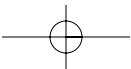
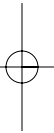
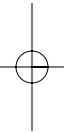
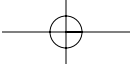


HUMAN RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL SUPERVISION

“The only things that evolve by themselves in an organization are disorder, friction, and malperformance.”

PETER DRUCKER



chapter **four**

ACHIEVING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH PEOPLE

“Never be doing nothing.”

Sir Walter Scott

As you move successfully from the role of worker to that of supervisor, an amazing transformation will take place in the way you look at things. You will suddenly find yourself more interested in John than in the machine he operates; more concerned with Helen than with the records she keeps; and more involved with Hank as an individual than with the work he turns out.

Your attention will shift from things to people, from the job itself to the person who performs the job. In short, you will need to become people oriented.

Terms such as *human relations*, *human behavior*, *motivation*, *attitude*, *sensitivity*, and *leadership style* will take on new meaning. Human understanding will earn the same priority in your scheme of things as job know-how. Helping Roberta increase her productivity will be as important as getting one of your reports out on time. Improving Dick's attitude will command your attention along with production figures, deadlines, and work schedules. You must make the shift from a job-centered employee to a people-centered supervisor.

Why is this transition necessary? Why must the new supervisor become so people oriented? Why must she or he learn to focus attention more on people than on the job itself? The answer lies in a simple, basic truth: A supervisor achieves productivity through people. Your success will be determined by the outputs of those you supervise.

Improving Productivity

Leading Teams

Communicating Effectively

Managing Conflict

Improving Performance

Managing Time

Benefiting from Change

PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES

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

- List three fundamental reasons why a supervisor must work through people to gain productivity
- Calculate productivity using the productivity formula
- Identify barriers and solutions to achieving increased productivity
- Describe Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory
- List and describe five ways to create and maintain a motivating environment

YOU CAN NO LONGER DO IT YOURSELF

The moment you become a supervisor, the production work you do yourself becomes secondary to the relationships you build with the people who do most of the actual work. Even though you may be able to do the job better or faster than those who work for you, and even though you would enjoy doing it yourself, you must turn it over to your employees. You must achieve productivity by learning how to direct, train, create, and maintain a motivating environment. You can seldom afford the luxury of doing it yourself. In other words, in terms of production work in the department, you will contribute more by doing less. Here is how the process works.

1. If you remain an employee, you are primarily responsible for your own job performance and productivity. Your productivity is measured and compared with that of others, and is the focus of your concern. As a supervisor, you are responsible for the productivity of everyone in your department. Consequently, management will be interested in measuring departmental productivity and not what you produce yourself.
2. Obviously, you cannot increase productivity substantially through your own production. You cannot supervise effectively and produce at a high level at the same time—you are only one person, not two or three. Even if you arrive at work two hours early and leave two hours late every day to do production work, the increase in total productivity would not be substantial, and, of course, you could not continue at such a pace for long.
3. Therefore, as a supervisor, you can maintain or increase productivity substantially only through others. You cannot do it by yourself. If you do not accept this fact, you will never be happy as a manager.



When you become a supervisor, you must learn to let the personal satisfaction of working with people replace the satisfaction you previously enjoyed in working with things. Your future is in the hands of those you supervise, so you must take pride in creating the kinds of relationships that will motivate people to achieve the productivity you desire. First, create the relationships; then work through them to achieve your productivity goals.

Create and maintain an atmosphere of respect and trust. By listening and following through on your employees' suggestions, going to bat for them with your superiors, recognizing their individuality, and, above all, demonstrating two-way communication, you will build trusting relationships.

KINDS OF PRODUCTIVITY

Because your future as a supervisor is so dependent on what you achieve through the productivity of the people you lead, let's examine the facts and theory involved. First, a sound understanding of productivity is important. *Productivity* is a word dear to the hearts of all managers. And well it should be. Productivity in its broadest meaning is the major purpose of all American business and government organizations and forms the foundation of our profit system. It permits us to compete favorably with other countries and is responsible for all the materials and services we enjoy. Only through the productivity of individuals (and machines operated by individuals) do we achieve our gross national product (GNP), the sum total of all tangible goods and services produced in this country during a given period of time. As a supervisor, however, you are concerned with only two kinds of productivity: individual productivity and departmental productivity.

Individual Productivity

As the term implies, *individual productivity* is the performance or contribution of one person over a specified period of time. It may mean the amount of materials produced, the ideas contributed, the sales achieved, or the quantity or quality of clerical services rendered. Every job has its own special kind of productivity or contribution. Most jobs, however, will fit into one of the following classifications:

- *Tangible productivity.* The factory worker who operates a machine on an assembly line contributes to the manufacture of the item in a form that can be seen and measured by management, so standards or norms can easily be established. For example, if the average employee produces sixty units per hour, and employee A produces seventy units, then it is easy to measure how far above the standard A's productivity is. In addition to factory work, tangible productivity applies to repairing or altering tangible products.
- *Sales productivity.* A salesperson in a retail store knows how her or his performance compares with that of others because management keeps a record of each person's dollar sales per hour. An individual's productivity can also be compared with a norm. For example, if sales amounting to \$90 per hour is the standard for salespeople of a given classification, and one salesperson's sales amount to \$100 per hour, her position above the norm is easily measured. However, retail salespeople should not be measured entirely on the basis of dollar sales. Because they must also contribute to stock

work, housekeeping, and other departmental nonselling functions, their productivity base is larger than selling alone.

- *Service productivity.* Many employees who do not produce tangible goods or generate dollar sales perform vital services that contribute a different form of productivity. Most of these services come under the classification of *customer relations*. For example, telephone operators do not produce anything you can see, nor do they normally sell to customers, yet the services they perform are basic to the company they represent. The same is true of the services provided by police officers, bank tellers, nurses, supermarket checkers, waiters and waitresses, postal employees, and many others. Although these intangible forms of productivity are sometimes difficult to measure and compare scientifically with norms, they are important to supervisors and the organizations they represent.

The productivity of all individuals is measured to some extent. If an objective measurement is impossible, a subjective measurement is attempted, perhaps comparing one individual with another. The measurement of individuals is vital to good personnel administration and management and must be accepted as part of employment (see Chapter 14). The important thing, of course, is to measure the productivity and performance, and not the personality of the individual.

Departmental Productivity

Departmental productivity is the sum total of all productivity (by machines and people) that comes from a department or section within an organization. Like individual productivity it can also be tangible, sales, service, or a combination of these and other forms. Just as one individual is compared with another, so are departments. It is easier, however, to measure the productivity of a department scientifically because it can usually be reduced to figures and accounting data from which management can make its analysis. The important thing to realize is that department productivity becomes your responsibility the moment you become a supervisor. You must live with the figures, reports, and comparisons on a day-to-day basis. If productivity goes up, you are rewarded; if it goes down, you must come up with some explanations. Your reputation in the company will be tied to the productivity record of your department regardless of how much you contribute individually.

Management is defined as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling activities to achieve productivity goals. From a human relations point of view, this process boils down to specific things you do to get work done through and with other people. No manager or supervisor can do it all alone, and frequently the more tasks he or she does personally, the lower the total departmental productivity that is achieved. Working supervisors, those who are expected to produce pieces or render services, often have lower departmental productivity than nonworking supervisors.

Shipping Department Example. Despite the fact that Woody felt he already had more than he could handle, he was given new duties in addition to running the shipping department at the paint factory where he had been a supervisor for five years. How could he pitch in during high-activity periods to maintain shipping schedules if he had to supervise workers in another section? He decided to lay the cards on the table with his six-person shipping department staff. His basic comment was, "I've been able in the past to help out during peak periods, but I can no longer do it. In the future it will be up to you to maintain schedules without my

personal productivity unless there is an emergency. How you do this is up to you. If you can come up with some time-saving procedures, I will go along with them.”

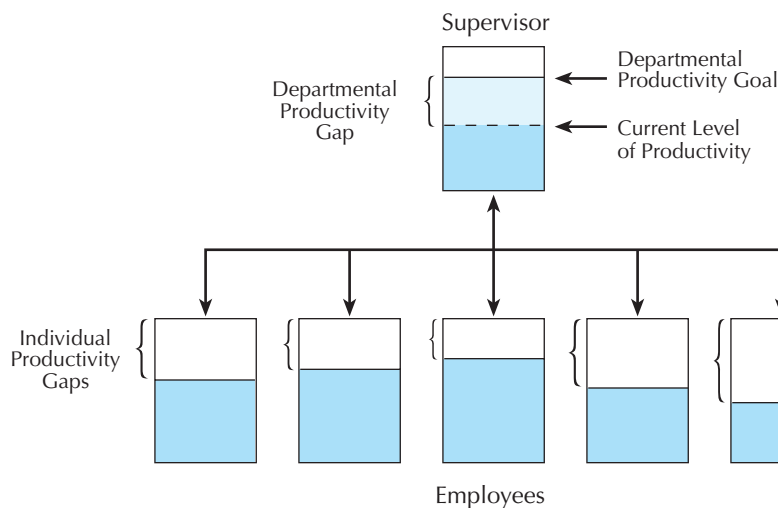
Six weeks later, after the crew had made a number of helpful suggestions, shipping schedules were achieved without personal help from Woody, and when one member of the staff resigned, a replacement was not necessary. Woody learned that his crew had not been working up to their potential because they could rely on him to step in and produce during busy periods.

Banking Example. Alice, an operations officer for a savings and loan facility, devoted so much time to training a few people to operate computers that other employees felt neglected. She finally turned computer training over to another. Result? Because she was able to improve relationships, efficiency increased to the point where the facility was able to maintain a high level of service with one less employee.

Health Care Example. Frieda, a registered nurse in a long-term health care operation, decided to delegate a series of duties to her three ward nurses so that she could devote more time to building relationships with the twenty nurses aides under her supervision. Result? The quality of care increased and costs went down.

Please study the following chart for a moment. Notice that each employee has an individual productivity gap. This gap represents the difference between what each employee is currently producing and what could be produced under ideal conditions. Notice, also, a departmental productivity gap between what the department is currently producing and what could be produced.

The goal of the supervisor is to close the departmental productivity gap. Because supervisors have a limited supply of time and energy, their time and energy should be spent helping employees close individual productivity gaps. This goal is accomplished primarily by building better human relationships with employees and creating an environment where they will be motivated to reach their own potentials. The remainder of this book will be devoted to helping you learn how to accomplish this goal.



The new supervisor soon learns that a difference almost always exists between an employee's daily performance and his or her capacity to perform. Whether large or small, a productivity gap of some size is natural and should be expected in all employees. Such gaps are, of course, difficult to measure accurately for two reasons: (1) the true potential capacity of an individual cannot really be determined because it is made up of elusive factors such as mental ability, inner drive, perception, attitude,

physical stamina, and emotional stability; and (2) job productivity is difficult to measure. The actual performance of a worker is fluid, moving up and down on an hourly, daily, and weekly basis. At one time an employee can have a wide gap (anybody can have an off day), while at other times it can be narrow. In other words, productivity levels quickly move up and down, depending on many internal and environmental factors. The supervisor can control some, but not all, of these factors.

It is only natural that supervisors should be sensitive to changes in productivity levels in their employees. When an employee shows progress in closing the gap between the current level of productivity and the potential capacity, the supervisor is happy. When the opposite happens, she or he becomes disturbed. The smaller the gap, the greater the total productivity, and nothing is more important to the supervisor's personal success. Small wonder the supervisor wants to know every technique that will help close such gaps.

Okay, you may be saying, I get the picture. I see why I must step in and help my people perform in line with their capabilities. But how do I learn to motivate my people to work more closely to their capacities? How can I increase productivity in my department without more equipment or more employees?

Calculating Productivity

Simply put, *productivity* equals *output divided by input*. It is written as the following formula:

$$P(\text{productivity}) = \frac{O(\text{output})}{I(\text{input})}$$

By manipulating output or input, we affect productivity. High productivity usually means that the organization is efficient. The more efficient the operation, the more successful it will be.



Output is anything your company produces. *Inputs* are the things it takes to produce output. For example, let us say that 1 person in a delicatessen produces 100 of the deli's signature sandwiches in 2 hours. Productivity for making those sandwiches is calculated by plugging this data into the productivity formula:

$$\text{Sandwich productivity} = \frac{\text{Output (100 sandwiches)}}{\text{Input (2 hours)}}$$

Dividing 100 by 2 hours provides the productivity for making the sandwiches. In this case, this individual's productivity in making these sandwiches is

50 sandwiches per hour of work

The rate of productivity affects the unit cost for producing the sandwiches. If our sandwich maker collects \$8.00 per hour worked and it takes him 1 hour to make 50 sandwiches, the cost per sandwich is calculated by dividing \$8.00 by 50 sandwiches. The result gives us the amount of money it costs (in labor) to make 1 sandwich:

$$\frac{\$8.00 \text{ (labor cost)}}{50 \text{ sandwiches}} = \$0.16 \text{ or 16 cents}$$

It takes 16 cents worth of labor cost to produce each sandwich. Of course, to calculate the total cost of the sandwich, we need to add in the cost of the ingredients as well.

Knowing the level of productivity can help the organization establish the correct price to charge its customers for its goods or services.

Add Value by Increasing Productivity

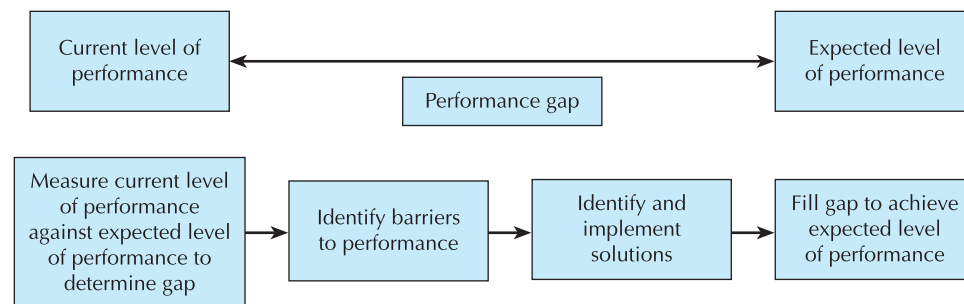
There are many ways to increase productivity. Reducing mistakes, errors, and waste of any kind; training employees; and investing in modern and efficient equipment are a few common ways to increase productivity. In some form or another, all organizations measure their productivity. Productivity levels can be calculated on a single operation or task. It can also be calculated on the organization as a whole. The organization's level of productivity provides evidence on its overall efficiency and financial health. Supervisors who raise productivity without sacrificing the expected level of quality add value to their organization. Adding value is a sure way to success.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY BY RESOLVING PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

The previous discussion illustrates the importance of understanding and analyzing performance gaps that are causing individuals or departments to not achieve the full level of productivity that is possible. Put another way, it is important to analyze the difference between an individual or department's current level of performance and expected level of performance and to then fill, or close, the performance gap.

The previous discussion also provides examples of the ways in which this gap can be measured, depending on the type of industry and the product involved. As noted, this product is not always tangible but may be more in the form of services that the industry provides. Determining this measure is not always easy. Nonetheless, you must have a clear picture of the expected level of performance for any particular position or team or departmental function so that you have a clear picture against which to judge current performance levels. Typically, for any position, you should be able to collect appropriate data through sources such as direct observation of performers in similar positions as the individual being analyzed; industry standards indicating the level of performance that should be expected for the position in question; concrete statistics showing the expected average level of performance for multiple performers in the position over time; and records, evaluations, and other data of performance for the specific individual being analyzed before a decline in performance was observed.

Once you have obtained this measure, you then know the extent of the gap you must fill. You must then come to an understanding of what is causing the gap in the first place. These causes are referred to as *performance barriers*. Once these barriers are identified and appropriate solutions have also been identified and implemented, we should see the gap close so that the individual or the department returns to the expected level of performance. This analytical process may be illustrated as follows:



But what are these barriers and how do you address them? As the supervisor, you must work closely with the individual or team to identify these specific barriers. There are essentially two kinds of barriers that impact individual or team performance: external and internal. Typically, as much as 80 percent of all such performance barriers are the result of external factors beyond the individual's or team's control. If you want to fill these gaps, you and the organization overall must seek to identify and implement solutions to these barriers in order to improve performance. Only 20 percent of all potential performance barriers relate to matters within the individual or team's direct control. While it is ultimately up to the individual or team members to address and overcome these barriers, there are solutions that you can assist in implementing that will provide the appropriate conditions to allow the individual or team members to improve performance.¹ A description of these potential barriers and possible solutions follows.²

Potential Barriers	Possible Solutions
External—intangible (pertaining to the environment)	
Organizational Systems and Processes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of how tasks are completed, in what order, and who is responsible • Work flow issues, including the sequencing of tasks and allocation of work among individuals and teams • Organizational practices and policies, including who is responsible for decision making and who has access to decision makers (and who doesn't) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employees have access to anyone in the organization on who they must rely to get work done, including managers in other departments • Realign responsibilities among employees and across teams and departments • Form process improvement teams to identify and resolve bottlenecks • Examine job descriptions and duties to address task-alignment and job-design problems
Incentives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The messages employees receive about their importance and the importance of their work toward contributing to team and organizational goals • The associated behaviors employees exhibit in response to these messages (positive or negative) • The mechanisms by which these messages are conveyed (or not), such as feedback, coaching, compensation, rewards and recognition, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule informal feedback meetings for coaching purposes • Begin a recognition program utilizing “low-cost” and “no-cost” methods for recognizing, rewarding, and appreciating staff • Introduce job-enriching tasks • Assess compensation structures to ensure they are equitable
External—tangible (pertaining to resources needed to perform)	
Cognitive Support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides, job aids, and documentation that show employees how to do their jobs • The effect their use or non-use has in facilitating the work to be completed efficiently and effectively • The clarity in which these guides demonstrate how tasks should be completed, or fail to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with employees to develop simple instructions and diagrams and standard operation procedures • Develop intranet and other electronic media to share operating procedures and make them accessible at all times
Tools	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “hardware” needed to perform job responsibilities • Includes work tools (for manufacturing jobs), computers and related software, calculators, automobiles, office equipment and supplies, telecommunication devices, etc. • The impact that the availability, absence, usability, and repair of such tools have on performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas where technology or the enhancement of existing technologies will help staff work more efficiently and effectively, and make modifications accordingly • Update computers, programming, and software as needed • Purchase new media, tools, and equipment or ensure existing tools are in good repair
Physical Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical space in which task completion takes place • Includes noise, light, temperature, physical layout, air quality, ergonomics, work atmosphere, etc. • The impact these issues have on facilitating or hindering work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform ergonomic, air quality, and other OSHA-type assessments and make improvements • Accommodate specific concerns regarding lighting, noise, temperature, etc. • Assess the work climate and general work atmosphere and make adjustments • Examine OSHA and occupational injury records and make corrections where injury patterns are identified

(continued)

Potential Barriers	Possible Solutions
Internal (pertaining to the individual performer)	
<p>Skills/Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which employees possess the requisite technical knowledge and interpersonal skills to complete job responsibilities • The extent to which employees receive continual training to keep skills and knowledge current • The employee's personal motivation (or lack thereof) to continually develop skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide weekly/monthly "release time" to attend workshops and complete on-line training modules • Provide timely performance feedback and coaching • Create opportunities for team members to meet and train one another on new skills • Make pursuit of job-related training an expectation of the job that will be evaluated
<p>Inherent Ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The traits and characteristics held by individuals that are relatively stable and enduring over time, e.g., introversion/extroversion, conscientiousness, openness to new experiences, agreeableness, emotional stability, etc. • The match or mismatch of these traits and characteristics and the position in question, and the impact these issues have on performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete "interest inventories" to identify traits and characteristics and realign work assignments among team members accordingly • To the extent possible, focus on strengths and compensate for weaknesses through appropriate trade-offs between team members and their duties • Incorporate cross-training among positions to increase variety

When you analyze these barriers and identify and implement solutions, do so carefully, paying special notice to the 80/20 rule described previously. One mistake supervisors can make is to seek to "fix" employee performance problems by directing their focus almost exclusively on the individuals themselves under the assumption the performance problems are inherently internal to the performer. When we fail to properly analyze performance problems and correct external barriers, we not only fail to fill the performance gap, but we also frustrate employees and, in the worst case, create tremendous resentment and distrust through the pressures we place on them to improve performance.

Of course, 20 percent of all performance barriers are internal. The discussion that follows concerning motivation provides additional insight on how to address these issues.

MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

Many things can happen, either on or off the job, to cause an excellent employee to drop suddenly in personal productivity. In dramatic situations of this nature (when the cause might be highly personal), the supervisor may wish to give the employee a few days to bounce back without interference. But if too much time passes with no improvement, the supervisor should try to discover the cause and take immediate steps to bring productivity back to the previous level. Hoping that time will take care of the problem can be wishful thinking. Take the case of Bernie, for example.

For the past week, Bernie had been producing far beneath his potential as a home-appliance repairman. Most of his co-workers averaged thirty-two house calls the previous week (average labor billings \$2,400), while Bernie averaged only twenty-one calls (average billings \$1,600). Why? Were Bernie's calls more difficult and time-consuming?

Was he less capable, so that it took longer? Were some unknown personal reasons behind the gap between what he was doing and what he could do?

Bernie's supervisor took time to look at his previous record and discovered that Bernie had been above average in productivity until the previous Friday, when his productivity gap dropped suddenly to about 50 percent of his normal level. Bernie's supervisor tried to remember any specific circumstance that day that might have been the cause. Then it hit him. That was the day the new truck arrived and was assigned to Frank. Was Bernie upset about it? Through a quick counseling session with Bernie, the supervisor verified his hunch. Bernie, thinking he had seniority over Frank, had expected to be assigned the new truck and was understandably upset when he didn't get it—so upset, in fact, that he seriously thought about resigning. In a long heart-to-heart talk, the supervisor was able to convince Bernie that his assumption had been wrong and that Frank was entitled to the new truck. The next day, Bernie's productivity started going back up. The supervisor had done a successful emergency repair job. Rather than wait around, he moved in and corrected the situation before Bernie's productivity drop seriously hurt the department or before Bernie resigned.

Communication failures, misunderstandings, and damaged egos can occur in any department, so the supervisor must constantly be on the alert for sudden drops in individual productivity. You cannot always afford to wait to discover whether the problem is job-related.

Not all drops in productivity are sudden and dramatic. Sometimes a slow deterioration does not show up for weeks or months. In such instances the supervisor may not be able to find a tangible cause for the widening gap, making corrective action much more difficult. For example, what about the person who has become disenchanted with the job and the company? What do you do when an employee has temporarily lost sight of a previous goal or has a change in attitude that defies understanding? To illustrate the problem, let's look at the case of Gilbert.

In less than two years with the organization, Gilbert had reached a position of high responsibility in his department. During the past three months, however, he had shown a noticeable productivity gap. Gilbert's slow loss of drive was reflected in reduced efficiency and generally weaker performance. Gilbert's supervisor decided to try some motivational counseling. She called Gilbert into her office and began as follows.

"Good morning, Gilbert. Thanks for accepting my invitation to drop by. It's been a few months since you and I had a good chat. Tell me, how are things going for you?"

"Well, pretty good, I guess. I still like the job and the company. I haven't heard any complaints."

"Yes, I still feel you have excellent long-range potential with us. By the way, have you ever thought about where you might like to be in our organization in five years? Do you have a personal goal? Are you, for example, preparing for a job similar to mine?"

"Well, at first when I was really gung-ho, I decided to become a supervisor within three years, but I guess my goals are less crystallized now. Reality is quite different from optimistic first plans, I guess."

The conversation that followed between Gilbert and his supervisor lasted forty minutes. During that time, they had a free exchange of ideas on many subjects, but most of the talk centered on Gilbert's future. At the end, Gilbert admitted that he had lost his focus on a goal, and it had been affecting his work. He expressed his pleasure

in getting the problem out in the open. It was forty minutes well spent, because Gilbert's productivity started going back up within the next few days. In fact, soon it was higher than it had been previously. Before the year was out, Gilbert was promoted to supervisor of another department. Talking things over had apparently restored Gilbert's goal and renewed his personal confidence in his ability to achieve it.

You can sometimes improve motivation by giving employees special assignments, rotating jobs when feasible, or providing special learning opportunities. Everything you do as a supervisor will have an impact on the motivation of those who work for you. In turn, the degree of their motivation will determine the productivity level of your department.

MOTIVATION THEORIES

Management books are full of motivational theories. Some, properly interpreted, can be useful to the beginning supervisor. Here are two examples.

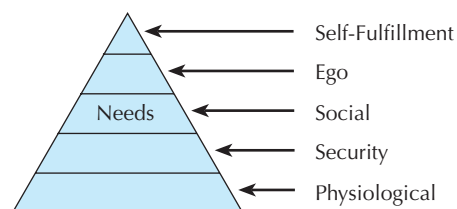
Hawthorne Experiments

From 1927 to 1932, the Western Electric Company conducted what are now known as the Hawthorne experiments. These experiments showed that no matter what improvements were made (rest periods, free hot lunches, etc.), the productivity of the group increased. Why? The employees were made to feel important; making any improvement gave them more status and respect. Until these experiments were made, management had accepted as self-evident that the way to improve the rate of production was to improve machinery, provide better lighting, and make similar physical changes. The Hawthorne experiments proved that the emotional climate of the worker is just as important and has positive effects on employee attitudes, which in turn affect productivity positively.

Many psychologists claim that employees' inner needs must be satisfied before they can reach their personal potentials. They divide needs into primary and secondary. A *primary need* is physiological, such as hunger; a *secondary need* is one that satisfies the mind, ego, or spirit.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

One of the best-known need-priority lists was established by Abraham Maslow.³ He theorized that all humans have five needs that can be prioritized in a hierarchy or pyramid, as follows:



This theory has some intuitive appeal. It helps supervisors understand their employees' reaction to changes in the organization that affect them and to decisions made by their company's leaders.

The crux of this theory is that workers are motivated to meet the lower-level needs before they are motivated to meet the needs above them. For example, an organization that is getting ready to lay-off half its work force will not be able to motivate its employees by sponsoring a softball team. A lay-off threatens employees' survival and security needs, which are satisfied by their paycheck. Employees will be more motivated to regain their level of satisfaction at the security level than attempt to meet the higher level social need. In other words, you must satisfy your need for food and security before social needs become motivating. Likewise, employees will satisfy social and ego needs before self-fulfillment is possible.

Today, employers do an adequate job of helping satisfy the first three levels of needs: physiological, security, and social needs. This is partly due to state and federal regulations and laws. We have OSHA to ensure our safety, employment laws that protect us from capricious and arbitrary firings and layoffs, and plenty of opportunities to socialize on and off the company property. As a supervisor, concentrate on helping your employees satisfy their ego and self-actualization needs. This is not difficult to do, and often costs very little. For instance, when you ask your employees for advice on how to make a change that affects them, you send the message to them that their ideas (and they as people) are important to you and the company. This helps satisfy their esteem need because it makes them feel valued.

Organizations attempt to meet each level of needs by providing, among other things, the following:

Physiological or survival needs—safe working conditions, adequate pay, health benefits

Security—job stability and security, savings account, retirement plans

Social—opportunity to work with others, team projects, break areas, company sponsored softball team, company picnics

Ego—awards, pats on the back, seeking employee input, participative management, advancement opportunities

Self-actualization—tuition reimbursement, career and professional development opportunities, work/life balance, participation in corporate-sponsored community service days

SUPERVISOR-EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS AND PRODUCTIVITY

A supervisor is responsible for creating and maintaining a motivating environment—an environment in which all employees are motivated to do their highest quality and most productive work. The following five tips will help you do this.

1. *Building good relations with employees is more important than being able to do their jobs skillfully yourself.* The technical skills you have are important because you must know how to do something before you can teach and supervise others; however, your emphasis as a supervisor will be on transmitting your skills through sound relationships rather than being capable of doing all the tasks yourself.
2. *Spending time to restore or improve your relationship with an employee whose productivity has slipped is the most important thing you can do with your*

time. As a supervisor, you will have multiple responsibilities. In all likelihood, you will have more things to do than time to do them, so it will be necessary to sift out and assign suitable priorities to your responsibilities. Top priority should always go to keeping the productivity of others as high as possible. When the productivity of one employee slips, you must be aware of it immediately and begin trying to do something about it within a reasonable period of time. Identifying and providing solutions to performance barriers are key methods for doing this.

3. *Management expects you to achieve high productivity from new employees in a hurry.* Today, a faster payoff is expected from new employees than was true in the past for several reasons:
 - a. Employees have a shorter span of employment today, moving from one job to another more quickly. So, if the mobile employee is going to make a productivity contribution, he or she should do so without wasting any time.
 - b. The pace in most organizations is faster today. Orientation periods have been speeded up, and training time (both on the job and in formal classrooms) is more limited.
 - c. Training today is more expensive.

What do these factors mean to you as a supervisor? It means you must build relations with new employees as early as possible and train them quickly so that they reach a good productivity level in a shorter span of time.

4. *Your future promotions will be based on the productivity of the people who work for you now.* Many factors are considered when management promotes a front-line supervisor to a more responsible middle-management position, but nothing influences a favorable decision more than a supervisor's having the human relations skill to motivate sustained productivity from people. To ignore, underestimate, or downgrade this principle in any way will surely damage your career.
5. *When you think of higher productivity, you must think of quality.* Corporations have discovered that higher productivity and higher quality are necessary to compete domestically and internationally. Stockholders and executives know they are dependent upon front-line supervisors to achieve these goals.

Supervisors occupy a unique and sometimes contradictory role. Although they must possess the knowledge and skills to do specific jobs they ask their employees to do, they must refrain from doing these jobs so that they can manage. They must be content to teach others how to reach their potential. They must reach their own goals through the efforts of others. It takes a special perspective and sensitivity to achieve success in this role.

PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

1. The moment you become a supervisor, you must achieve productivity by learning how to direct, train, create, and maintain a motivating environment. You can seldom afford the luxury of doing it yourself. In other words, in terms of production work in the department, you will contribute more by doing less.
2. As a supervisor, you must work to increase and maintain the individual productivity of each employee you manage as well as overall departmental

productivity. *Individual productivity* is the performance or contribution of one person over a specified period of time. *Departmental productivity* is the total of all productivity (by machines and people) that comes from a department or section within an organization.

3. *Productivity* equals *output divided by input*. *Output* is anything a company produces. *Input* is anything it takes to produce output. By manipulating output or input, we affect productivity. High productivity usually means that the organization is efficient. The more efficient the operation, the more successful it will be.
4. To improve productivity, you must first analyze the difference between an individual or department's current level of performance and the expected level of performance. Once you have obtained this measure, you then know the extent of the performance gap you must fill. You must then come to an understanding of what is causing the gap, referred to as *performance barriers*. Once these barriers are identified and appropriate solutions have also been identified and implemented, the gap closes and productivity increases.
5. In general, only 20 percent of the barriers to effective performance are the result of causes

internal to the employee. Common internal performance barriers are the lack of inherent ability and lack of appropriate skills or knowledge to perform specific tasks. On the other hand, as much of 80 percent of performance barriers is the result of causes external to the employee and beyond his or her control. Some of these external barriers pertain to the work environment such as incentives and organizational systems and processes. Other external barriers pertain to the resources employees need to perform such as cognitive support, tools, and the physical environment. Supervisors must be careful to address external barriers and not put all the burden on employees for performance problems.

6. When there are performance issues involving individual performance, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory serves as a good model to identify and implement appropriate measures to motivate employees. In particular, employers must consider specific ways they can address each of the five needs identified in Maslow's model: physiological, security, social, ego, and self-actualization.

TEST YOURSELF

For each of the following statements, check true or false.

True False

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. The Hawthorne experiments demonstrated that <i>any</i> change in the treatment or environment of the worker causes an increase in productivity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Employees promote their own supervisors through their personal productivity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Individual productivity is easier to measure than departmental productivity. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. <i>Managing</i> is defined as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling activities to achieve productivity goals. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Maslow's list of needs indicates that physiological needs cannot be met until self-realization needs are met. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Upper management measures only the personal productivity of a supervisor. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. In general, focusing most of your attention on an employee's performance deficits rather than other factors impacting his or her performance will more quickly lead to improvement. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. A <i>performance gap</i> is the difference between current performance and expected performance for someone in the employee's position. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. <i>Output</i> is what a company produces. <i>Inputs</i> are the things it takes to produce output. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. An example of an internal barrier affecting an employee's performance is the absence of effective job aids and documentation explaining how to accomplish tasks. |

Turn to the back of the book to check your answers.

Total Correct _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might it be extremely difficult—perhaps impossible—for a worker who has been in a highly skilled job for ten years to become a successful supervisor?
2. When, if ever, would a supervisor be justified in saying, “It’s easier to do it myself”?
3. Does it take as much patience and understanding to be a good supervisor as it does to be a good teacher, coach, or minister? Explain your answer.
4. Do you agree that 80 percent of performance problems are typically due to external factors beyond employees’ control? What has been your observation where you have worked as an employee and/or supervisor? How would your acceptance or rejection of this 80/20 principle impact the way you manage employees in the future?
5. What things might supervisors do in order to create an atmosphere in which their workers can meet their social, ego, and self-fulfillment needs?

CASE 1: APPROACH

Yesterday, Marty was promoted to the role of supervisor in a department where customer relations has top priority. In fact, Bill told him he received the promotion because of his outstanding skills with people and his contagiously positive attitude.

Marty is pleased with the opportunity and hopes that it will be the first step on a path that will bring him additional promotions. He decides on the following approach.

First, he thinks he can eliminate all training in how to handle customers by being an ideal model. He feels strongly that to work well with people, an individual must be natural, and he does not want to impose his own customer relations techniques on the personalities of others. He feels that if he sets the pace and becomes a good example, employees will accept the challenge and

develop their own style. They will not need specific suggestions from him. He intends to come to work early and stay late to do supervisory paperwork so that he can spend more time out front with customers.

Second, because satisfied employees are the key to success, he wants to be a “good guy” instead of a disciplinarian. He feels a permissive, relaxed working environment is essential if employees are to be natural and effective with customers. He feels that if he is more accessible to his employees, they will come to him with their problems, and he can develop stronger personal relationships.

Do you see any pitfalls in Marty’s approach? What suggestions might you make? Turn to the back of this book to compare your thoughts with those of the authors.

CASE 2: PERFORMANCE BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Review the role profiles for the members of Ricardo’s team, including Karl, Giselle, Marty, Renee, and Julie. For each, using the performance gap analysis and barriers/solution discussion provided in this chapter, identify the potential barriers keeping each employee from performing to their full potential and possible solutions to improve their performance. Conduct the same analysis

for the team as a whole. What barriers and solutions would you suggest? Would you say performance relates more to internal or external factors? Why or why not? If you feel you have insufficient information to assess team or individual performance problems, what more would you need to know or do to determine the barriers and identify and implement solutions?

PRODUCTIVITY EXERCISE

This exercise will help you identify the kinds of motivational factors that may help your employees close their productivity gaps. Read the ten factors listed below, then rank the one you feel would be the most effective motivator at the top of the pyramid and so on down the line. Once you have completed the pyramid,

ask one of your employees (or a fellow student or friend) to complete the same exercise. To gain new insight, match and discuss your answers.

- More recognition
- Involvement in decision making

- Opportunity to be heard
- Opportunity to learn
- Sharing problems and challenges
- Freedom from close supervision
- Being trusted and respected as an individual

- Getting time off to handle personal problems
- Enjoying some fun on the job
- Opportunity to discuss personal plans and goals

Turn to the back of this book to compare your view with that of the authors.

PERSONAL GROWTH EXERCISE

Calculate your department's productivity in one area and think of several ways to increase it. To do this, an-

alyze the performance gap and the performance barriers and identify possible solutions to eliminate the gap.

TO LEARN MORE

To read more about Abraham Maslow's theories, refer to the following texts:

Maslow, Abraham H. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954.

Maslow, Abraham H. *New Knowledge in Human Values*. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. Princeton, NJ: D. Van Norstrand Co., 1962.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Maslow on Management*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 1998. (Originally published as *Eupsychian Management*. Homeward, NJ: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. and Dorsey Press, 1965).

NOTES

1. Wile, David, "Why Doers Do," *P & I Journal* 35, no. 2 (February 1996), 30–35.
2. Adapted from Ibid.

3. Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943), 370–96.