which of the following is an example of an organizational constraint that can affect your ability to lead?
(a) Upper management's approach to the business.
(b) Your own attitude toward the job.
(c) The length of time it takes to be promoted.
(d) Your experience in supervising others.