

the art of supervision

an action learning toolkit



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SECTION 1 – GETTING STARTED

Introduction

Welcome to the *Art of Supervision*, an action learning toolkit to help you build your skills in your role as a supervisor. As a supervisor, you have the opportunity to build and nurture a team, contribute significantly to the University by setting and achieving the goals for your work area while developing your own personal and professional skills. Supervisors are often the key change agents in an organisation, with the opportunity to help drive the many changes that organisations face, effectively through the people in their team. There are general principles and strategies considered to be good practice in management and leadership, but real life often brings us a range of people and situations that require something different to what traditional management theories suggest. One size does not fit all. As a supervisor it is important that you develop your own brand of supervision good practice tailored to your personality, your team, your work area and the culture of the University.

Who is this toolkit for?

Supervisors have a range of responsibilities and this guide focuses on some key aspects of the people management function in a supervisor's role. This toolkit is designed for Professional, Document Services and Grounds and Security staff who are new to supervisor roles. More experienced supervisors may find sections of the toolkit beneficial for reference and tips. If you are looking for more in depth information and concepts, the two main texts recommended in this guide are excellent resources for more extensive theoretical frameworks, case studies and activities.

What is it designed to do?

This learning toolkit offers you a range of activities and strategies to adapt good practice to your specific situation and management style-with the ultimate aim of building a productive team with healthy team relationships. It is important to note that a learning guide is not an exhausted list of 'how to' or even text. It is a guide to help trigger reflection, discussion and further research to help the participant strengthen their skills. Use it to support you in developing a skills base and seeking further development from people, books, the internet and workshops.

Some people will go through this document on an informal, self initiated 'need to know' basis, while others may find their manager suggesting it as a useful tool for further developing supervisory skills with a more structured approach of undertaking the activities with follow up discussion with their manager.

Terminology disclaimer

Some language in this toolkit is not gender inclusive and refers to 'boss' and 'subordinate'. We have retained those words because they are part of the original text, but acknowledge that these and other terms in the articles do not necessarily reflect the University's approach to gender inclusive language.

Key Features

Listed below are the key categories of activities and headings for this document. This learning guide is divided into five sections, *Getting Started*, *Managing Yourself*, *Managing Relationships*, *Managing Your Team* and *Managing Performance*. Each section is divided into topics or "mini chapters". Each topic will have the categories that are relevant for the topic.

FYI

This is the “theory” section, which provides you with a brief summary of key frameworks and information relating to the topic being discussed. This information will be communicated via articles, information sourced from the research for this guide and information written from the writer’s experience. This is intended to be a brief abstract, rather than exhausting the topic as a textbook would. At the end of many topics, there is a **Taking it Further** section which recommends further reading if you would like more in-depth information on any topic.

Good Practice

A dot point list of behaviours, practices and approaches that are considered good practice in the area being discussed for you to use as a quick reference. This section is a **summary** of key issues covered in each topic.

Common De-Railers

Discussion of common actions and behaviours that can de-rail a supervisor’s relationships and effectiveness to help you learn from the ‘mistakes’ of others who have gone before you.

In The Real World

This section will mostly be case studies highlighting real life dilemmas and the possible adaptation of “standard textbook good practice” to them.



Activity

Activity for you to develop strategies for adapting the topic being discussed to the politics, dynamics and skill level of your team in a way that is consistent with good practice and true to your personality and working style. **How you record your activity is up to you. Some suggested ways are:**

- **Learning Journal**

Some people find it useful to document new ideas or new ways of looking at a current situation in a journal or folder. It can also be helpful to write down a current situation, intended actions to improve the situation and the journey from current situation to improved situation. This can be a very useful way of seeing how far one has come in a situation even if the steps have been very incremental. Sometimes this is referred to as *reflective learning* which is a very effective means of taking in and acting upon new learning.

- **Action Plan**

Documenting actions with dates, outcomes and anticipated barriers is a very effective way of incorporating new learning into your work practices. There is an Action Plan Template on page 29 in the Tools, Surveys and other Useful Forms Section.

- **Notes**

Making brief informal notes on a separate piece of paper.

- **Discussions**

Some people learn and grow best by discussions with others. You may find many of the activities work best for you if you discuss it with others. **There is a Conversation Starters category which makes suggestions about specific conversations you can undertake with others whose advice and feedback you value and trust.**



Conversation Starters

Some of the most effective learning, development and solution finding moments come from interactions with others. There will be suggestions of conversations you can initiate with others to be challenged and encouraged as you progress through this learning guide.



Keeping Your Manager in the Loop

An important part of being a supervisor is keeping your manager appropriately informed. This section will suggest that you initiate a conversation with your manager around certain activities and aspects of this learning guide. This could have two benefits: modelling keeping your manager in the loop and keeping your manager informed of your current and emerging skills as a supervisor.



Taking It Further

Suggested further reading, reflection questions or web sites. Often you will be given suggestions of topics to 'Google' rather than specific web sites since web links so quickly get out of date.

Do I have to do all the activities and conversation starters?

It is up to you (and where appropriate, your manager) to decide how best to use this guide and whether you will use all, or a selected range of features. The **Action Learning** activities are provided as a possible resource for development. Undertake those that you think would be useful and disregard those that aren't. At the back of this guide is an optional **Sign Off Sheet** for people who would find it useful to track progress by recording it.

In most cases, your selection of features you use will be guided by:

- any requests or agreements you have made with your manager about which topic; and activities to complete;
- the areas you have identified as development needs;
- your learning style; and;
- the most pressing issues in your team.

Your management of how you use this guide, what you select to do, how focused you are on undertaking it and how and when you involve your manager will involve the same skills of discernment, prioritising and application that you will apply in your role as an effective supervisor.

Do I need to buy any books to work through this learning guide?

There is no requirement for you to purchase a book, but it is highly recommended that you purchase (or access) *Management, Theory and Practice (3rd edition)* by Kris Cole, published by Pearson Education, 2005. This is an excellent, comprehensive and very practical resource for managers at all levels, particularly supervisors at the front line level. Another very comprehensive text is Carlopio, J, Andrewartha, G and Armstrong, H 2005, *Developing Management Skills*, 3rd edition, Pearson Education, Sydney.

Extensive reference will be made to both of these books in the Taking it Further section.

SECTION 2 – MANAGING YOURSELF

TOPIC 2.1 – Building the foundation for success

There is a saying “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. Planning is an important component to success. This applies to your development as well as your role as a supervisor. A few planning steps will help you derive maximum benefit from this learning guide. The more you tailor your usage of the kit to your development requirements and your team, the more likely it is that you will ‘stick with it’ and see tangible outcomes from the activities you undertake. The tyranny of time is your greatest opponent in undertaking this development. Pressing priorities, people demands and meeting demands on your time and other deadlines will mean progressing through this learning guide will need to be managed well to avoid delaying or abandoning your completion of it.

Preparation

Read through the headings in this toolkit and spend some time thinking about the following (you may want to record these in a journal to add to and track through out your completion of this toolkit.

What are your strengths as a supervisor?

In what ways have you demonstrated those?

What are your areas of pressing need in terms of development and tips for being a supervisor?

When you have finished going through this toolkit, what would you like to have achieved?

Will you go through all the sections of the toolkit? If so, what priority will you give them?

If you will go through selected sections of the toolkit, what would they be?



Conversation Starters

Think of 2-3 people who you will involve in the **Conversation Starters**. Some qualities you might want to look for are:

- people whose management/leadership you admire;
- people who will supportively challenge you to grow and continually improve;
- people who will be fairly accessible for discussions;
- people who you consider to be mentors.

You may find that the people you engage in discussions change from topic to topic. Take a few minutes to think about who you might approach for these conversations.

Learning Styles

Understanding your learning style will have the following benefits:

- give you insight into the best approaches for you to 'take in' the information in this tool kit; and
- provide you with appreciation and understanding of the various ways that people 'take in' information and how you as a supervisor may have to adapt your style to different people's needs.



Activity - Learning Styles

Complete the Learning Styles Questionnaire in the Tools, Surveys and other useful Forms section, or alternatively, the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) questionnaire at <http://www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/ILSpage.html> and then answer the following questions:

What is your learning style?

What does the description of your learning style tell you about the ways that you best take in and apply learning and new information?

What might that mean for how you work through this learning guide?

Read the Learning Styles descriptors and write down how you think each learning style would interact with others as a supervisor.

What are the positive aspects of your learning style in supervising others? What are the areas that you need to develop?

TOPIC 2.2 – Your Job

It is important that you have a clear understanding of the expectations that the University of South Australia has of supervisors. The Human Resource Unit has developed [Supervising Staff@ UniSA: A Quick Guide for Professional Staff](#) which assist new supervisors to understand their responsibility. If you are unfamiliar with any of the topics in the Quick Guide, you should read the relevant sections of that document now before going any further in this learning guide. It will be important that any actions or activities you undertake in this tool kit are within the guidelines and expectations that the University of South Australia has of supervisors. If there is anything in *Supervising Staff@ UniSA: A Quick Guide for Professional Staff* that is unclear to you, be sure to promptly clarify it with your manager or another appropriate person.

Topics covered in the Quick Guide are:

- Expectations Of A Supervisor;

- Understanding The Legislative And Policy Environment;
- Vice Chancellor's Authorisations;
- Duty Of Care;
- Leading Change;
- Corporate Planning And Review;
- Workforce Planning And Succession Planning;
- Familiarity With Terms And Conditions Of Employment;
- Staff Representation;
- Meeting Staff Requirements;
- Recruitment And Selection;
- Induction And Probation;
- Performance Management;
- Leave Management;
- Formal Grievance Resolution;
- End Of Employment;
- Occupational Health, Safety And Welfare;
- Valuing Equity And Diversity;
- Employees Assistance Program;
- Compliance, Risk Management And Finance;
- HR Summary;
- Links Available To You.

TOPIC 2.3 – Your Personal Skills - Leading by Example

2.3.1 Building your Personal Power

FYI

In your role, there are probably a number of people and situations that you will need to influence. They will most likely include:

- your manager;
- your team;
- other work groups at the University;
- Senior managers above the level of your manager.



Activity - Who do you need to influence?

In the table below, write the names of key people or groups you need to influence and fill in the columns. A larger copy of this template is in the Tools Section.

WHO YOU NEED TO INFLUENCE	FOR WHAT PURPOSE	WHAT TYPE OF POWER DOES THIS REQUIRE?	WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE INFLUENCING THIS PERSON.

Power and Influence

There are two types of power a person can have in an organisation: **position power** and **personal power**. Position power refers to your formal authority in the organisation. As a supervisor, your role gives you authority over the behaviour of others. One could say, people in your team *have* to do as you ask, because you are their manager. **Personal power** is the unofficial, informal influence you have on other people/colleagues. The emerging challenges for supervisors (which will be discussed in greater detail in the **Managing Your Team** section) are more effectively met by personal power than position power. The table below shows you the types of position and personal power that one can have.

BASES OF POWER IN AN ORGANISATION		
Positional Power	Legitimate Power	The power you have as a result of your position.
	Coercive Power	The power to threaten and have people follow you out of fear (this is obviously not a constructive power).
	Reward Power	The official authority to reward people by some formal means.
Personal Power	Expert Power	Power that comes from being an expert or a highly respected specialist.
	Referent Power	Respect and goodwill that a person has earned. A person with referent power may have no positional power, but can still be a key influence in the organisation.
	Proximity Power	Information or knowledge that a person has that can be shared with others. The 'inside' scoop on certain decisions or incidents.

Personal power is the most important power for today's managers. The 'do as I say because I say so and I am the manager' way of managing has been replaced by a need to engage people, build trust, demonstrate that they are valued and have opportunity to grow.



Activity - Your Bases Of Power

What bases of power do you have?

Write down some examples of how you use that power.

What are some ways that your personal power needs to be improved?

Can you identify specific examples of how other people recognise your bases of power?

Building Personal Power

Trust - The Cornerstone of Personal Power

One of the most important ways to build personal power is to build credibility and trust. Research ¹has identified five dimensions that make up trust:

- Integrity - Honesty and truthfulness;
- Competence - technical and interpersonal knowledge and skills;
- Consistency - reliability, predictability and good judgement in handling situations;
- Loyalty - always demonstrating supportive words and actions toward a person in their absence;
- Openness - willingness to share ideas and information freely.

Building Personal Power with Your Team

There will be a number of times that you will have to influence various members of your team for a range of reasons. Some of the most common situations are asking someone to undertake a task they don't want to do or don't believe should be done or asking them to behave in a different manner.

Personal power starts with quality relationships and it really comes down to those characteristics of trust. One could almost develop a Golden Rule for building personal power with your team.

Building Blocks to Developing Personal Power

- Be fair;
- Give credit where it is due, take time to give genuine positive feedback;
- Keep people in the information loop as appropriate;
- Be clear about what you expect;
- Be approachable;
- Be consistent;
- Be positive and help your team to see the positive side of situations;
- Spend time with team members getting to know them (not in an invasive way);
- Be good at your job and be open about the areas you need development in (this may need to be tailored to the politics of your team);
- Be pro-active rather than re-active (solution focussed vs. blame focussed);
- Influence what you can and manage what you can't influence;
- Remember you always have an audience watching how you react, respond and interact. Practice self control. Respond rather than react to situations.

If you have built that foundation of trust, when it comes to asking your team to do something or correct something you are much more likely to be able to influence them because they will respect you.

¹ P.L. Schindler and C.C. Thomas, 'The structure of interpersonal trust in the workplace, *Psychological Reports*, October 1993m pp. 563-73.



Activity - Improving your personal power

Review your responses to the activities in this topic and write down the following:

The strengths of my current level of personal power are:

The areas for growth are:

One action that I can/will take to improve my personal power is:

A situation in my team that I am going to have to apply personal power to is:

One way I might approach that is:

Building Personal Power with Senior Managers

The first step in being able to influence senior managers or others above you in the organisational chart is to apply the characteristics of trust that we mentioned earlier. You will need to adapt the level and nature of each of those characteristics to your situation. Building a sound relationship with your manager and other senior managers and continuing to build your own credibility is the critical foundation for building personal power with these people.

The following suggestions for forging a positive relationship with your manager (at times referred to as 'managing up') are also helpful for building relationships with **any senior manager** that you will need to work with and possibly influence.

- **Remember your purpose** – Focus on what needs to get accomplished and use the rest of these tips to get your manager's support. If you are requesting further resources or something that needs to have a decision and approval, be sure that you have all of your facts in order and that your rationale is based on sound facts.
- **Understand your manager's problems** – Ask your manager what kind of pressures he or she is under. Now you may not think it's your place to do that, but it can make a great difference in your understanding why your manager is not managing you properly.

- **Compliment what is working** – Give your manager positive feedback on what is working in your relationship. For example, say ‘Thanks for your valuable feedback,’ when he or she gives you a useful response.
- **Be a role model** - If you want your manager to do certain things, do them yourself. For example, if he or she doesn't listen well, practice active listening in your interactions. He or she will probably mirror your positive behaviour.
- **Understand and follow necessary formal and informal protocol** – In a situation where you are seeking further resources or a decision in your favour on something, be sure you know the proper steps that you need to take. Who needs to be informed? Is there a sequence of who to inform first? Do you put things in writing or verbally
- **Let him or her be wrong** – Remember that your manager has the right to be wrong or make a mistake. Try to correct something a few times and if it doesn't work, let it go. You won't always be able to save him or her.

Source: *Managing Your Boss* by Michael H Smith @ <http://www.michaelhsmithphd.com/manageboss.html>



Activity - Influencing your Manager

What are some of the ways you will need to influence your manager?

What challenges does this present to you?

When have you been successful at influencing your manager? What has not worked for you?

What strategies can you apply to more successfully influence your manager?

Good Practice

- Show personal integrity in how you treat people;
- Practice not taking comments, actions and behaviours of others personally. View them as purely professional interactions and transactions;
- In difficult or unfair situations, identify what you can influence and take steps to do that and determine ways of managing that which you can't influence or change immediately;
- Build on your successes. Remember times that you have successfully influenced others? What made them successful situations? (Often this can reveal strengths that you did not know you had and help you to develop further strategies for action.);
- Respond, don't react to situations. When faced with a setback or frustrating situation, ask yourself "what am I going to do about this"? as opposed to "why me"? or "how unfair". It will channel your energy to positive action.

Common De-Railers

- Allowing someone to 'get to you' and respond in an angry manner;
- Regularly gossiping about others or speaking negatively of them (this often communicates a need to make oneself feel better because of a lack of personal power);
- Complaining about how your manager or others above you treat you rather than taking action to effectively manage the situation. Or often referring to 'they' as in "they won't let us do this" or "they won't approve this";
- Not freely sharing information with your team or keeping your manager in the information loop;
- Not working on continuing to become more and more competent in your job;
- An unwillingness to take on developmental feedback.

In the Real World

After a few months in her job as Team Leader, Annie discovered some challenges that she had not anticipated. In meetings with her Manager and the other Team Leaders, she found that her viewpoints were often overlooked. She felt very sidelined. John, one of the Team Leaders seemed to really have the ear of the Manager who always seemed to give him the good projects and Annie was never approached to do any of them. John was often asked to undertake work that she was much more experienced in. John's team was in great conflict because John was not an effective supervisor, yet he kept getting 'rewarded' with interesting projects. He clearly was one of those 'protected species' that every organisation has! Annie went home many nights very frustrated and spent hours debriefing with her flat mate. Her temptation was to just withdraw, figure there was little she could do and just make 'subtle points' in meetings and conversations. She knew this would not be very effective and that the most constructive action would be to talk to her manager about her desired involvement. Annie knew it would be important to be unemotional in this and just stick to the facts of what she could contribute, not making any comment about John. She prepared for the appointment by making notes about her skills and identifying the types of projects she would like to be considered for. She opened the conversation explaining that she would like opportunities to further use her skills and would like suggestions about the best way to be considered for them. Her manager responded very positively and asked what types of projects she would like to be considered for. Because of her preparation, she was able to be very articulate and professional in her discussion. The manager made some suggestions, which Annie followed and she soon was involved in the projects she wanted to be part of. With each project, she proved her skills to more people in the organisation, which resulted in more requests for her skills.

What Annie did was move beyond her reactions and worked to increase her personal power by:

- showing her manager that she was pro-active and willing to take on extra work;
- positioning herself to work on other projects that gave her exposure to others in the organisation; and;
- not reacting to situations that seemed unjust, but using them as opportunities to 'practice resilience' and further developing strategies to better position herself.



Activity - Document your progress in Building Personal Power

On a regular basis for the next 4-6 weeks, document your progress in building your personal power with your team and with your manager. What strategies worked? What ones have not been effective? Why? What do you need to do now? What progress have you made since the last entry?



Taking it further

Perform a Google search on 'Managing Up' and 'Bases of Power'. Carlipio et al Chapter 7 Gaining Power and Influence.

2.3.2 Developing Political Savvy

- Culture = the way we do things around here
- Politics = the way we do things to other people around here

"Leaders will increasingly have to operate in environments where there is competition for scarce resources, where 'games' are played and where the race to benefit from shrinking opportunities becomes sharper". Maurik, 2001

FYI

In Social Action theory, the structure of an organisation is not a thing, but rather a process occurring as individuals and groups, negotiate, bargain, contest their relations with others in a continuous flow of action whilst pursuing the primacy of their beliefs and interests. The location of power is not fixed and resides in resources and dependencies. Managers are not necessarily the controlling group but only one group of actors who are attempting to impose their interests, meanings and concerns in the process of organising. Conflict is inevitable.

Source: Dr Beth Kotze, Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators

Organisational politics is often construed as:

- Doing deals;
- Getting one over;
- Scoring points;
- Secrecy and subterfuge;
- Mafiosa tactics;
- Win-lose.

Organisational politics is really about:

- Influence;
- Collaboration;
- Building relationships;
- Openness and honesty;
- Being 'streetwise' (not naive);
- Win-win situations;
- Being visible;
- Making your contributions known to the people who have formal and informal power.

Source: Dr Beth Kotze, Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators

Good Practice

- Networking - form mutually beneficial relationships with others in the organisation;
- Professionalism – do what you do well and don't let people down;
- Positive self-marketing;
- Create goodwill and organisational diplomacy;
- Acknowledgment of informal organisational structure, functioning comfortably and effectively within an ambiguous environment;
- Refine interpersonal, conflict management and negotiation skills.

Source: Dr Beth Kotze, Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators

Common De-Railers

- Opportunism: reinforcing failure in others to support your cause;
- Misinformation;
- Brown nosing, bullying;
- Power plays: threatening to withhold or reveal information, refusing to give support;
- Engaging in conversations and behaviour that undermine the organisation and its mission.

Source: Dr Beth Kotze, Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators



Activity - Where do you need to be more politically savvy?

Review the **Good Practice** list.

For each item rate yourself 1-5 (1 being needs much improvement to 5 very strong)

Review the areas that you rated yourself less than 4. For each of those areas, write down one strategy that you will put into place to improve in that area.

Are you engaging in any of the derailers? If so, what strategies can you apply to correct this part of your style?



Taking it further

Organisational Politics PowerPoint presentation available at

<http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/cisg/misgevents/YorkSeminar/YorkSeminarPresentations/YorkSeminarPresent4>

Cole, 109-110.

2.3.3 Assertiveness

FYI

Assertiveness is a skill that anyone can learn. This does not mean it will be easy. For many it is more of a *journey* than an *overnight success*.

Many people confuse assertiveness and aggression. Aggressive behaviour is standing one's ground and arguing a point without compromise. This usually does not result in constructive outcomes. Assertive behaviour on the other hand is marked by communicating your needs, wants, feelings, beliefs and opinions to others in a direct and honest manner with the intention of helping people to understand your view. Assertiveness is the middle ground between being aggressive and passive. While aggression and bully tactics are destructive to relationships, remaining passive, while avoiding conflict, can lead to feelings of helplessness and lack of control and can ultimately ruin relationships

The advantages of assertive behaviour

- Your needs, views and opinions are understood;
- Both parties feel heard and that their view is respected;
- Relationships are made stronger;
- There are fewer conflicts and arguments;
- You feel in control of your life which then leads to further confidence for future assertive behaviour;
- There is usually an increase in confidence and self esteem;
- You are more likely to get what you want.

When the other person is not co-operating

At times, the other person will sometimes behave like you're having an argument and want to yell, criticise and goad even though you are trying to be calm and direct. Some strategies that may be useful are:

- Suggest you take up the subject at another time and leave;
- If you do stay, remain calm and keep the conversation to the original point, not responding to 'baiting', accusations or any other attempts to get a negative reaction from you;
- Recognise that there may be other issues motivating their behaviour-this can help you not to take it personally.

Adapted from Better Health Channel, www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



Activity - Assertiveness Check

In your role, what situations are the most challenging for you to apply assertive behaviour?

What are the barriers to your being assertive?

Good Practice

- Make a conscious decision that you want to be assertive rather than aggressive or passive;
- Review a recent conflict and consider ways you could have handled it in a more assertive way;
- Practise talking in an assertive way alone or with a friend;
- Respect the wants, needs and feelings of others, and accept that their viewpoints may be different to yours. This can help when reaching a compromise because you have understood what is important to the other party;
- View conflict as a problem to be solved rather than a battle to be won, and try to see the other person as your collaborator rather than your opponent;
- Be honest with the other person, without making accusations or trying to make them feel guilty;
- Use assertive language such as “I feel” and “I think”, rather than aggressive, accusatory language such as “You always” and “You never”;
- Don't interrupt the other person when they are talking, and listen and demonstrate that you understand their point of view;
- If the exchange doesn't go well, learn from the experience and plan how you will do things a little differently next time.

Use appropriate body language

- Look the person in the eye;
- Hold your body upright;
- Consciously relax your shoulders;
- Try to breathe normally and don't hold your breath;
- Keep your face relaxed;
- Speak at a normal conversational volume (don't yell or whisper).

Common De-Railers

- Negative self-talk that can lead to undermining your confidence and therefore your ability to be assertive;
- Feeling controlled by the situation rather than seeing how you can influence it;
- Refusing to show respect for others and yourself;
- Giving into anger and therefore taking the conversation to an unproductive point;
- Being passive and ‘giving in’ which often leads to resentment that stewes below the surface; often exploding at very inopportune and inappropriate times.



Conversation Starters

With a trusted person, discuss your assertiveness, your strategies for improvement and seek feedback from them.



Taking it further

Cole, pp 142-152

Carlopio, J, et al, pp 376-382

2.3.4 Managing your Work Priorities

FYI

"Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you"

Carl Sandburg US Author

Time Management

Time management is one of the greatest challenges for managers. Many managers find that a significant part of their time is spent on the 'people issues' that arise in circumstances which often can not be planned for.

ELEMENT OF TIME MANAGEMENT	EXAMPLE OF WHY IT IS IMPORTANT
Assertiveness and Influencing	When delegating work to others, you may need to apply assertiveness and influencing skills in gaining their co-operation. When saying 'no' to a task, deadline or your involvement in a particular project, assertiveness and influencing may be needed.
Delegation	Being able to delegate work to others, appropriate to their skill level, job responsibilities and potential for growth is one of the key factors in time management.
Prioritising	Distinguishing the important from the urgent is the first step in prioritising. It is unlikely you will get through everything you had planned to on many days. Prioritising will be the key to be sure you are progressing the priority projects and tasks.

The Fifteen Biggest Time Wasters and Solutions

Causes	Solutions
Unaware of importance	Keep a three day time log. Analyse tendency to take on things your team and others could be doing. Delegate more and say no when appropriate.
Lack of priorities and planning	Set objectives, priorities, deadlines in four critical time frames (daily, weekly, monthly and yearly). Focus on top priorities and ignore the bulk of activities that contribute nothing to your objectives.
Unrealistic time estimates	Recognise that everything takes longer than you think (Murphy's second law). Analyse characteristic underestimates, then add appropriate cushion to all critical estimates (20 to 50 percent).
Responding to the urgent	Distinguish the urgent from the truly important. Balance short term objectives. Ask "What's the worst that can happen?" before responding.
Over-response	Limit your response to the real demands of the situation. Stay uninvolved if others can handle it. Delegate if staff can handle situation.
Over-ambition and inordinate need to achieve	Control your ambition to fit your abilities and situation. Ask yourself what you are trying to prove. Be realistic, keep perspective. Stop killing yourself.
Desire to impress manager	Discuss what the manager really wants. Recognise that long term success is more important than short term impressions.
Over-desire to appear cooperative	Stop saying yes just because you want to be appreciated. Recognise difference between being cooperative and doing others' work. Learn to say no without offending. Use your own priorities as reasons and offer alternatives when appropriate.
Understaffed	Expose staff to time management and target saving two hours a day for each person. Do feasibility study with time log to demonstrate that actual additional help would be cost effective.
Perfectionism	Lower standards to what is reasonable. Allocate time frames more closely.



Activity-What are your time robbers?

What are your top three time wasters?

Identify one strategy for reducing those time wasters and develop a plan for implementing them in the next week.

Set aside time to review and refine these on a regular basis.

Delegation

One of the biggest challenges to a new supervisor is how to do all of your work while you also supervise someone. Learning the art of delegation is one of the keys to time/task management for supervisors.

Many managers say that they do not delegate nearly as much as they could or should. Cole suggests 5 D's of delegation.

- Do it now;
- Do it later;
- Do it if time permits;
- Delegate it;
- Dump it.

Cole (214)

To enable someone else to do the job for you, you must ensure that:

- they know what you want;
- they have the authority to achieve it;
- they have the resources to achieve it;
- they know how to do it.

This can take time and that is where delegation often fails. Managers believe it is 'easier and faster to do it themselves'. While this may be true in the short run, in the long term, this is not a solution and will continue to contribute to the time pressures a manager is under.

When the job is not done the way it should be, it is often due to one of the following factors:

- The person has not been properly trained to undertake the task;
- The person did not understand the instructions completely;
- The person was 'left to their own devices' too soon;
- The person does not have the adequate resources to undertake the task.

Good Practice

- Delegate whole pieces or entire job pieces rather than simple tasks and activities;
- Clearly define what outcome is needed, then let individuals use some creative thinking of their own as to how to get to that outcome;
- Clearly define limits of authority that go with the delegated job. Can the person hire other people to work with them? Are there spending constraints?
- Clear standards of performance will help the person know when he or she is doing exactly what is expected;
- Assess routine activities in which you are involved. Can any of them be eliminated or delegated?
- Never underestimate a person's potential. Delegate slightly more than you think the person is capable of handling. Expect them to succeed, and you will be pleasantly surprised more frequently than not;
- Do not avoid delegating something because you cannot give someone the entire project. Let the person start with a bite size piece, then after learning and doing that, they can accept larger pieces and larger areas of responsibility;

- Agree on a monitoring or measurement procedure that will keep you informed as to progress on this project because you are ultimately still responsible for it and need to know that it is progressing as it should. In other words-If you can't measure it don't delegate it;
- Keep your mind open to new ideas and ways of doing things. There just might be a better way than the way something has previously been done;
- Never take back a delegated item because you can do it better or faster. Help the other person learn to do it better;
- Agree on the frequency of feedback meetings or reports between yourself and the person to whom you are delegating. Good communication will assure ongoing success;
- Delegation strengthens your position. It shows you are doing your job as a manager-getting results with others;
- Delegation is taking a risk that the other person might make a mistake, but people learn from mistakes and will be able to do it right the next time. Think back to a time a project was delegated to you and you messed it up;
- Find out what the talents and interests of your team are and you will be able to delegate more intelligently and effectively;
- Be sensitive to upward delegation by your staff. When they ask you for a decision on their project, ask them to think about some alternatives which you will then discuss with them. This way responsibility for action stays with the staff member;
- 'Push' responsibility down in a caring helpful way;
- Remember, you are not the only one that can accomplish an end result. Trust others to be capable of achieving it;
- Break large jobs into manageable pieces and delegate pieces to those who can do them more readily;
- Keep following up and following through until the entire project is done;
- Resist the urge to solve someone else's problem. They need to learn for themselves. Give them suggestions and perhaps limits but let them take their own action.

Source: [How to Delegate Work and Responsibilities @ ZeroMillion.com](#)

Common De-Railers

- Not trusting staff enough to delegate;
- Hovering over staff who are capable of completing the job; or not providing effective coaching and gradual full delegation to staff who need support;
- Giving work to your favourite team members while others are underutilised;
- Always giving work to the people you know who will do it well- this can make your 'best workers' feel 'penalised' for doing well. "I work hard and competently and I just get more work".



Activity - Your Delegation Challenges

What is your greatest challenge in delegating to others?

What are one or two strategies you can adopt to improve your delegation skills?

Review your workload, particularly those things that are most pressuring you and identify one or two tasks or projects you can delegate and then brief the best person for the task and delegate it.



Keeping Your Manager in the Loop

Once you have identified and started to implement strategies for time management, and delegation share your progress with your manager and ask for feedback.



Taking it further

Cole, pp 364-371

Carlopio, J, et al, pp 563-572

More on delegation

<http://www.businessballs.com/delegation.htm>

Prioritising

It is essential to have a clear understanding of what the priorities of the demands on your time are. Some questions to ask yourself are:

Is this urgent or is it important?

Sometimes urgent tasks appear important because of the emotion and pressure of the people bringing them to our attention. This does not necessarily mean it is important.

Who is making the request?

If the request is from a Senior Manager, Board Member, Minister or anyone who has a higher position and function than you do, it usually needs to be considered with the urgency that it is given to you.

Do I have to do it myself?

If you can not delegate the entire task or project, there may be parts of it that you can delegate.

Good Practice

- Create a To Do list and label the items:
 - 1 = Important and Urgent (Must)
 - 2 = Important (Should)
 - 3 = Routine (Could do or Delegate)
 - 4 = Wasted (Why did I do that?)
- Evaluate urgent matters to be sure they are truly urgent in the context of your role and responsibilities;
- Be prepared to change priorities throughout the day to accommodate interruptions, crises and unexpected tasks with short deadlines;
- Periodically complete a time log to check how your time is being spent and if it is on true priorities.

Common De-Railers

- Responding/reacting to everything immediately;
- Absence of a plan and a sense of what is a priority;
- Absence of understanding of your KRAs (Key Result Areas) and what that means in terms of how you prioritise.
- Inability to be assertive with others whose urgent work is not your priority.

Activity - Time Log



Complete the Time Log in the Tools Section, pp 15-19 to help you prioritise more effectively.

Identify 3 areas that you can improve your use of time and develop and implement strategies for addressing them.



Taking it further

Cole, 214-222

Carlopio, J, et al 179-184

TOPIC 2.4 – Blending Work and Life

FYI

The Big Rocks of Time

One day an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered overachievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz." He then pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed Mason jar and set it on the table. He produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them one at a time into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone in the class said, "Yes." Then he said, "Really?"

He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing it to work down into the space between the big rocks. Then he asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied.

He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand and started dumping the sand in the jar until it filled the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?" "No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good."

Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!" "No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point."

"The truth this illustration teaches us is that if you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all. What are the 'big rocks' in your life? Your children, your loved ones, your education, your dreams, a worthy cause, teaching others, doing things that you love, your health; your mate. Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all. If you sweat about the little stuff then you'll fill your life with little things and you'll never have the real quality time you need to spend on the big, important things.

So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question: What are the 'big rocks' in my life? Then, put those in your jar first.

Source: Big Dog Little Dog <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadtime.html>

Blending work and life is really about making sure that you put the big rocks into your life and schedule first. It is probably most realistic to evaluate your work life balance from a longer term perspective. Some weeks will demand more of your time and longer hours. This does not necessarily indicate an absence of work life balance if you look at say, a two month period and can see times when you have been able to fit the 'big rocks in', even if perhaps it is not as frequently as you would like.



Activity -Your big rocks

What are the big rocks in your life?

What are the grains of sand and pebbles that can rob you of the time you want and need to spend on the big rocks?

Good Practice

What can help lead to work life balance? Probably it is no surprise to find that many strategies relate to good management practices, many of them the personal skills covered in this section.

- Prioritise. Be sure that you are spending your time on the tasks that are progressing your key result areas;
- Manage interruptions so they don't rob you of time to work on high priority task, which may increase your working hours;
- Delegate. Check that you are delegating all that you can;
- Be assertive and pro-active. If you believe that tasks or projects given to you are not in your scope of responsibility, raise it with your manager in a professional manner with sound rationale based on your priorities;
- Fix a certain part of your schedule for big rocks. It may be a hobby, class, or fixed time for meeting with friends or relatives;
- If you do take work home, particularly on the weekends, be sure to quarantine the time devoted to work. Set aside a certain time (e.g. Sunday afternoon etc) and try to stick to that. Otherwise, you may find that the whole weekend (or evening) is an endless stream of stop and start work and you don't feel like you have a break.

Common De-Railers

- Doing it all yourself and not delegating;
- Not being pro-active in seeking solutions;
- Allowing interruptions to intrude on your schedule;
- Not viewing your personal big rocks (e.g. your needs) as enough of a priority; allowing them to be crowded out by other demands.



Activity - Getting more of your big rocks

What big rocks are currently being crowded out of your life?

Thinking of your response to the previous activity and the article and information in this topic, make a list of actions you can take to achieve greater work life balance.

What barriers do you anticipate?

What will you do to overcome those barriers?

How and how often will you review your progress toward work-life balance?



Taking it further

The following web sites have further information on work-life balance:

<http://www.worklifebalance.com.au>

www.worklifebalancecentre.org/

www.docep.wa.gov.au/lr/worklife/overview.html

Fastcompany.Com is an on line magazine that has a number of articles www.fastcompany.com (search on work life balance)

SECTION 3 – MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

TOPIC 3.1 – Managerial Courage

FYI

It is likely that one or more of the following situations apply to you and your role as a supervisor

- I was a team member and now am the supervisor indefinitely;
- I was a team member and am acting in the supervisor role for an undetermined amount of time and will eventually go back to the team;
- I was not a team member before becoming the permanent or temporary acting supervisor of this team.

Each of these scenarios presents challenges. Challenges that require you as the supervisor to exercise leadership that will move the team forward. Sometimes this outcome will take courage to move in a direction that not everyone supports or is enthusiastic about.

Building Personal Power with Staff

In **Topic 2.2.1 Building Your Personal Power**, we discussed the importance of increasing your personal power to increase your influence in the organisation. Many of those principles apply to influencing members of your team.

One of the most effective ways to influence a team is to model sound management practices which are listed in **Good Practice**. The courage comes in terms of persevering and not taking attacks personally. Regardless of your situation, (e.g. permanent Supervisor, returning to the team after a short tenure as Supervisor or Supervisor in a team of people who are your friends) if you apply consistent, fair, management practices, you will find yourself earning the respect of your team.

Managing the expectations of others is challenging. And there may be some who consider you a friend and expect 'favours' only to find themselves disappointed when you prove to be a manager who is equitable and not one to 'play favourites'. These people may challenge you and attempt to cause problems, but keep in mind that your best action is to keep persevering, applying the behaviours, actions and decisions that you know are consistent with sound management practice.

In the Real World

When 25 year old Jeff moved into a supervisory position after 2 years in the University, one of the team members he had to manage was Beryl, a 59 year old woman who felt that she should have been appointed supervisor because she had been in the University for 30 years. She worked to undermine Jeff and was very disrespectful to Jeff in team meetings. From the beginning, Jeff did not let Beryl's attempts to undermine him get to him. In staff meetings, he respectfully responded to Beryl's questions (some were an attempt to trap Jeff). Other team members approached Jeff and tried to get him to engage in criticising Beryl, but he did not. When Beryl raised a petty issue or tried to hijack the meeting with something irrelevant, Jeff politely would say "Beryl, I heard you say that we are really 'stuffed' as a team, how does that relate to our discussion about the phone roster?" Jeff did not always feel confident and often did get angry at Beryl's petty attempts to undermine him, but his behaviour was always very professional with a focus on the task at hand; making sure to acknowledge positive actions on the part of Beryl and other team members. In time Beryl started to give up her attempts to undermine Jeff because she saw that they were futile. They were futile, because Jeff did not give away his personal power to Beryl.

*"Your management of an attack, more than the substance of the accusation, determines your fate".
Leadership on the Line, p 195.*

When you are attacked (and we define attack here as any attempt to undermine you overtly or subtly) it is important to keep in mind that the attack is targeting your role, not you personally. Generally, attacks are on the *roles* and *perspectives* that you represent. Separate yourself from the role. Remember, roles end, if you get caught up in your role and define yourself as your role, what will you do when it ends? In the case study, Beryl was not attacking Jeff personally, but attacking what Jeff represented in his role. If Jeff took Beryl's attacks personally, he probably would have reacted defensively which most likely would have led to behaviours that would have undermined his reputation as a professional.

Courage requires that you:

- Not take attacks or stubborn lack of co-operation personally;
- Keep moving forward with sound 'people management' practices;
- Treat and interact with the attackers in a fair manner without allowing anger, frustration or other emotions to be part of the communication;
- Recognise behaviour or actions that 'cross the line' and need to be addressed as a performance situation and take appropriate action;
- Keep the focus on the issue at hand and bring the conversation back to it.

It is important to distinguish between attacks and legitimate challenges to a direction, decision or action that you are taking. It is important that your team believes they can challenge ideas and engage in healthy debate without consequences.

Good Practice

- Minimise your concern about avoiding attacks or what appears to be rejection. People are responding to what your role represents to them;
- Stay focussed on the issues, projects, goals and tasks;
- Be clear with people about what is expected of them;
- Provide regular feedback – catch them doing right;
- Consult with people on decisions and initiatives, where possible;
- Keep people in the communication loop;
- Demonstrate that you are a fair manager and seek to understand how you can give people opportunities to extend themselves.

Common De-Railers

This list could be called How Not To Win Friends and Influence People

- "Personal appeal - draw on their loyalty or friendship;
- Ingratiation - flatter them, pay them compliments, butter them up;
- Exchange - do something for them in return, bribe them;
- Pressure - get tough, demand action, use threats, coerce them;
- Legitimacy - claim my rights, use my authority, cite the rules;
- Coalitions - gang up on them, get my pals on side, get political;
- Packaging - get liberal with the truth, exaggerate the upside;
- Sulk - pretend to be hurt or offended until I get sympathy;
- Withdraw favours - ignore them, cut them off, until they crack", and
- React defensively - get angry and defend your actions.

Source: Leaders' Direct: <http://www.leadersdirect.com/influ.html>



Activity - You and Managerial Courage

What situations require you to exercise managerial courage (list as many as you can recall)

Which ones do you believe you have successfully integrated into your routine management behaviour?

Which ones do you need to develop better strategies for dealing with?

Select the three most pressing situations and think about strategies that you will use to better apply managerial courage. Develop a plan for reviewing your progress.



Conversation Starters

Who in your network is applying managerial courage?

Start a conversation with them about their management style, how they have overcome the problems of facing adverse reactions and kept courage in the face of being challenged personally.



Keeping Your Manager in the Loop

Discuss your strategies for further developing managerial courage with your manager and ask for feedback.



Taking it further

Heifetz, R and Linsky, M 2002, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

Hill, L. A 2003, *Becoming a Manager: How New Managers Master the Challenges of Leadership*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

For development opportunities at UniSA, check out the following website.

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/staffdev/>

TOPIC 3.2 – Giving and Receiving Feedback

FYI

Principles of communication

User centred communication goes beyond just being clear. It includes:

Empowerment

Communicating so others can make informed and independent decisions

Respect

You acknowledge that each time you communicate you are using a portion of someone's day

Usefulness

You organise and share what you know so others can quickly and easily put it to use.

Giving and receiving feedback

"A significant amount of communication is giving and receiving feedback. It is important to give positive feedback as well as feedback about a performance issue or a behaviour, pattern or process that is needing to change.

There are two main types of feedback: **positive** and **developmental**.

Positive Feedback applies to situations where the person has performed well. It consists of simple praise, but is more powerful if it highlights why or how the job was done well. The more specific the feedback, the more the individual learn about their behaviour and their ability to meet expectations. Many people say that they never are told when they do something well. The power of *genuine, detailed* positive feedback can not be underestimated.

Developmental Feedback highlights how a person has behaved / performed and how they might do better next time. When describing the person's action it is important to focus on specific observable facts."

Source: OCPE Performance Management Supermarket



Activity - Your experience with feedback

What experiences have you had of a manager giving you feedback?

What behaviours and actions can you incorporate into your style from the positive experiences?

What have you learned to avoid from the negative experiences?

DISC model with positive feedback

Positive feedback is very important. It must be specific, timely and given to the person in the way they are most likely to best receive it. Some people like public recognition, others like private recognition, some find it hard to receive verbal positive feedback, but find written positive feedback an encouraging motivator. Ask your staff how they like to receive positive feedback. Focus on what is going well.

Describe the situation

When you offer to help Sally when she struggles with budgets.

Indicate the impact

I've noticed that the whole team seems to be inspired.

Steps of action

I'd like to explore ways to help others take similar initiatives.

Consequences (positive)-describe them

I think this would greatly improve team harmony.

Reward and Recognition

There are a number of ways to reward and recognise people. In many cases, money and salary increases are not the rewards that people are most looking for. Ask staff how they would like to be recognised and rewarded.

Reward and recognition must be genuine and it can be very effective. Some ways of rewarding and recognising are:

- A simple thank you
- Specific information about competence or success in a task
- Positive feedback about a difficult situation handled well
- Recognition in a team meeting
- Opportunities to work on more challenging projects or be on committees which provide opportunities to network with people at a higher level
- Opportunities to 'act up' in a higher role when someone is on leave.



Activity - Reward and Recognition

What rewards and recognition have been effective for you?

What other methods of reward and recognition can you identify for your team?

The Difficult Conversations

Some of the most challenging feedback to give someone is feedback regarding something that has to be done differently but it is also a challenge for many people to give others positive feedback. The suggestions below relate to giving developmental feedback, but are also relevant for feedback in any situation where you have to confront someone about an issue.

Starting the Conversation

Using the DISC approach can be helpful

Describe the situation

When you arrive two hours late for work....

Indicate the **impact and find out if there is a problem.**

I've noticed that you have not been able to complete all your job assignments. Can you tell me what is happening there? Do you need any support?

Solution-propose a solution

If there are days when you think you'll be late, I'd prefer that you planned your work schedule in advance and if necessary stay back at work to finish

Consequences-describe them

If you don't you won't be meeting your work objectives that we agreed on 3 months ago.

The word 'consequence' might sound harsh, but it really depends upon how you present it; the words you use, the tone you use and the body language you display. It is important that people understand the results of their actions. It may be a bit uncomfortable to address the situation and open up the conversation, but chances are, you will further earn the respect of the rest of your team. This often requires *managerial courage*. Many problems occur because people do not address issues and they are allowed to fester until they become serious.

Keeping the Conversation Going

At times it is helpful to ask questions rather than make statements. Open ended questions are the best

- Can you give me an idea....
- Tell me about.....
- How does it feel.....
- Can you please describe.....
- What would you do.....
- How do you think.....
- What would happen if.....

Open questions help the 'receiver' to not be defensive. They usually invite greater interaction and invite more exploratory comments than direct confrontation.



Activity – Open Questions

What are some ways that you could use the open questions to address the example used for the DISC model?

When the conversations get stuck

One of the most challenging parts of difficult conversations is when they get stuck. They usually get stuck when the person receiving the feedback makes a strong statement that is hard to move beyond. On the next page are some suggestions of ways of moving beyond the barriers that people put up in difficult conversations.

RETHINKING QUESTIONS CHALLENGING NEGATIVE BELIEFS		REFRAMING TO CREATE A NEW OUTLOOK	
<p>NEGATIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's too expensive • We've tried that already • I don't want to, can't etc 	<p>RETHINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we achieve the same outcome within budget? • What would we need to do to make it work this time? • What would we have to do, or what would have to happen to 	<p>RETHINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we achieve the same outcome within budget? • What would we need to do to make it work this time? • What would we have to do, or what would have to happen to 	<p>REFRAMING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have done well to deal with the problem is there anything we can learn from it? • Yes, it will be difficult. We need to concentrate on getting the first bit to work. • How do you see it happening?
REFRAMING BELIEFS		DOUBLE OR TRIPLE BIND QUESTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm too old to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have you learned in the past that will help me meet this challenge? • You bring a huge amount of skill and experience to the situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a person is putting up barriers, ask questions that present limited choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think would work best, some extra training with a mentor or setting tighter deadlines? • Would you like to do xx first or would you rather do YYYY or even ZZZZ?

From Solution Focused Coaching by Anthony Grant



Activity - Practice Open Ended Questions

In the next 2-3 weeks practice on a friend, trusted colleague or partner

Open ended questions

At least one of the 'when conversations get stuck' techniques

THEN

Apply it to a situation that you need to address in your team

You may find it useful to document your progress in giving and receiving feedback so you can track growth and record which strategies work best for you.

Good Practice

- Be open to and model receiving feedback;
- Always give developmental feedback in private and without interruptions;
- Avoid giving developmental feedback at every possible opportunity – select issues that are directly related to performance and are important;
- Be specific about the behaviour or action that was inappropriate and explain why it is inappropriate;
- Focus on the future – determine strategies for improved performance and gain agreement on how to handle the situation if it was to occur again;
- Develop a team that is open to and accepts constructive feedback;
- Feedback should be timely;
- Give positive feedback and recognise achievements in ways the person values;
- Ask open ended questions;
- When conversations get stuck, reframe the beliefs.

Common De-Railers

- Waiting too long to give feedback;
- Focusing on personality rather than the facts and the issue;
- Not having the facts right;
- Approaching it with an accusing mindset;
- Not being specific enough;
- Not offering solutions or ways to change skills or behaviour to improve;
-and NOT HAVING THE CONVERSATION AT ALL!

Receiving Feedback

When most managers think of feedback, they imagine that they are the person offering it to others. The reality, however, is that you will also receive feedback from your manager and, if you have a positive working relationship with others, your colleagues and staff.

When receiving positive feedback:

- Allow the person giving the feedback to talk and listen attentively while they do so;
- Ask for specific details, make sure you understand the behaviour about which you are receiving information;
- If the feedback relates to personality characteristics or other personal attributes, ask the person to describe the behaviour that was appropriate.

When **receiving feedback about something that is not working for someone:**

- Allow the person giving the feedback to talk and listen attentively while they do so;
- Ask for specific details, make sure you understand the behaviour about which you are receiving information;
- If the feedback relates to a personality characteristic, ask the person to describe the behaviour that they would like you to change;
- If the feedback does not appear constructive, say so, and ask the person to provide some constructive comments that would help you to make some changes.

Sometimes, people may not be forthcoming with feedback so you will need to seek it out. When **seeking feedback:**

- Select someone you trust and the right person for the topic e.g. If you would like feedback on your managerial skills it would be a good idea to get feedback from someone you manage;
- Give the other person time to prepare for their discussion with you;
- Be open to the feedback, ask for specific examples and respond after you have reflected on the issues raised. Responding defensively will not establish an environment where the other person will feel comfortable giving you feedback;
- Where appropriate, follow through on the advice and suggestions given to you.



Activity - Receiving feedback

What are your strengths in receiving feedback?

What areas do you need to improve? (is it from a certain person? certain type of feedback?)

What can you do to better receive the feedback?

Note the times you receive feedback and how you handled it. Use these notes to develop your ability to better receive feedback.



Taking it further

Grant, A 2003, *Solution Focused Coaching*, Pearson Education, Sydney.

Cole, 388-396

Carlopio, J, 425-426

TOPIC 3.3 – Your Relationship with your Manager

In **Section 2.3.1 Building Your Personal Power** we discussed building your personal power and included some specific actions you can take to effectively manage your relationship with your manager. This is such an important aspect of your role as a supervisor, that we have also included this *Your Relationship with Your Manager* topic in the **Managing Relationships** Section. The FYI of this section includes two articles that may be useful to you in terms of managing your relationship with your manager.

REMINDER: Some of the terminology in these articles does not reflect the University's approach to gender inclusive language.

Managing Up: An Overlooked Factor in Career Success

by [Joanne Murray](#) @ [Management.Monster.com/articles/managingup/](https://www.managementmonster.com/articles/managingup/)

“One of the most common obstacles people face in their careers is a bad relationship with their manager. Difficult relationships with supervisors lead to missed advancement opportunities, forced resignations and damaged professional reputations. Many otherwise-solid managers, adept at motivating and anticipating the needs of their staff, overlook the importance of building strong upward relationships with their own managers.

The relationship with your manager is key to success in your current position and advancement in your organisation. Why? Not for the reasons often associated with getting along with your manager -- political manoeuvring or apple-polishing. To the contrary, you and your manager share a critical interdependence that makes the development of a strong and trusting relationship essential for each of you.

Work on Relationships

Managing up means focusing on the relationship with your manager to obtain the best results for you, your manager and your organization. Actively managing your relationship maximizes both your ability and your manager's ability to contribute to the organization, and it helps you weather the inevitable conflicts that will occur occasionally. Your supervisor has critical information and an organizational perspective that you need in order to most competently perform your job while staying in line with your company's growth and direction. He can share developments that occur at higher levels in your company and can update you on emerging priorities. Your manager can connect you with other areas in the organization, ensuring that your department stays at the core of the company's growth -- vital in today's corporate climate. And, of course, your manager can serve as your advocate when you need resources and cooperation from other departments or divisions.

Equally important, your manager needs you in order to accomplish his job effectively. Your supervisor needs your support and insight to advance his priorities and agenda. He needs to be kept informed and advised of concerns you see from your perspective in the organization. Too often, individuals higher in organizations miss out on critical information about problems others can more easily identify, hindering their effectiveness and abilities to advance their broader agendas.

Two key factors influence your ability to build this critical relationship: Understanding your manager's goals and priorities, and understanding your manager's work style. Knowledge of each will help you take the steps to rebuild your current relationship or build a solid foundation with a new manager.

Understand Your Manager's Needs

Consider the key priorities and projects your manager needs to accomplish. Take the time to anticipate and appreciate the pressures of balancing multiple priorities and conflicting needs. Reflect this perspective in your approach to your work. How do your projects fit within this larger context? Would accomplishing your goals advance your manager's priorities or inadvertently conflict with another team that reports to him? Tie your work to the larger goals of the

division. Value your manager's time. Plan your meetings carefully, gauging your project's level of priority within the division.

Understand Your Manager's Work Style

Is your manager formal or informal? Does he like to be briefed in writing before meetings or prefer to brainstorm issues with you? Is your supervisor a hands-on manager who likes to be consulted about issues as they arise, or will regular and informal updates make your manager think you aren't taking the lead in performing your managerial role? While you might think your manager would be pleased that you keep him in the loop, his work style may value a manager who acts more autonomously. Pay attention to the differences in your work style and your manager's style. Where possible, make adjustments to be consistent in style, eliminating unnecessary annoyances that can build into real miscommunications.

Evidence suggests that the most effective individuals in organizations understand management is not unilateral. Building a solid network of collegial relationships is critical, as is an informed and motivated staff and recognition of the interdependence between you and your supervisor. This recognition ensures you stay in close alignment with the vision and direction of your organization, and gives you the tools and opportunity to advance."



Activity - Do you know your manager's style?

Answer the following questions about your manager. If you don't know the answer to some of the questions, find them. Check your style in relating to your manager with his/her preferred style. Do you need to make any changes? If so, make note of them and start making them.

- Is your manager formal or informal?
- Does s/he like to be briefed in writing before meetings or prefer to brainstorm issues with you?
- Is your supervisor a hands-on manager who likes to be consulted about issues as they arise, or will regular and informal updates make your manager think you aren't taking the lead in performing your managerial role?
- Does your manager prefer email, face to face, phone or memo contact?

Managing Your Manager

by Katherine Spencer Lee @ <http://www.careerbuilder.com>

"We'd all like to have the perfect manager: the one who is cheerful, professional, experienced and fair. But managers, like everyone else, aren't perfect. Perhaps your supervisor is a great communicator but a poor delegator, or maybe your department's visionary leader falls short when it comes to attention to detail. Learning what makes your manager tick not to mention what ticks him off can help you better communicate and improve your odds of developing a great working relationship. Here are some suggestions.

The Manager as Client. You've probably had a variety of managers in your work life. Some gave you good feedback and always went to bat for you. Others made life difficult; they were too controlling or disorganized. No matter what your manager is like, recognize that you can either work with him or against him. And it's a lot easier to work with him. You probably already go out of your way to accommodate clients or customers. So why not think of your manager as your client? He or she has expectations, and those expectations should define what you deliver. Keep in mind that your relationship with your manager is your most important one at work; it affects your job satisfaction and advancement opportunities.

Begin the relationship on the right foot. Have a meeting with your manager where you discuss such fundamental issues as job responsibilities, performance expectations and objectives, your company and manager's guiding values, and preferred work processes or 'best practices.'

Have regular meetings. This means not only those weekly progress reports on projects, but also a quarterly or semi-annual meeting where you and your manager revisit those 'big issues.' (You may need to take the initiative and request these meetings.) Business events from reorganizations to new product launches can shift priorities. Make sure your priorities are still the same as your manager's.

Try to understand your manager. By observing and asking questions, you can learn a lot about your manager's world. Try to note such things as scope of responsibility, number of direct reports, industry background, and history with the company. Even more telling might be your manager's career goals, relationship with his manager and any outside pressures. Placing yourself in his shoes can provide insight into the demands he may also be under and help you gain perspective with regard to your own projects. Perhaps he or she is experiencing stress from his own manager and therefore may seem to have less time for you. In this case, offering your assistance can come as welcome news to your manager and allow you to take on increased responsibility.

Communicate effectively. Figure out the best way to communicate with your manager some managers prefer face-to-face contact throughout the day and others prefer e-mail or voicemail updates or questions. Also, ask if your supervisor prefers a quick overview with bullet points or a detailed report.

Tell your manager what you need. Once you've found the best way to communicate with your manager, be proactive in telling him what resources you need to get your job done (don't hope your manager will guess). Maybe you need additional computer training to create a presentation, for instance. Let your supervisor know why you need it and how it will help you do your job more effectively.

Dealing with Difficult Managers. The suggestions above will work well with most managers, but there are some who have more specific ways of working that make day-to-day interaction challenging. Here are some typical 'difficult manager' personalities and remedies for dealing with them.

Manager type: The Micro-Manager (controlling, overly involved)

Remedy: Your manager needs to develop more confidence in you. Begin by asking for complete responsibility on smaller tasks and then work your way up to bigger tasks. Be sure to deliver consistently excellent work or you may lose that trust quickly.

Manager type: The Non-Manager (indecisive, hesitant, vague)

Remedy: Instead of asking open-ended questions, give him a few choices and one clear recommendation. Counteract vagueness by asking for clarification. Avoid procrastination on your manager's part by communicating your deadlines and following up on what you need.

Manager type: The Unreasonable Manager (crushes you with work)

Remedy: Schedule a meeting to discuss priorities and options for what you can and cannot handle. Suggest bringing in a contractor to help during peak periods.

Use the 'managing your manager' strategies presented here to forge a harmonious, productive, and mutually beneficial relationship with your supervisor. You'll realize that it often takes very little effort to adapt to your manager's work style, but the payoff is big. Remember, getting along well with your manager has more bearing than any other factor on your ability to do your best work on the job."

Good Practice

- Take time to understand the strategic position, goals and objectives of your organisation;
- Walk a mile in your manager's shoes;
- Assess how your manager's strengths and weaknesses interact with your own;
- Understanding that managing upward is not about managing the manager; it is about managing yourself within a complex set of peer and hierarchical relationships.

Common De-Railers

- Manipulation in the form of finding your manager's favourite food and buying it, inviting your manager to go sailing with you etc. Doing any of this as a genuinely friendly interaction is fine, but it should not be the foundation of your strategy for moving upward;
- Being a 'yes' person to score points. Sometimes you will need to challenge your manager;
- Merely mimicking the manager's behaviour. It is important to understand their style, but be your own person.



Activity-The state of your relationship with your manager

Reflecting on what you have read in the articles, take some time to write your description of the state of your relationship with your manager.

What is working well?

What could be improved?

Referring to the articles in this topic, make some notes about strategies that you can use to improve your relationship with your manager and then write them up as action plans.



Taking it Further

Perform a Google search on 'Managing Your Manager' and 'Managing Up'

For development opportunities at UniSA, check out the following website.

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/staffdev/>

SECTION 4 – MANAGING YOUR TEAM: COMMON CHALLENGES

4.1 Get to know your staff - A Key to Motivation

FYI

One way to know how to motivate staff is to get to know them. It does not take a lot of time and can reap great benefits. Find out what they like, what motivates them and what de-motivates them. Spend time one on one with each staff member in a casual setting like a coffee shop or even in 'down time' in the office. As you get to know your staff, you will build trust and find that they are much more open with you about things that can be improved and things that are going well.

Listen carefully to what people say are de-motivators and work toward removing as many of those as possible.

Not everyone is motivated by the same factors. Some of the common factors that motivate people are

- money;
- power;
- relationships;
- recognition/validation;
- achievement;
- sense of contribution;
- freedom;
- ability to be creative;
- empowerment.

The ACORN model has some excellent suggestions of questions you can ask to get to know staff better.

	STRATEGY	TRIGGER QUESTIONS
A	Accommodate employee differences	What motivates the employee? What rewards does the employee value? How does the employee view work?
C	Create workplace choices	What type of work structure does the employee prefer? What type of training most suits the employee's style? What conversations might I need to have with the employee to find out?
O	Operate from a sophisticated management style. Use a situational leadership style to accommodate many workplace situations and issues	What role does work play in the employee's life? What level of direction does that require? What 'out of the box' management strategies can I adopt for this person? What is the best way to give this person feedback?
R	Respect competence and initiative	What specific contributions does the employee make to the organisation? How can I recognise those and make sure the employee feels valued?
N	Nourish retention	What does the employee want from an organisation? What draws them to an organisation? What keeps them in an organisation?

Adapted from Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin system

4.2 Attraction and Retention

Attracting and retaining the best staff is an increasing problem for organisations in a market with a shrinking pool of available candidates. Losing staff means losing knowledge and experience that often cannot be quickly replaced. Therefore, providing the right environment for people to thrive (by motivating them with the right motivators) can go a long way to keeping staff and attracting skilled people to your organisation and team.

Let's take a closer look at some more detailed information about motivating the four generations and knowledge workers.

Generations in the Workplace

There are currently four generations in the workplace. While the table below only represents *generalizations* it offers some useful insights into what might be key motivators for each generation and what might be potential sources of conflict among the generations.

	TRADITIONALISTS (born before 1945)	BABY BOOMERS (1946-1964)	GEN X (1965-1980)	MILLENNIALS (GEN Y) (after 1980)
Career Goals	Build legacy	Build career	Build portable career	Build parallel careers
Rewards	Job well done	Money, title, recognition	Freedom	Work that has meaning
Work/life balance	Support in shifting the balance	Help in balancing everyone else and find meaning for themselves	Want balance now not at 65	Work is not everything, need flexibility to balance all activities
Retirement	Time for their rewards	Time to re-tool and do something different	Time to renew themselves	Time to recycle themselves
Changing jobs	Carries stigma	No problems with it if better opportunities are offered	Necessary	Part of daily routine
Feedback & evaluation	No news is good news	Feedback once a year with documentation	Initiate by periodically asking how they are doing	Should be there whenever they want it at the push of a button
Relationship with organisation	Want to be part of organisation's future	Want to move up in organisation	Want to know what they will be doing and assurance they are on the right career path	Want to see the future and what role they will play
Training	They learned the hard way so others should too	Train people too much and they will leave	The more people learn the more they stay	Continuous learning is a way of life
Perceptions that cause conflict	Consider some in younger generation lazy, not willing to pay dues and not committed to quality work.		Consider some in older generations to be resistant to change, inflexible and technological dinosaurs.	

Adapted from Lancaster and Stillman, *When Generations Collide*

Strategies for managing diversity

The ACORN model on page 38 highlights a range of strategies and trigger questions that can be effective in identifying what type of workplace and workplace culture will help to retain staff. This is not to suggest that you cater to every whim and desire of staff, but rather to offer guidelines for situations where there is a choice of strategies that can be chosen.



Activity-What can you do to adapt to the diversity?

Review the two tables relating to generational diversity in the workplace. Every organisation and every manager has constraints that they have to work within. Considering the constraints that you have to work with, make some notes about what you could do to maximise the job satisfaction of:

- Generation Y
- Generation X
- Baby Boomers
- Traditionalists

4.3 Managing people with more knowledge or experience than you have

There will be times when you might be managing someone with more experience or knowledge than you have. It may be that you have a younger team member with extensive technology skills that you do not have or perhaps you have an older team member with more year's experience or it could be that you have a team member with specialist knowledge in an area that you are less familiar with. This can be threatening at times. But one very effective ways of showing competence and confidence is to let those workers share their knowledge and experience with the team and become the 'resource' in that area.

Good practice

- Encourage more experienced or knowledgeable workers to share it with the team;
- Have them become the team resource in that particular area;
- Encourage collaboration not competition.

Common De-Railers

- Being defensive and trying to prove you know more than they do;
- Shutting down suggestions or observations shared by the person with greater knowledge / experience;
- Subtly undermining them in discussions with other members of the team.



Activity -

Make some notes about the following:

Who are the people in your team that you believe are more experienced than you are?

What challenges do you personally face with these people?

For each person, write down at least one strategy you can use (or alternative mindset you can adopt) to further improve the way you manage these people.



Taking it further

Hill, L. A 2003, *Becoming a Manager: How New Managers Master the Challenges of Leadership*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston. Chapter 5: Managing Subordinate's Performance has a helpful section on managing more experienced direct-reports.

www.fastcompany.com search 'motivating staff'

4.4 Team Meetings - An Important Tool for Communication

With the range of generations in the workplace, there is greater potential for conflict and misunderstandings about roles, how work should be done, and even how one relates to the Supervisor. Team meetings are a very important vehicle for breaking down communication barriers and building relationships of understanding. Team meetings don't just happen. They require careful planning and facilitations. Well managed meetings can help your team become a team that builds relationships to work together with synergy rather than perpetuate a workgroup that is made up of individuals who 'do their own thing'.

"Teams need to get more out of meetings. They need to get to know each other, learn to be a team, formulate a common goal, identify targets, plan work and then coordinate how they will achieve that work.

Teams are also supposed to be identifying problems and working together to find solutions and better ways of doing things. Meetings are their forum to make decisions and increasingly expand their own empowerment levels until they become self-managing.

Finally, meetings are also a forum for feedback and evaluation. Team members are jointly responsible for reviewing their progress on achieving results, each other's performance and the performance of the team as a whole. All of this has to take place at the team's regular meetings if the team is going to be a real success.

The days of simply getting together to read a few memos and bounce around an idea or two are gone. Team meetings have to be carefully structured and skillfully facilitated in order to accomplish all the things an active team needs. The responsibility for making sure that meetings are well managed is one of the most important aspects of being a team leader.

Meetings are so important to teams that it can safely be said that no team can exist without them. In fact, meetings need to be regular and members must attend them religiously. As a team leader, it's advisable to

establish a regular time for meetings and hold to that schedule even if some people are occasionally absent. Whether you choose to meet for two hours every Monday or an hour every day, set that time and make sure everyone honours it in their schedules.”

Source: Team Meetings are Different by Ingrid Bens @ <http://www.effectivemeetings.com/teams/teamwork/bens.asp>

Good Practice

- Identify the purpose of the meeting. Is a meeting the best way to handle the need?
- Determine who should attend the meeting. Are all the necessary individuals included? Are they all needed?
- Decide if an agenda is required or if a less formal approach is needed;
- If using an agenda, develop a logically ordered agenda and allocate time considering urgency and importance. Clearly state the discussion items for attendees to understand;
- Send out a meeting notice and agenda with purpose, place, time and any required preparation;
- Start the meeting on time to maintain effective meeting discipline. Late arrivals must catch up on their own. Cancel the meeting if ‘must’ members are absent;
- Decide if meeting notes required, and if so, ensure someone is responsible for taking them. Standardize the format.
- Clearly articulate what you want to accomplish in the meeting. Review the agenda items and the expected actions;
- Stay focused on the agenda. If a new topic is introduced, add it to the list of future agenda items or negotiate with the group if it should be discussed now;
- Strive to get everyone involved in discussion. Avoid domination by one or two members;
- Clarify the issues. Use a disciplined process to gather the facts and come to a decision. Strive for consensus with key decisions. Summarize important points.

Adapted from:
Effective Team meetings @ <http://www.npd-solutions.com/meetings.html>
The Team Meeting @ <http://www.teambuildinginc.com/tps/020g.htm>

Common De-Railers

- Not being clear about purpose;
- Allowing one or two people to dominate the meeting;
- Digressing from the main topic;
- Not taking notes;
- Not having a follow up action or decision recorded against each agenda item;
- Starting the meeting late to accommodate late comers-this sends a message that it is ok to be late;
- Not distributing notes within a few days of the meeting.



Activity - Your team meetings

If you have not started a practice of team meetings, consult with the team about agenda items, what they would like to see from the meetings and their views on how they would like to see the meetings run.

If you do have team meetings, consult with your team for information on how the meetings are working and what might be done to improve them.

4.5 Helping Your Team Manage Change

“The role of a team leader or supervisor during periods of significant organisational change can be extremely challenging. The performance of the team and achievement of expected work outcomes need to be maintained while change is being implemented, although it inevitably has an impact on staff. It is critical that team leaders are aware of how to manage these situations effectively.”

From *Managing Change @ UniSA*

The University has produced a comprehensive booklet called *Managing Change @ UniSA*. Follow the link below and download it.

http://www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/resources/change/managing_change_kit.pdf

4.6 Managing Conflict

Conflict between you and another person or work area

There are three main types of conflict you will have to address as a supervisor:

- Personal;
- Team based; and
- Conflict that one of your team members is having with another person.

Below is a systematic approach to resolving conflict that you might have with someone else. This approach indicates what type of thinking and actions will lead to constructive outcomes.

You may find this useful in helping a member of your team to manage a conflict they are involved in.

Identify the critical information:

Define the conflict situation

- pertinent issues; history; primary & secondary players; other stakeholders

Define relevant organisational factors:

- structure; process; environment

Identify personal factors

Reflect and Question

- Whose problem is this?
- Am I behaving in ways that contribute to this conflict?
- What needs to be changed in this situation? What am I willing to change?
- What matters most to me? And to the other party? What is at stake?
- What are the resource and time contingencies?

Develop an Action Plan

- Define the steps – prevention and early intervention; shuttle diplomacy; communicate often and early;
- Develop a personal stance: *‘just another part of the job’*; detach; see as an objective problem to be solved; positive self-talk; take the long term view: what will be important in 5 years?
- Focus on relevant issues – stick to the facts;
- Acknowledge feelings;
- Ask for specific behaviour change;
- Identify what you are willing to do.

Self Management

- Remember, this isn't about you;
- Staying centred – be like a tree;
- Choose your response;
- Remember anger is a way of controlling others;
- Detach;
- Preparation – define what you want, how you will approach each step, what you want to say, how you will handle emotion and other negative responses, outcomes to be achieved, write it all down, rehearse.

Source: Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators



Conflict Resolution Network

Spend some time browsing the web site of the Conflict Resolution Network.
<http://www.crnhq.org/>

This will be a key resource for you. Book mark, print or save useful sections of it and add them to your toolkit. Some of these conflict resolution tools are included in 'The Art of Supervision: tools, surveys and other useful forms' section.

Good HR Practice when dealing with conflict

- Prevention is the best-good management practices go a long way toward avoiding or minimising conflict;
- Be sure to document and/or diarise conversations and meetings you have regarding performance improvement or conflict that appears to be escalating beyond something that will be able to be resolved by one conversation;
- Keep your manager informed of the process as it is unfolding. The 'no surprises' approach is particularly important here;
- If you have any questions, or are unsure of the best way to proceed, contact your local HR person
- Remember the Employee Assistance Program is available and may be part of the solution (<http://www.unisa.edu.au/ohsw/employeeassist/default.asp>)
- If you are in an open office, it is important to move to a private meeting room for any discussion around resolving conflict.

In the Real World

A few members of Jan's team were having difficulty with one strong personality, Agnes. Agnes was bossy and was bordering on bullying the other staff. Jan told the team to 'be positive' and to just ignore it, that was 'just Agnes'. Jan seemed to defer to Agnes because of her strong personality. Jan let this go on for over a year until she asked for intervention from the internal consultant. The internal consultant knew these team members as very strong women who rarely got emotional. She was very surprised to find that every team member burst into tears when she interviewed them one on one. The saga continued for several months, with a psychologist and other EAP support being brought in. Agnes eventually was transferred because it was clear that she was a toxic influence on the team. Had Jan addressed the problem when it arose by listening to the team members, respecting their views and problems and addressing Agnes's behaviour, it is unlikely it would have escalated to the point that it did.

Common De-railers

- If you do not fully document conversations and discussions, if the problem does escalate, the absence of proper documentation can lead to a further dragging out of the resolution;
- Avoiding dealing with conflict hoping it will 'just go away';
- Taking sides in conflict;
- Making it personal, not sticking to issues.



Activity - How do you manage conflict?

Review the suggestions for a systematic approach to resolving conflict.

Think back to a recent conflict you have been part of or one that you are currently part of.

Which aspects of the systematic approach do you already use?

Which aspects of the systematic approach could you adopt and add to your learning guide?

Think of strategies for including those into your working style.

The Tools section of this guide has further tools to assist you in dealing with the three types of conflict.



Taking it further

Cole, 158-166

Carlopio, J, 466-525

The Conflict Resolution Network <http://www.crnhq.org/>

SECTION 5 – MANAGING PERFORMANCE

Your primary source of information and content regarding Performance Management will be the UniSA web site. Links to specific tools and resources at the University are listed in this section.

FYI

Many people make the mistake of thinking that performance management is about the annual review and form. True and effective performance management includes:

- Daily interactions and meaningful conversations;
- Regular catch ups to exchange ideas and progress and give and receive feedback;
- Formal review (which should just be a summary of what has been going on in the first two activities);
- A commitment to developing staff.

If you use the forms as a basis for meetings about performance, you change only one thing-what might have been a natural, helpful conversation into an awkward, anxious inspection.

Kelly Allan, Allan and Associates

The most valuable kinds of feedback are the daily interactions between leaders and their people- interactions can't be caught on paper.

Dorothy Gill, VP Human Resources, Parkview Medical Centre

Informal Feedback

Performance management is happening in corridors, staff rooms, car parks, offices and restaurants. Any time a manager provides a 'debrief' on a meeting or a project, commending them on a job well done or suggesting where a project, clinical practice or task needs to be 'tweaked' they are undertaking the most important part of performance management: **meaningful conversations** as situations arise.

Planned Feedback Sessions

Many managers plan regular catch up meetings with their staff members weekly or fortnightly. Again, this is not usually around a 'performance management form'. It is however, a more formalised review of how things are going. It can be useful for you and the staff member to make note of actions arising out of the meetings-not in the context of a Performance Management Form but in whatever you would do in the natural flow of a meeting.

Another method of monitoring progress and providing feedback is to have each team member at a team meeting, update the team on progress. This should be a minimum of once a month.

The Formal Feedback

The formal review is like the writing up of the newspaper article. It is usually undertaken at 6 month and 12 month intervals.

At the formal review **there should be no surprises**. Issues, progress, concerns should have all been discussed as part of the daily working routine. The formal review, like the newspaper article is just the 'putting into print' a summary of activities and outcomes that have occurred over a period of time.

This discussion should include:

- Recognising accomplishments;

- Updating on progress toward goals;
- Identifying barriers to goals progressing;
 - Under resourced?
 - Politics?
 - Need for further training?
 - Need for further role clarification?
- Agreeing on interventions if goals are not on track. These can include training, resources, a further action plan or revising the goal.

There are many ways to gather information. You could:

- Review the individual's performance against the agreed work objectives;
- Ask the individual to complete a self assessment;
- Undertake discussions / surveys with customers, colleagues, etc. *Before you do this it is important that you ask the staff member about the sources of feedback and seek their agreement on who feedback will be sought from. The processes need to be transparent.*

Good Practice

- Provide regular feedback to people on an informal basis. (People often say that they do not get enough feedback so it is almost impossible to give too much *genuine* feedback.);
- Give the staff member opportunity to have input into the process and discussion;
- Before the formal feedback session, be sure the staff member knows what the process will be;
- There should be 'no surprises'. Issues should be addressed as they occur. This means that the formal feedback session is merely recording what 'has been going on' throughout the year;
- The form is not the focus. The conversations are the focus.

Common De-railers

- Focussing only on the form;
- Not giving feedback on a regular basis;
- Not giving genuine positive feedback;
- Waiting until the formal feedback review to raise issues of performance improvement.



Activity - Access UniSA guidelines

Access the UniSA Performance Management Guidelines in particular:

Performance Management: A Quick Guide

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/employment/performance/intro.asp>

Managing Performance Improvement of General Staff: A guide for Managers

http://www.unisa.edu.au/hrm/employment/performance/guide_general.asp

Read through the documentation and plan how you will undertake performance management with your staff using the process outlined by the University (the University process is consistent with the guidelines mentioned in this topic)



Keeping Your Manager in the Loop

Once you have determined how you will approach managing the performance of your staff, discuss this with your manager for further feedback. This will also be a useful way of keeping your manager informed of initiatives you are taking.

Managing your staff's performance should be a KPI in your performance plan.



Taking it further

Cole, Chapter 12

Carlopio, J, 752-756

Look at the companion web site to Cole's book.

http://wps.pearsoned.com.au/au_pve_cole_mgt_3 Select Chapter 12: Appraising Performance and read the Current Events and Internet Exercises sections.

The Art of Supervision is an initiative of the Organisational Learning and Development team in the Human Resource Unit.

Being a new resource, we would appreciate your feedback on the usefulness of this action learning toolkit and where it might be improved.

Feedback can be given to:

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