GETTING INTO SUPERVISION

“Whatever you can do, or dream to do, begin it.”

GOETHE
chapter one

SHOULD YOU BE A SUPERVISOR?

“Nothing noble is done without risk.”

Andre Gide

Patti drove home from her job with a financial institution feeling both elated and troubled. After less than two years with the firm, she had been offered a promotion to a supervisory role. Should she accept it?

Manuel has been happy as a short-order chef for three years. Yesterday he was offered a position as night manager at a substantial increase in pay. Should he accept the challenge?

Gerald was surprised when he was invited to apply for a management position with his electronics firm. Should he leave his highly paid, satisfying, skilled position for the headaches of management?

Clarice reentered the labor market in the health care industry at the age of forty-three. After less than six months, she has been invited into management. Should she make the move?

George has been encouraged to start thinking about a supervisory role with his national supermarket chain. Should he leave the security of his union for the problems of management?

The decision to make the transition into management is difficult and serious. When your opportunity comes, you should weigh both the advantages and the disadvantages. Would you be happier as an employee with fewer responsibilities? Which would mean more to you—the personal satisfaction of being a specialist, or the status that comes from being a leader? Some people would never consider becoming supervisors, as shown by the following comments:

As a supervisor, you are squeezed between a rock and a hard place. You have to please management and at the same time keep your employees happy. It’s an impossible situation. No, thanks.

I’ve seen too many burned-out supervisors to want the impossible headaches of a supervisor for a few more dollars each week.

PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES

After you have finished reading this chapter, you should be able to:

• List a minimum of six characteristics of an effective supervisor
• Explain six advantages to being in management
• Describe the skills and competencies needed at the front-line supervisory, middle, and upper levels of management
I’d rather be happy without the pressure and additional income, and my family agrees with me.

I’m a skilled person who takes pride in and receives pleasure from doing my specialized job well. Why should I abandon a skill it took me years to develop? I consider myself to be an excellent technical person, but after taking a management seminar I could tell that being a supervisor would never be in my comfort zone.

**MANAGEMENT DEFINED**

The definition of management is getting things done within an organization through other people. It means guiding people’s efforts toward organizational objectives; it means inspiring, communicating, planning, organizing, controlling, and evaluating; it means setting goals and moving employees toward them. Management is leadership.

Obviously, management is not for everyone. Most employees in all classifications are wise to remain non-managers, especially when they do not have the temperament or personality for successful careers as supervisors. Make no mistake—there is tremendous value and need for specialists and individual performers who do not aspire to larger leadership roles in their organizations. Being a manager is neither better nor worse than being a specialist, nor should it confer any superior status in contrast to the specialist. Being a manager means added work pressures, leadership responsibilities, and the continuous development of specific skill sets and competencies not typically expected of specialists. Although there are rewards to being a manager, there are also significant challenges.
How about you? Should you seriously consider a permanent career in management? Would it satisfy your personal needs and values? Would you achieve greater self-fulfillment? Would you be successful? To help you think it through, try answering the ten questions in the following checklist.

### Checklist for Prospective Supervisors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you consider yourself a highly ambitious person?</td>
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<td>2. Do you sincerely like and have patience with people?</td>
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<td>3. Do you like solving problems that don't have just one correct answer?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Are the financial rewards you may receive worth the added work pressures you will experience?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Is seeing that others do a job well more important to you than taking pride in doing the job yourself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Would you enjoy learning about psychology and human behavior?</td>
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<td>7. Would you be happier with more responsibility?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Would you rather work with problems involving human relationships than with mechanical, computational, creative, clerical, or similar problems?</td>
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<td>9. Do you desire an opportunity to demonstrate your leadership ability?</td>
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<td>10. Do you desire the freedom to do your own planning rather than being told what to do?</td>
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**Total Number: _____Yes _____No**

If your total number of yes answers exceeds your no answers, you probably make an excellent candidate for a supervisory position.

This checklist is intended to start you thinking, not to tell you definitively whether you should become a supervisor.

If most of your answers are yes, it appears that the role of supervisor might be attractive and comfortable for you. If, however, you gave more no than yes answers, it appears (at least at this stage of your life) that you should proceed with caution. Such a checklist also helps by pointing out that many important factors are involved in such a decision. Following are five factors that should receive your special attention:

- **How deep is your need for the status and recognition that comes from being a manager?** Some people have a strong drive for positions that confer status and authority, while others gain their self-esteem from the intrinsic value of their individual contributions. There is nothing inherently wrong with this drive for status and recognition from others, because it can be one important motivator that drives leaders to assume increasingly responsible positions within their organizations. However, it also means you will likely be more intensely scrutinized. With this status comes accountability for the performance of others, for which you will be evaluated as well. If you are unwilling to pay
the price that this additional status confers or if your self-esteem needs can be more readily met through your daily work activities and working relationships with your co-workers, you might be happier as a non-supervisor.

- **How important are people to you?** Most jobs require some contact with people, but the job of supervisor requires much more than most. You must be a personnel director, counselor, teacher, and practical psychologist at the same time. You must learn to work constructively with and accept people who irritate, frustrate, disappoint, and hurt you. You must develop your interpersonal or “people” skills. Active listening and use of correct grammar in written and spoken communication are examples of these skills. You must familiarize yourself with employment laws and regulations, such as those pertaining to anti-discrimination, sexual harassment, family and medical leave, and worker’s compensation, which require you to treat all employees in a consistent and equitable manner. You must be receptive to assist new employees from diversified cultures. You must have a great deal of patience, perception, and compassion. In other words, you must like people—all kinds of people. You can’t fake it. Yet, if people are truly important to you, building lasting relationships with those you supervise can be highly rewarding.

- **Do you consider yourself a good planner?** Are you an organizer? Supervisors must prepare and implement plans. They must spend quiet periods reorganizing their departments. They must think ahead. If you prefer to leave planning to others, you may not be happy as a supervisor.

- **How willing are you to relinquish control of daily work tasks and rely on others to complete assignments?** One mistake that new supervisors often make is they continue to perform essentially as they did as specialists who are responsible only for their own work activities. Although becoming a supervisor doesn’t mean you won’t retain some of these responsibilities, you are now responsible for ensuring that others perform these tasks so you can focus on broader activities involving planning, organizing, and directing others. Some managers lack the skill and, more importantly, the willingness to delegate these day-to-day activities to others. If you don’t want to let go of these activities, you will probably be happier as a non-supervisor.

- **Do you have leadership potential?** A supervisor, department manager, or crew chief is, more than anything else, a leader. He or she must set the tempo, provide the inspiration, and sometimes nurse the employees along, while at other times exercise harsh discipline and hand out constructive feedback. It is a constant balancing act designed to keep the team spirit of the department alive. Although some people seem to have natural leadership ability, most managers have had to develop their skills through training, experience, and reflection on their experiences. Don’t worry about whether you have been able to demonstrate your leadership yet—it’s the desire that counts. If you believe that you have the potential, look ahead with confidence to your role as a supervisor. Opportunities to demonstrate your leadership come later.

### ADVANTAGES OF BEING IN MANAGEMENT

If you have never been a leader, it may be difficult to predict how you will react or perform in a management role. If you have the slightest interest in finding out what
Should You Be a Supervisor?

your chances are, why not try? Start preparing now and accept the first opportunity that presents itself. Following are some advantages to consider:

1. **Opportunities abound.** Approximately one out of every nine employee positions is a supervisory or management one so there must be room for you. The police officer who is on a beat can prepare to become a sergeant. The registered nurse can plan to become a superintendent. The factory worker can aspire to become a supervisor. The young person at McDonald's can set the goal of becoming its CEO. The opportunity to move up is nearly always present in those who are willing to plan ahead and prepare. Effective leaders are more able to move to another organization, thus creating the opportunity for advancement.

2. **Becoming a supervisor is often the best way to achieve a better-than-average income quickly if you don't have a technical skill or a professional specialty.** Specialists are paid well for their expertise, which they gained through education, on-the-job training and work experiences, and the attainment of specific licenses and certifications required for their field. If you have a general educational background and do not have a trade, specialized skill, or professional or semiprofessional license or certificate, you should consider becoming a supervisor. The opportunities, especially in service organizations, are excellent.

3. **Supervisors can learn more because of the greater opportunity to participate in company training.** They can attend more classes, read more, and associate with experts. In fact, supervisors must continue to improve and grow with the company. Organizations experience many changes that require their employees to learn new skills. Along with technical training that supervisors or managers get, they are often given the opportunity to attend seminars on leadership, team dynamics, or in technical areas like inventory control, production planning, or quality assurance. Employees may be able to find a little niche where they can hide, but supervisors cannot. The Bigger Pot Principle applies here. If you believe your personal growth is restricted as an employee, moving into supervision would be like transplanting a plant to a bigger pot where greater root growth is possible in many directions.

4. **Supervisors almost always know what is happening within the organization.** As part of the management team, they attend meetings, receive more written communications, and are often consulted by leaders in upper-level positions. They interact with other departments and deal with a wide variety of challenges.

5. **Supervisors are in an ideal position to contribute to the welfare of others.** As managers, supervisors can go to bat for the employees they supervise. The supervisor is the employee's link to policymakers in the organization. The process of meeting the special needs of employees often begins with the supervisor.

6. **Supervisors are more mobile than workers.** Front-line supervisors usually find it easier to locate a new job should their firm downsize, right size, or simply shut its doors and go out of business. This is because they generally gain additional knowledge and experience over their non-supervisory counterparts and they have demonstrated leadership capability that can be applied to new situations.
Chapter 1

DISADVANTAGES OF BEING IN MANAGEMENT

In addition to the many advantages in becoming a manager, a few of the disadvantages are listed next. Think about them before making a final commitment.

1. **Problem employees can be difficult.** As an employee, you have already noticed that some co-workers have unusual behavior patterns that cause problems for their supervisors. Handling confrontations, working with grievances, and doing corrective interviews can be traumatic for some people. Supervisors often find themselves in the middle of complex human problems that seem to have no possible solution.

2. **Expect to be more alone as a supervisor.** Successful supervisors—even team leaders—must isolate themselves to some extent from the employees they supervise. This challenge can be especially difficult for new supervisors who have been promoted to lead their former peers. It can be difficult to be a supervisor and a close friend at the same time. You must frequently back away when you might prefer to be a part of the group. You may be asked to withhold confidential information from your employees until an official announcement is made. As a member of the management team, you may be perceived as being one of “them” and not one of “us” by your employees. You might feel this isolation most when you make an unpopular decision and the people you supervise let you know you are on opposite sides. It is an unreasonable expectation to think that you can please everyone all the time.

3. **You may not receive constant reinforcement from your supervisor.** People in management usually treat other managers differently from the way supervisors treat their employees. As a supervisor, you are expected to support and protect your employees at all times. You must give them day-to-day security and constant personal attention. Do not, however, expect this same treatment from your supervisor. Because you are a manager, you are expected to be stronger, so your supervisor may not feel the same need to reinforce you. He or she will take it for granted that you will provide your own personal confidence and self-motivation and will deal more openly and directly with you.

4. **You may have to change your behavior more than you expect.** Becoming a supervisor for the first time may become one of the most important things to happen to you in your lifetime. It can be a bigger transition than people expect. In becoming a supervisor, you lay your career and reputation on the line; if you fail, your adjustment to a lower level can be brutally difficult and often impossible. The change requires realigning your thinking because your whole approach to your career must be different. Your daily routine, your human relationships, and your self-concept may have to change. Underestimating the degree of change you might have to make could cause you to fail as a supervisor.

5. **A position as a supervisor could mean longer hours without overtime pay.** Although many workers are paid on an hourly basis and entitled to overtime pay (usually time and a half of their regular hourly pay) pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act, many supervisory positions are paid on a salary basis for which overtime rules do not apply. As a salaried professional, you may be expected to do work outside the standard 40-hour workweek. Often, a supervisor’s schedule is so tight during the regular working day, assisting staff, addressing employee concerns, and meeting
with other managers, that he or she might not have time to plan and perform other management functions during the regular business day. This may mean taking extra work home, which in turn cuts into family time. Such is the price for those who wish to lead.

6. *High-productivity and high-quality standards are more important today than they were in the past.* Your challenge is to gain higher-quality standards and greater production with fewer people. These demands increase the pressure on supervisors to learn new technology and approaches in workflow and job design.

7. *Your skills as a supervisor may need to be developed.* Often, the best and most capable technician may be given a promotion to supervisor. Even though technical skills are important, other skills are needed too. As mentioned earlier, you need interpersonal skills, such as people and leadership skills, as well as time-management skills.

**THE PRESSURES OF MANAGEMENT**

The promises and the pitfalls of management are many. However, is there any truth in the belief that becoming a manager is a sure way to get an ulcer? A first-class ticket to a heart attack? A one-way passage to a nervous breakdown? Not really.

This frequently expressed fear—that becoming a manager is injurious to one’s physical and mental health because of excessive pressures—is a myth. Management people, in general, are as healthy as those not in management. The supervisor can learn to deal with organizational pressures just as the politician must deal with public pressures. Certainly, the job may tax your nervous system a little more than some other kinds of work, and the emotional and mental strain may be greater in some careers than in others. Every job has its own special demands. The solution, of course, is to handle the job without letting it become too much of a strain. Special
courses teach strategies for dealing with stress. Some individuals who are highly self-motivated apply pressure to themselves by setting difficult goals that force them to live up to their potential. Properly controlled, stress increases productivity.

Let’s look at an example of one individual who wanted the challenge and involvement of a supervisory role. Hank recently accepted an opportunity to become a supervisor.

I admit that I have many fears about becoming a supervisor. I’ve never thought of myself as a natural leader and have never really had an opportunity to work under pressure. But I’ve got to cross over the line sometime or I’ll never know whether I can make it. I might as well start now and find out what it’s like. I realize the days ahead will be the most critical of my career, even though I will supervise only four people at first.

I see the whole thing as a sort of laboratory experiment. I’ll be able to try out all the principles and techniques of good supervision, and if they work well with four people now, they should work well with four hundred people later. It’s my first chance to test my ability as a leader. I feel somewhat like a young senator on his first trip to the capitol. I’ve won the election, but now I must prove to myself that I can survive.

Hank is approaching his new assignment with an excellent attitude. He has assessed his personal desire to be a supervisor, his potential as a leader, and his drive to succeed, and has decided it is worth the time and investment. He is also going into his first role as a supervisor with his eyes wide open, knowing it won’t be easy, but viewing it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and test himself. Like Hank, if you have engaged in similar self-assessments and determined that supervision is for you, you will likely find that the challenges and rewards far outweigh the pressures and stress you will face.

**THE SKILL SETS AND COMPETENCIES YOU MUST DEVELOP IN YOUR NEW SUPERVISORY ROLE**

Should you decide to make the move into management, there are specific skill sets and competencies you must develop and continue to develop as you progress in your career through the management ranks. Depending on your specific role and your relative position within your organization’s hierarchy, the extent to which specific skill sets and competencies are needed will vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Management</td>
<td>Conceptual Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Management</td>
<td>Human Relations Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-Line Supervisor</td>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
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</table>

Skills chart
The chart on p. 10 shows the levels of management (front-line, middle, and upper) and the type of skills needed or used at each level. The three skills sets are technical, human relations, and conceptual. Notice that at the supervisory level, technical skills are used the most. The amount of technical and conceptual skills one uses at each level of management changes. Supervisors use their technical skills most often, with some conceptual skills. Upper management, however, uses a smaller portion of technical skills but a larger portion of conceptual skills. For example, when an effective engineer gets promoted to supervisor, he uses his technical skills a great deal of the time to guide and direct the efforts of his direct reports. He also is expected to use human relations skills in dealing with his employees. When he moves to middle management, he is expected to use less technical and more conceptual skills than he did at the supervisory level. When he reaches upper management, he is expected to use a great deal more conceptual skills and fewer technical skills. Again, he continues to use the same amount of human relations skills.

After being in upper management for years, it is conceivable that a CEO who came up through the management ranks from engineering may no longer be a qualified engineer, because he has not had to continue to use or develop his technical engineering skills and relies instead on qualified front-line and middle managers to ensure that a technically competent workforce is maintained. He must instead use more of his human relations and conceptual skills. Conceptual skills are essential for establishing the overall direction of the organization that front-line and middle managers, along with staff, fulfill through their day-to-day activities. While the CEO uses his human relations skills in equal proportion as he progresses through the supervisory-, middle-, or upper-management ranks, he presumably hones them more sharply as he advances in order to respond to and manage the increasingly complex human relations challenges that typically accompany the CEO role. Consider, however, the CEO who fails to understand the importance of continued development in the human relations realm. There are ample stories of leaders who are respected within their industry for their vision and technical expertise, but who fail to inspire trust and loyalty among employees because of their inability to develop competence in this critical area. Clearly, a supervisor who wishes to advance within managerial ranks must never undervalue the importance of developing human relations skills.

Technical Skills

The supervisory ranks are often filled with technically skilled workers possessing a strong work ethic. These characteristics are normally the ones that got the employee promoted to supervision in the first place. The supervisor must possess sound technical, job-related skills that are developed on the job, by completing an apprenticeship in a skilled trade, or by completing a two-year associate degree or four-year bachelor’s degree in a specific technical area. Technical skills are important, because the supervisor is often required to make decisions, answer questions, train, or guide and direct the work of her followers. The supervisor often must be trusted to be a technically qualified resource to his or her employees. The chart shows the relative need for these skills as the supervisor moves into middle and upper management.

Human Relations Skills

Human relations skills are those skills that are required to get along with other people. These are commonly referred to as people skills and include, among others, interpersonal communication, knowing how to lead others, giving and receiving feedback,
coaching, relating to others, empathizing, managing conflict, negotiating, influencing others, and maintaining motivational environments. Highly qualified technical people who are promoted because of their technical expertise often struggle as supervisors because they do not possess these skills. They have not learned what it takes to get along with their employees. If you are promoted to supervision based on your technical expertise and work ethic, you should invest your time and energy into learning and developing your human relations skills. Even if you are a naturally talented “people person,” you may need to further develop that talent by studying human relations. There are many books and courses available on this topic.

Conceptual Skills

Justice, fairness, the difference between right and wrong, legitimacy, truth, equal opportunity, and valuing and appreciating diversity are examples of human conceptualizations—that is, their definitions are not universally defined because they do not exist in nature as a tangible object, but are in our minds as concepts. Concepts are very important in that they form the foundation of our beliefs and values. They may be only slightly different or perhaps substantially different for one person or group than for another. The executive often defines these types of concepts for the company they lead. His or her meanings of these concepts influence greatly the decisions made and thus the company’s direction. Upper-level managers must possess sound conceptual skills. We expect our executive-level managers to know the difference between right and wrong and be ethical and fair with their employees, customers, and community.

There are also problems and challenges of a conceptual nature that executives must solve. Dealing with change, growth, and decline; creating new markets; outsourcing; investing money; and dealing with local, national, and international politics are a few of the conceptual problems facing the modern executive. Unfortunately, there are no universal solutions to most conceptual problems they face, but only approaches that the executive may adopt and use. As a result, executives must learn from their successes and failures as they go. To learn, they must be open to new ideas. Learning often requires skill handling ambiguity and uncertainty. Executives set the example for their employees. They must be able to conceptualize a vision for their company and guide their organization to the realization of that vision.

ADDITIONAL SKILL SETS AND COMPETENCIES

A few specific skill sets and competencies have been identified in recent years that, although part of the technical, conceptual, and human-relations framework, have received special attention among employers and, therefore, require your attention to develop. These additional skill sets and competencies include the following:

1. Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence encompasses an individual’s capacity to manage his or her emotions and harness them appropriately to guide behavior and thinking to enhance performance and achieve better results. It also covers an individual’s ability to respond appropriately to the emotions of others without overreaction in order to minimize escalation and ideally to help others manage their emotions better. Someone who demonstrates emotional intelligence possesses self-awareness regarding his or her
moods and emotions and their impact on performance, empathy toward the moods and emotions of others, understanding of how others react to your emotions and behaviors, and self-regulation of behavior to respond appropriately rather than impulsively to given situations.

2. **Social intelligence.** Social intelligence involves the ability to determine the appropriate requirements for leadership for particular situations and to respond accordingly. It includes social perceptiveness to understand the needs, problems, and opportunities of the team, group, or organization and the relative working relationships, characteristics, and traits of members and collective capabilities that enhance the leader’s ability to influence change. It also includes the ability to vary behavior to accommodate team and organization relationships and the social situation at hand.

3. **Political savvy.** Political savvy involves the ability to recognize and take advantage of the unwritten and unspoken rules, norms, roles, and channels people use to get things done within the organization.

4. **Systems thinking.** Systems thinking involves the knowledge and understanding of how various organizational components such as processes, systems, policies, decision making, relationships among teams and individuals, and the work of individual performers interrelate, and how change in one component impacts other components. Systems thinking requires an understanding of these interrelationships and has impacts at the organizational, process, and job and performer levels.

5. **Continuous learning.** Continuous learning involves the ability to introspectively analyze the processes and efforts engaged in while working, consider ways to improve, and apply new learning for future situations, in a continuous cycle of improvement. It also involves the ability and willingness to modify behavior and change assumptions and beliefs based on new experiences.

6. **Managing diversity.** Managing diversity includes understanding how the differences and similarities reflected in the workforce can be used to strategic advantage to achieve synergy and better results. It involves valuing diversity and respect among and between teams and individuals, as well as accepting the challenges that result based on differences among people and their perspectives and managing them rather than avoiding or minimizing their importance. It also involves incorporating diversity values in every component of organizational work, life, function, and systems rather than viewing diversity as an isolated subset of activities.

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**PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST**

1. Management is leadership. It involves getting things done within an organization through other people. It means guiding their efforts toward organizational objectives, inspiring them, communicating, planning, organizing, controlling, and evaluating. It means setting goals and moving employees toward those goals.

2. Management may be for you if you have leadership potential, feel a deep need for the status and recognition that comes with being a manager, like people, and are a good planner, willing to relinquish day-to-day work activities to others and direct their work instead.

3. There are many advantages to being in management, including the abundance of opportunities available, income potential, opportunities for training and development, upward mobility, and the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of others.
4. There are, however, disadvantages, including the difficulties of working with problem employees, occasional feelings of loneliness with limited opportunities to receive reinforcement from upper management, long hours with little or no extra pay, the pressure of producing high-quality work, and the necessity to change your behaviors and develop appropriate skills in order to become effective in the supervisory role.

5. The competencies that a supervisor must develop can be categorized into three areas: technical, human relations, and conceptual. Front-line supervisors are relied on and must use their technical skills on a daily basis, whereas they are expected to use conceptual skills less. Upper management uses conceptual skills more often and technical skills infrequently. However, the need to use and continually develop human-relations skills remains constant, regardless of one’s role and rank within an organization’s management structure.

6. In addition to the skill sets and competencies reflected in the technical, human-relations, and conceptual frameworks, a few specific skill sets and competencies have been given increasing attention among employers and, therefore, demand the supervisor’s attention to develop. These include emotional intelligence, social intelligence, political savvy, systems thinking, continuous learning, and managing diversity.

TEST YOURSELF

For each statement below, check true or false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People with general educational backgrounds but no technical skills should seriously consider a role in management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Beginning supervisors can count on constant support and reinforcement from their superiors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Supervision is basically getting things done through others.</td>
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<td>4. Little behavioral change is required in making the transition into supervision.</td>
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<td>5. The most successful supervisors are those that become close friends with their employees.</td>
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<td>6. The skill set needed to manage diversity requires the supervisor to seek to avoid or minimize differences so that employees can work productively together.</td>
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<td>7. Those who do not have previous leadership experience tend to become poor supervisors.</td>
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<td>8. Developing your interpersonal and people skills is a must as a supervisor, regardless of the level of responsibility in the organization.</td>
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<td>9. The process of meeting the special needs of employees often begins with the employee.</td>
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<td>10. The company promotes you to supervisor because of your background and skills; therefore, furthering your development is not necessary.</td>
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Turn to the back of the book to check your answers.

Total Correct __________

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. For you, right now, based on the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages described in this chapter, is the price of becoming a supervisor too high to pay?

2. Should a college student who does not have specific clerical, mechanical, technical, or professional skills take courses in management? Defend your answer.

3. From your personal experience as an employee, what percentage of supervisors would you say are truly professional? How would you differentiate between supervisors who are professional and supervisors who are not?

4. Describe the job of your supervisor. As you do so, ask yourself whether the rewards justify the sacrifices.
5. How accurate do you think your score is on the Checklist for Prospective Supervisors? Do you believe it provides you an objective perspective of whether supervision is right for you?

CASE: CHOICE

Please turn to the back of this book and become acquainted with the roles of Bill, Ricardo, Renee, and Marty before analyzing this case.

Bill must fill a vacant supervisory spot and is considering both Renee and Marty, who have applied. He asked Ricardo for advice on this decision and to get back to him soon on his recommendation. Ricardo must, therefore, choose one of his employees to recommend for promotion. Ricardo is ambivalent about whom to recommend. He knows that Renee believes she is entitled to the promotion because she leads the department in personal productivity. She is the better choice on the basis of educational background and mental ability, but Ricardo is not sure that other employees will respond well to her assertive ways and high demands. Renee’s relationships with others are not as good as Marty’s.

Ricardo also knows that Marty believes he is ready to make the move. Marty has paid his dues, his ability is sufficiently high, and he might be more sensitive to the needs of employees. Ricardo must consider one additional factor: Renee seems to have more personal confidence than Marty.

No matter what happens, Ricardo knows he will have a human relations problem with the employee not selected. Even so, he wants credit from Bill for recommending the most successful candidate and wants to choose wisely.

Ricardo comes to you for your advice. Base your choice on the preceding information and your interpretation of the roles of Renee and Marty (as described in the back of the book). If you were Ricardo, how would you proceed? On what factors would you base your decision? What process would you follow? What information will you need to make your choice? What information is missing that would help you make a more informed choice? Would you recommend either at this point in favor of looking at other candidates (either internally or externally)? You know you will be expected to justify your recommendation to Bill and to the one (or both) you do not recommend.

Do you feel qualified to make such a decision? Is Bill using this situation as an opportunity to test your skills in leadership? If so, can you identify your leadership skills? Turn to the back of book to compare your thoughts to those of the authors.

LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL SCALE

Supervisors are both managers and leaders. Once you become comfortable with your supervisory role, you may want to add more and more leadership to your management style. If you have not (up to now) had the opportunity to demonstrate your leadership talents, you may have more potential than you think. This scale is designed to help you evaluate just how much potential you possess.

Circle the number that indicates where you fall in the scale from 1 to 10. After you have finished, total your scores in the space provided.

I can develop the talent and confidence to be an excellent speaker in front of groups. 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
I have the capacity to build and maintain productive relationships with workers under my supervision. 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

If you rated yourself 80 or higher, it appears that you have both the desire and the potential to be an excellent leader. If you rated yourself between 50 and 80, you may need more desire and confidence in yourself, but you seem to have the potential to become a highly successful leader. If you rated yourself less than 50, you probably are not ready for a leadership role at this stage of your life. See the authors’ comments in the back of this book.
Chapter 1

I intend to take full advantage of all opportunities to develop my leadership qualities.  

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I do not intend to seek a leadership role or to develop my leadership skills.

I can develop the skill of motivating others. I would provide an outstanding example.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I could never develop the skill of motivating others. I would be a poor example to follow.

I can be patient and understanding with others.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I have no patience with others and could not develop it.

I could learn to be good at disciplining those under me—even to the point of terminating a worker after repeated violations.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

It would tear me up to discipline a worker under my supervision; I’m much too kind and sensitive.

I can make tough decisions.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I do not want decision-making responsibilities.

It would not bother me to isolate myself and maintain a strong discipline line between workers and me.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I have a great need to be liked; I want to be one of the gang.

I would make an outstanding member of a “management team.”

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

I hate staff meetings and would be a weak or hostile team member.

In time, I would be a superior leader—better than anyone I have known.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

My leadership potential is so low it is not worth developing.

Total Score _____

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISE

Interview a supervisor who you know and ask about the challenges and rewards of being a supervisor. Ask for any advice he or she would give or lessons learned that would benefit you in your decision whether to pursue a supervisory role.

TO LEARN MORE

To learn more about the specific competencies and managerial behaviors that supervisors must develop, refer to the following references:


NOTE