

## Planning a Supervisory Program

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How fortunate is the company that has a well rounded and well planned program for training its supervisors. In such a company, you will find the media of learning being permeated not only down through managerial ranks, but to all other employee categories to such an extent that the place literally radiates with enthusiasm, know-how and team work.

How lucky for that company to have such a capable and understanding Director of Training, upon whom so much of the operational and ultimate success of that plant depends. Yes, you will hear some industrial educators say "For any program to be successful, it must have the whole-hearted backing and cooperation of management." No truer words could be spoken; but how many of us realize that management rightfully does not buy a training program just because the director is a fine fellow. The so-called "for the sake of training" programs will never obtain the acceptance and the attention of the "brass" as the one which is properly planned to fulfill a specific plant need and which guarantees pre-determined results.

You may perhaps look dubiously at the clause "guarantees pre-determined results." But can we, as training directors, be looked upon as experts in the field of industrial learning unless we can call our shots and accomplish the objective? This is not impossible; it is only then that we can render the service which is normally expected of us, and it is only then that we are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of the position in which we rightfully belong in our respective organizations.

In discussing this subject—Planning a Supervisory Program—I am firmly convinced that there is no person more eligible or in a better situation to develop your own specific program than you, who are responsible for such activity. As consultant in training and education to a group of ten plants scattered about the country, I have found what an impossible task it is to plan a specific program for any one of

those plants without sufficient knowledge of the conditions, past experiences, and the type of personnel existing within them. Therefore, this discussion or material which will follow should not by any means be construed as the exact method by which you should plan your program. These opinions are offered merely as thought provoking, and as an aid to you in developing your specific pattern of procedure.

Let us briefly turn to the responsibilities and functions of the Director of Training and Education in a typical industrial situation. In view of the fact that his duties are many-sided and all important, one of the first activities that he should undertake—and he usually does—is to educate himself in the structure of the organization, function and methods of operation of each unit, section or department, and in the qualification and traits of management and worker in that organization. The training director, if he functions properly, will be looked upon as a consultant by management; and he should be able to develop the knowledge, skills and ability of all levels of personnel in the plant. He will be required to develop courses for employees in a variety of occupations, and he must begin such programs in accordance with the level of formal education and degrees of skill possessed by employee participants.

He must develop confidential, friendly and understanding relationship with all levels of personnel in order to realize and maintain fluent, effective and cooperative work alliances with the people in the plant. A training director is more successful when he establishes close and frequent contact with supervision and workers; when he makes their problems his, and does what he can to solve and alleviate such problems through the training media. When management and worker look toward the training group for solution to their problems, for guidance and counselling, then training has attained the proper relationship with company personnel.

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Some training directors not only have a staff of assistants, but utilize very effectively training committees, composed of people of all supervisory-management levels depending on the nature of the program. Members of such a committee, if properly selected, are of great value, not only in determining the needs of training within the plant, but can be of great service to the training director in organizing, selling and administering the program. There is an old adage which says, "If you think a man doesn't agree with what you are trying to do, put him on your committee." How true this is, since such a man thus has an opportunity to get all of the facts, learn of the possibilities of your endeavor, and to participate in the activity which in many instances is all that is necessary to make any program important to him, anyway. Careful thought must be given to the selection of such a committee so that members are not too far removed from the situation where the program will be administered.

For example, a training director organized a committee composed of superintendents to assist him with an on-the-job training program. It did not work out too well, since they were two steps above the level where on-the-job training was to be performed. They did not have too much to offer, since they were not aware of the conditions or prevailing problems necessitating such attention. When an on-the-job training committee was formed, composed of foremen and assistant foremen, the information and service received was very contributory to the success of the program since this activity was directly connected with one of their particular problems. By the same token, higher level management (such as directors, superintendents, department managers or general foremen) could be of great service on a supervisory development program committee in that they are aware of supervisory problems and difficulties, can lend prestige to the program, and can assist in making a survey or, with methods used, to determine the training needs of supervisors.

To strengthen present foremen training programs and to develop a company-wide program

for selecting and training new supervisors, a survey was made in the RCA-Victor Division. The data of the survey was obtained from supervisors by questionnaire through interviews with a selected group of superintendents, general foremen and foremen. By this means, supervisors were given the opportunity to participate in the development of future conferences and to discuss with their superiors and training people the problems of supervision with which they have most difficulty. Information gathered as a result of this survey consisted of:

- Percentage of the Workday Spent on Various Activities

- Higher Management's Idea of the Foreman's Workday

- Amount of Time Foremen Spend Daily with Other Plant Units

- What Courses Foremen Want

- How Foremen Want Training

In determining what percentage of his total workday was spent on various activities, the supervisor indicated that 71% of his day was devoted to just five functions. These we called the "Big 5", which consisted of Meeting Production Schedules—29%, Human Relations—14%, Quality Control—11%, Cost Control—9%, and Methods—8%. The remaining 29% of the day was taken up with the following duties: Personnel Functions, Tools, Equipment and Machines, Materials and Supplies, Working Conditions and other activities. By this part of the survey, we learned what kept the supervisor so busy. To check the validity of this workday breakdown, we had higher supervision; i.e., superintendents and general foremen, indicate what they thought really comprised the foreman's workday.

It is interesting to note that these higher level supervisors thought that the "Big 5", as selected by the foremen, should be the big five. However, they placed slightly greater emphasis on human relations. Perhaps this is a good indication that the higher a man goes in an organization the greater respect and consideration he has for the well-being and feelings of his fellow man.

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This part of the survey gave us an accurate account of where the supervisor spent the biggest portion of his workday. It did not necessarily indicate where foremen needed or wanted training to aid him to do a better job in these activities. When asked "What topics do foremen want in their training programs?", 83% placed the broad area of human relations among their first three choices of topics desired. Production control ranked next and was placed among their first three choices by 37%. Following those came company policies—32%, how to instruct—39%, quality control—21%, cost control—31% and safety, good housekeeping at 11%. So you see foremen did not think they needed training in that activity which took up the biggest part of their day; namely, meeting production schedules.

In a review of contents of many programs given to foremen by industrial plants throughout the country, it is interesting to note at this point that 65% of the topics were devoted to dealing with people; 7% had to do with financial matters such as reducing cost, budgets, etc.; 7% were topics on proper methods and procedures; 5% on proper use and handling of materials and 3% were discussions on machinery tools and equipment. So you see, greater emphasis is being placed on this all important topic of human relations by industry in general throughout the nation.

Up to this point, our survey established for us the areas in which training should be given. There remained yet the matter of determining how foremen would like to be trained. Remember we said that the best way to get enthusiasm and eagerness to attend a program is to give participants the opportunity to plan the details, thereby making it *their* program. When asked what teaching methods or aids they thought most effective, 33% of our foremen indicated the case study method, illustrating principles would do them most good. 31% favored discussion of a topic. 23% of the RCA leaders thought motion pictures a most valuable method, and 13% said they would like to have the lecture method of training. It is interesting to note that the case study

method is most comparable to the complete training procedure, since it incorporates an opportunity to determine how the learner would handle the situation and to have his method checked and constructively criticized. The Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, used this method very effectively. Several RCA-Victor plants reported good results from the use of this method, which is being given more and more attention by industrial educators for possible use in their supervisory development plans.

As to length of sessions, 38% indicated a preference of 2 hours; 32% thought 1 hour would be a substantial period and 30% voted that 1½ hours would suffice for each session. On other important details, 54% of the RCA-Victor supervisors preferred short, intensive courses; 60% wanted voluntary attendance; 93% thought simple tests were good, and 40% indicated no objection to written homework.

Can you think of a better way to create an eagerness to obtain enthusiastic and self-propelled willingness to participate than to have supervisors assist in developing their own program. And this matter of management backing! Management is not so much interested in how training will be administered as it is in what results it can expect. From such a survey, conducted by members of management, we not only learn the problems which necessitate the assistance of training but at the same time these members of management add significance to the need of a program for alleviating such supervisory difficulties. From then on our objective is to organize a course of training to satisfy a need and which will attain predetermined results.

There are three things which training can do for supervisors:

1. It can give to them the tools or fundamentals with which to do his job.
2. It can keep those tools sharp or up-to-date.
3. It can keep those tools active by frequent follow-up or by refresher courses or sessions.

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To maintain an efficient, live-wire supervisory staff, all three of these services are necessary. We must teach foremen the practical fundamentals of supervision. We must conduct habit forming programs if we expect our training to be lasting and become part of the daily routine of the supervisor. We must check the results of our training and follow up periodically with refresher sessions to assure that the standards set for our supervisors have not only been attained but that our teachings have become the permanent tools of the foreman in his job. So much is heard from management that, "Joe Foreman has attended so many conference meetings devoted to better techniques of handling people, but it just doesn't register. He doesn't use the material that is discussed to better himself on his job." Well, is there any guarantee in a discussion or conference program that Joe Foreman has learned or will use on his job that which he has been covered? Usually, in teaching of this type the prerogative rests with Joe Foreman to either use or ignore the techniques discussed. Supervisors often complain that, "It's the same old stuff; we had it last year, and many consecutive years before that." You may well ask why such complaints arise and what can we do about them. The answer may well hinge on how the subject matter was selected and whether or not the course of study satisfies a need as indicated by supervision. But it is my opinion that many managements spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for the "training" of supervisors when actually all that their foremen are getting is an expansion or broadening of their knowledge on a subject. I should like, therefore, to make an assertion to you that I made before a group of training directors at the recent convention of the American Society of Training Directors at Detroit. I said that a conference session by itself is not an adequate training tool. Perhaps now, before giving this question much thought, you will be stirred by a little inward objection as did several participants in that convention meeting in Detroit. However, as we discussed the causes and solution for many of the difficulties experienced in administer-

ing a supervisory training program, most of the references reverted back to lack of checking the application of the material taught and of frequent follow up.

Let us take a brief look at a few of the problems in the training of supervisors with which training directors who attended the convention at Detroit indicated they were confronted. The problems are placed in the order of weights put on them by the participants of that meeting.

1. Getting supervisors to apply the material learned in conference meetings to their daily activities.
2. Resistance put up by more experienced supervisors to attend these training sessions.
3. Getting supervisors to exercise training functions in their respective sections.
4. When supervisory training should start.
5. How to evaluate supervisory training.
6. How to discuss with and sell supervision on the subject matter.
7. Lack of appreciation for the need for further training.
8. How to divorce the minds of supervisors from shop problems while they are in the training session.

These problems are not unusual but wouldn't you say that most of the solution to many of these problems is in having supervisors participate in determining the need for and in organizing their own program; in checking up on the application of that which was taught and in follow up instruction or sessions on those phases of the learning which "just didn't register?" The T.W.I. "J's" are recognized as excellent training programs. Why? The answer is obvious since those programs provided for a check on the learner's application and a follow up to assure permanency of the habit formed and the procedure established. I wish to make it clear at

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this point that I am not condemning the conference method of supervisory development. They do a fine job of expanding and of keeping up to date, that knowledge and that ability already possessed by the supervisor. Conference meetings also serve to keep that know-how active and in the forefront for use by the foreman on the job. However, supervisors succeed or fail by the habits and abilities they develop. I am advocating a training program organized to purposely, intentionally and systematically form the proper habits of supervisors. This can best be accomplished in pre-supervisory training where no improper habits have been formed. However, with proper planning, all supervisors can constructively change their behaviors on the job by efficient training procedures.

At this point then it is obvious to conclude that to perform the services for supervision as indicated in this discussion it is necessary to motivate two types of training, one a complete training procedure for forming proper habits and conventional supervisory abilities to meet a standard of proficiency established for leaders in the plant; the second, the group or conference meeting which maintains or further develops the standard of proficiency of supervision which now exists.

Can we entertain both methods simultaneously? Yes. The conference meetings may continue at regularly established intervals, covering those subjects which momentarily need most attention. These meetings serve as a review and call attention to the need for additional concentration on below standard activities. The complete training procedure can be used for developing a habit in skill or ability on an intensive or long-range basis, depending upon the nature of the subject taught or the urgency of the situation. In addition to the "J's", a fine example of training supervisors is a part of the Employee Service Review Plan, a systematic evaluation of employee performance, launched last winter by Mr. F. M. Folsom, Executive Vice President of the RCA-Victor Division. To effectively motivate this plan to review the services of

employees, supervisors had to be taught the details of the plan and how to rate their subordinates using the forms involved. After adequate and necessary information was presented, the supervisors were given a hypothetical employee service description on which to perform a trial rating. These trial ratings were reviewed and discussed for improvement in technique and application of procedure. The Employee Service Review Plan naturally lends itself to good training procedure, since all actual ratings are reviewed by the rating supervisor's superior and by a coordinator who reviews all ratings for any possible inconsistencies or inadequate use of the forms. Follow up sessions are being developed for these rating supervisors when sufficient use of the plan has been experienced. In these sessions, the plan will be constructively criticized, and guidance and advice will be given to these supervisors to alleviate any difficult or problematic situations which may have arisen during the first rating period.

I would like to say a few words about the organization of sessions. Most training people have very good conception of the way an interesting and effective training meeting should be organized and conducted.

I am sure we know that all training periods should have objectives to be attained by the termination of that meeting. Good training procedures tell us not to stuff too many objectives in one sitting. This is another basic used in the "J's". Each conference and objective should be part of an overall objective or program. Eventually and at the completion of the course, we as training directors will have guided the learners to an ultimate goal which will benefit both company and employees.

Training meetings should be interesting and uniquely administered if possible. Guest speakers, models, charts, motion pictures should be included in every session. We should make sure, however, that no one teaching aid or person predominates in the meeting. Participants should have the opportunity to express their viewpoints and exchange ideas relative to the subject matter.

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A good conference leader is an important asset to a program. It is he who guides and keeps the discussion into its proper channels in order that the objectives of the session are met. It is he who effectively summarizes the points brought forth in the meeting and who develops an eagerness to attend the next session.

Let us briefly recapitulate and list the requirements of a well organized training session:

1. List objectives of the session.
2. Introduce subject matter.
3. Conference leader starts and keeps discussion moving toward objectives of the session by use of lead questions.
4. Motion pictures, charts, models and guest speakers should be used to promote variety, interest and vivid impressions.
5. Conference leader should summarize the session bearing out the objectives.
6. Conference leader should develop an eagerness to attend the next meeting by a few descriptive words.
7. A summary of the session should be prepared and passed out at the end of the session for review at future time.

Supervisors are the keynote to the success of any industrial business enterprise. We, as training directors, have much to do with the proper development of these supervisors. If we are to be successful in this endeavor we must close up any gaps between supervision and ourselves in order to be in a better position to study their needs, and to use all of the know-how and ingenuity that we possess to direct their development and mold them into leaders in keeping with supervisory standards so necessary for successful enterprise.

## Orientation Training

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### Summary

Orientation training is the planned and guided adjustment of the employee to his company and his job. When successfully undertaken, it goes far toward arresting turnover, absenteeism, worker disinterest, and unjustified dissatisfaction with the job and the company.

Orientation training is practiced wherever managements realize that attitudes must be given constructive attention, perhaps guided or in some cases even directed, no less deliberately than are the more material aspects of the business. Many managements are coming to realize along with Peter Drucker that, "Mass production is not fundamentally a mechanical principle but a principle of social organization. It does not coordinate machines or the flow of parts; It organizes men and their work."<sup>1</sup> Drucker claims that only manual skill is eliminated or reduced in modern industries, while the need for "social skill and social understanding" is increased. Orientation provides the knowledge and information upon which social skill and understanding can be based.

1. "Henry Ford: Success of Failure", by Peter F. Drucker, *Harpers Magazine*, July, 1947.

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## Experiment in Education

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so many better ways that Seagram's is said to have advanced the industry scientifically in ten years more than it advanced in the 200 that went before.

As a man advances in his career, his specialized knowledge becomes of secondary importance as he begins to understand the overall picture of the relationship of many specialized activities in terms of the organization's objectives. During the past ten years, we have found that the specialists have insufficient aptitude or desire for absorbing the many complex and overlapping problems with which industrial management is confronted today. Even the graduates of colleges seem to have a tendency to specialize on techniques and skills. A man needs a minimum of job know-how and a maximum of job growth potential.