

Sara:

Hi, everyone, and welcome to today's webinar, ***Supervisory Skills 101***, hosted by HRDQ-U, and presented by Keera Godfrey. My name is Sara, and I will moderate today's webinar. It will last about an hour. If you have any questions, go ahead and type them into the questions area on your Go To webinar control panel, and then we'll either answer them as they come in, at the end of the session depending on time, or after the session by email. Today's webinar content is from our self assessment and workshop supervisory skills questionnaire. If you're interested in delivering this training within your organization, please contact HRDQ.

Sara:

Our presenter today is Keera Godfrey. With 15 years experience, Keera is a change management and training consultant helping organizations connect, build, and invest in their greatest assets, people. Whether re engineering business processes, implementing a new information system, or augmenting staff, taking care of people is critical to success. In 2010, Keera founded Naris Communications, a company that specializes in designing training programs, developing stakeholder communications, and delivering leadership training to support organizational transformation, performance improvement, and information system implementations. Welcome, Keera, and thank you so much for joining us today.

Keera Godfrey:

Thank you so much, Sara, and thank you to all of you for being here today. Here's our agenda. We will first talk about a proven supervisory skills model and the five key supervisory skills needed for success. As I present each skill, I will begin with an application scenario. I will present a situation, and we'll talk about the best action. Our agenda today also includes a discussion about supervisory do's and don'ts, and then a few skill improvement tips. We will end with how to identify a supervisor's strengths and weaknesses based on a supervisory assessment model designed by HRDQ. If I stick to the agenda, we will have time for Q and A's at the end.

Keera Godfrey:

Let's begin. Consider this scenario. You have been given an award for excellence in supervision for 2017. The award was created, and it was also voted on by employees. What makes excellence in supervision? Is it the technical expertise, or is it excellent relationships? Tell me ... just think about it for a moment, and jot down your response on a piece of paper. What do you think? What makes excellence in supervision?

Technical expertise or excellent relationships. All right. Let's talk about the correct answer. The correct answer is excellent relationships. Most people aren't promoted to supervisor because of their technical skills. In essence, they know how to do the job well. However, supervisory skills are very different than technical skills to complete the job. Research has shown that the ability to cultivate excellent relationships is an attribute of effective supervision. This includes excellent relationships with employees, the organization, and even vendors.

Keera Godfrey:

For a moment, think about a supervisor you have had in the past, or think about your experience managing others. I'm certain you can attest to the fact that to be an effective supervisor, it is a balancing act. The role of a supervisor is first to align your teams with the goals of the organizations, such as the goal of the organization may be to increase production, to increase sales. Supervisors are expected to do this while also meeting the needs of the individual employees in the work group. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees receive effective training. They manage requests for, let's say paid time off. And you're doing this while ensuring work gets done. Also, you may have to even resolve a few conflicts along the way. In essence, supervisors are now responsible for the balancing act in an era of increasing government regulations, sophisticated technology, movement across cross functional teams, and diverse, entitled, and better educated employees. Despite these challenges, the basic function of a supervisor remains the same, getting the work done through the efforts of others.

Keera Godfrey:

Making the transition to an effective supervisor requires a shifting of attitude, an increased ability to perceive the emotions of direct reports, and to manage one's own emotions. Here is a supervisory skills model we will discuss over our time together today. Look carefully at this diagram. It tells a story about supervisors' need to balance or function as a link between the organization's management and the employees. The supervisor is accountable to management for completing the work according to expectations, and they are accountable for their own direct reports. In this model, you as the supervisor will use direction from the organization to perform your job. As the supervisor, you then first organize the work, second, guide the work, third, develop your direct reports, fourth, manage performance formally and informally, and fifth, manage relationships with several teams outside of your own work group. These are the five essential supervisory skills that the more effective supervisors demonstrate in the work place. Let's explore these a little more.

Keera Godfrey:

Let's look at the first one, guiding the work. As a supervisor, your view of work must be broader than the view of your employees. Effective supervisors must be able to guide the work group towards organization

of goals in such a way that employees know their needs are not being ignored or forsaken. Let's talk about this one a little bit more. Let's do this. I want to give you a scenario. If you can just take a moment to think about it, and then jot your answer down on your piece of paper that you have with you. Here's the scenario. A project your group received about three weeks ago seems stalled, even though your group knows it's important to your best customer. You decide to have a talk with your group about what the problem may be. How would you start the discussion? A, would you tell your group that you need to know what's going on with the project, tell them that you will accept whatever changes they suggest? B, you will start by stating clearly that this project must be completed, then discuss their expectations for completion and yours. Or C, tell the group that the project is now a top priority, and give them a completion date. Which one do you think is best to start the discussion?

Keera Godfrey:

The correct answer is B. Start by stating clearly what this project must ... that this project must be completed, then discuss their expectations for completion and yours. Guiding the work involves taking the direction of the organization and translating it into actionable plans for the work group. Being an effective supervisor means understanding the bigger picture, which includes the goals of the organization, the direction from the business, and setting clear expectations as to how the work will be carried out. This is not always easy for supervisors, particularly new supervisors whose perspective has been focused more on the needs of the work group. Although it may be challenging at times, any direction a supervisor provides has to be supportive of the organization. This means fostering an environment in which employees and your teams are encouraged to collaborate and feel empowered to develop creative solutions to complex problems.

Keera Godfrey:

Under guiding the work, let's talk a little bit about a few do's and don'ts. As a supervisor, you must understand the needs of your organization, and then effectively create plans within your group to meet those needs. Here are a few examples. As a supervisor, you must support your organization goals. Again, you are the liaison in between the business and your work group. Do get your employees involved in the planning process and gain the commitment to those action plans. Also, act decisively. Employees' work depend on supervisors decisions. Lagging or wavering could affect workflow, and it simply sets a poor example. Here are a few don'ts. Don't tell employees that you disagree with management positions. Again, you are the liaison between management and your work group. Consistently prepare detailed plans without consulting your employees. Again, this is a don't. Don't consistently do this. It should be a collaborative process. Also, don't fail to assign

responsibility for tasks.

Keera Godfrey: Let's talk about a few improvement tips. Here are things you can do that will help you along the way as you guide the work. Make it clear to your work group that you support the organization and its goals. Also, balance asking for information and acting decisively. Also, you want to create specific and realistic plans. Plans are necessary to translate intentions into actions. Whatever strategy the supervisor decides, it must be clearly defined. Whatever you decide, make sure that it's clearly defined. Make sure that it's well understood by your employees, and unmistakably communicated. Gain commitment by actively involving your work group. Without specific commitment to action plans, understanding the goals of the organization is pointless. It does no good. Make sure you gain commitment.

Keera Godfrey: All right, good job. Let's move on to organizing the work. The second supervisory skill involves assigning the right people to the right tasks, and providing necessary resources to meet work goals. Shifting organizational priorities and business transformation necessitate almost consistent reorganization of work. With change come opportunity and cost. As a supervisor with responsibilities to the organization, you must consider the impact to the bottom line of certain actions. The primary consideration in organizing or reorganizing the work is the effect on the organization. However, supervisors must keep the needs of his or her direct reports in mind as well. Here's another scenario that we'll talk about. You have appointed one of your people as the leader of a project, but it is clear that another employee is really seen as the leader by the group. The project is progressing well, but it worries you that the leadership is not where you want it to be. What would you do?

Keera Godfrey: Would you A, make it clear to the group who the leader is and who you support, don't tolerate other sources of leadership, B, appoint the leader who has the group's support as the formal project leader, or C, don't interfere? Yes, the correct answer is don't interfere. Supervisors are part of a hierarchy in their organizations. Working within that hierarchy is critical. But it's also critical, however, to have an awareness of the unspoken hierarchy known as the informal organization. The informal organization can have a strong impact on the organization of work, often exceeding the effectiveness of the prearranged cross functional teams. When it is in line with the formal organization, the supervisor should simply let it be. Fighting the informal organization is often fruitless work. As the supervisor, you should intervene when the informal organization is working against the formal hierarchy. The need to intervene will be less frequent if you encourage a culture of transparency, trust, and also teamwork.

Keera Godfrey:

All right, let's talk a little bit about some do's and don'ts. As a supervisor, you should develop the necessary skills needed to assign people and allocate resources to accomplish work goals. To be the most effective and to maximize people's engagement in the organization, you should set schedules to meet the organization's goals. Also, use others' expertise to organize when necessary. Also, keep track of what's going on in the information organization. Here are a few don'ts. Don't accept work changes without question. It's okay to ask questions and also to answer questions as well. Don't show favoritism or fail to assign unpleasant tasks. It's a necessary part of getting the job done. Also, don't try to have complete knowledge of all aspects of work. This is the reason why we work in teams and collaborate with others.

Keera Godfrey:

Here are a few skill improvement tips. Handle shifting priorities. Again, in the world of changing technologies, being able to balance and handle shifting priorities and change along with the business needs are going to be quite important for any skillful supervisor. Also, quickly investigate unforeseen problems, and try to solve them. Also, follow the rules, the regulations, and guidelines of the organization. Accommodate the needs of your work group when they are not in direct conflict with the organization's needs. This is a part of the balancing act that we were talking about earlier.

Keera Godfrey:

Now let's talk about developing your staff. The third supervisory skill involves knowing and actively working to increase the skill level of each employee being supervised. The third skill level is developing direct reports. A supervisor who is aware of the unique features of each direct report in the work group will be best equipped to help them meet their potential. Here is another scenario. You believe that one of the people you supervise has the potential to be promoted, but that person lacks confidence in his or her abilities. How would you build his or her confidence? A, would you give the employee a challenging assignment that you are sure he or she can complete with some effort, or B, would you give the employee an easy assignment and then praise him or her when the assignment is completed, or C, would you praise the employee publicly each time he or she completes a task or an assignment? Go ahead and jot your answer on your sheet of paper. What do you think? A, B, or C?

Keera Godfrey:

All right. The correct answer is A. Give the employee a challenging assignment that you are sure he or she can complete with some effort. Investing in an employee's development takes commitment, trust, and a well-defined objective, clearly established action plans, and follow through by both the supervisor and the employee. Delegating works to employees creates more engagement, and it builds the skill base of the

organization. Also, it frees you to develop your own skills. Furthermore, if the assigned work is perceived as challenging and engaging, and aligns with the employees' underlying interests, you can boost productivity and company morale, and it gives employees a greater sense of self esteem and also completion.

Keera Godfrey:

Let's talk a little bit more about a few do's and don'ts as it relates to developing staff. When you're developing your direct reports, this involves increasing the skill level of each employee by learning your employees strengths, and then assigning tasks according to their development needs. Do delegate work that develops your employees' skills. Also, do keep employees informed about the status of their request. Also, do make your expectations for results clear when you delegate tasks. Let's talk about a few don'ts. Don't complete tasks yourself because they require effort to teach others. Don't treat employees as a group rather than as individuals. It is best to look at employees as individuals, look at their individual skills, and be able to develop their individual skills. You will see that it will contribute to the development of the entire group. Also, don't delegate only to people who already have the skill or task that you're looking for. Here's the skill improvement tips, a few skill improvement tips for you. Take the time to delegate. Also, delegate work that develops employees' skills and does not require your formal authority. Provide clear expectations and follow up regularly. Another tip would be to set challenging and realistic goals for your work group. That's going to be important as they develop their skills.

Keera Godfrey:

Let's move on to talking about managing performance. This is the fourth supervisory skill, and it involves moving the obstacles to better performance so employees can meet their own and the organization's objectives. The obstacles to employee performance can be found both within the employee and in the work environment. To be an effective supervisor, you must be mindful of and also be able to manage obstacles in both areas. Managing performance, like the other supervisory skills I mentioned, is a daily task that requires a supervisor to remain aware of each individual employee. All right. Here's a scenario for you. One of your employees is always just a little bit late completing his or her assigned tasks. It hasn't really affected the work, but it annoys others. What should you do in this situation? Should you A, schedule a formal performance review meeting with the employee and document it? Should you B, tell others in your group to work around it, it is only a minor problem? Or C, should you have a short informal meeting in which you tell this employee about the impact of the problem, and also discuss solutions? Tell me, what would you do? A, B, or C. I'll give you a moment to jot your answer down on a sheet of paper.

- Keera Godfrey: The correct answer is C, have a short informal meeting in which you tell this employee about the impact of the problem, and discuss solutions. A part of managing performance involves the continual coaching of direct reports to achieve their potential and understand their career goals. Coaching can be more effective than formal review. It begins with looking to the future and deciding what level of performance can reasonably be expected of an employee. Beyond teaching employees how to perform, as a supervisor, you should strive to instill in them the self confidence in their ability to perform. Another aspect of managing performance is dealing with performance problems which you are bound to encounter. When these problems occur, the best approach you can adopt is to maintain a voice of reason and calm. Once again, taking the perspective of the organization and encouraging employees to do the same will focus the discussion of performance issues on what is really important. The key to managing performance is helping employees gain awareness of their actions.
- Keera Godfrey: All right, let's talk about a little bit of do's and don'ts as it relates to managing performance. When managing performance, you must track the performance of your employees, and help them meet their own objectives, and those of the organization. In this case, do track performance and provide feedback on a continual basis. Also, remain objective in the situation. Look at the task. Get commitment from employees to improve their performance. Also, let's talk about a few don'ts. Don't review performance only once a year. Judge employees before you talk with them about their performance. Don't do that. Talk first. Also, don't allow yourself to become emotional in the process.
- Keera Godfrey: All right, we're moving along quite nicely. Let's talk about some skill improvement tips. When we're looking at a few improvement tips as relates to developing your team, tell people what you expect of them. Also, monitor their progress and provide feedback. Also, you want to formally evaluate their performance. We talked about making sure that this is not done just on an annual basis. Also, learn to distinguish between problems that need formal attention, and those that do not. Finally, the last tip I would like to leave with you on this topic is to confront behind the scene problems when they affect performance.
- Keera Godfrey: Okay, we're moving along. Let's talk a little bit about managing relationships. This is the fifth supervisory skill, and it involves developing and maintaining good relationships with other groups so that the supervisor's employees and the organization meet their goals. This includes relationships with the organization, the direct reports, and also vendors. This skill encompasses managing these relationships. As a supervisor, your direct reports do not operate in a vacuum. As

organizations become more connected, both internally and externally, the ability to manage relationships with other groups has become a key skill for supervisors. Between human resources, technical experts, regulatory bodies, and also internal and external customers, as a supervisor you have your hands full with trying to maintain good relationships with all of them.

Keera Godfrey:

Here's a scenario under this topic, managing relationships. You have been blindsided quite a few times recently by changes in the organization that you don't know about, but other supervisors did know. Your group is starting to get upset. What would you do? Would you A, ask the boss to keep you better informed about what's happening, B, make an effort to get to know other supervisors and talk to them about what's happening, or C, you'll never know everything, teach your people how to react quickly to unexpected things? Go ahead and think about it for a moment, and jot your answer down, and we'll talk about it. Yes, the correct answer is make an effort to get to know other supervisors, and talk to them about what's happening. This is going to be very important as you work through the skills of being an effective supervisor. Like other supervisory skills, as you're managing relationships, it should be guided by the goals of the organization. Communication is critical to maintaining good relationships, particularly with groups that regularly interact with the supervisor. Keeping other groups informed of plans and keeping abreast of the activities of the rest of the organization ensures that the supervisor's work group will be well positioned to succeed.

Keera Godfrey:

Let's move on and talk a little bit about some do's and don'ts as it relates to managing relationships. Working closely with others to ensure that your work group is effective and the organizational goals are met, this is one of the primary goals of an effective supervisor. In this case, do keep other groups informed about your plans. Also, become generally familiar with other work groups. Also, develop relationships with other supervisors. As it relates to managing relationships, don't try to acquire resources by complaining about your group's situation. Also, don't try to have complete knowledge of other groups' work. Also, don't turn down all requests for help that inconvenience your group. Realize that all work groups within the organization work together and collaborate to help the entire organization meet its business goals.

Keera Godfrey:

Here are a few skill improvement tips for you as supervisors that will help you to manage relationships a little better. View other work groups as partners. Again, you're working for the same organization, helping the organization meet its business goals. Acquire resources by framing requests according to what is good for the organization rather than only your work group. Also, know how and when to ask for support from the

other work groups. Responding to requests from other work groups helps in the goal to understand the organization and what are their objectives and goals moving forward.

Keera Godfrey: All right, we made it through. We talked about all of the five supervisory skills. We talked about organizing the work, developing the staff, managing relationships. We talked about guiding the work, and we also talked about managing performance. Again, as seen in this illustration, the supervisor acts as a liaison between the direction from the business. Also in managing the work group, to the work group. I encourage you to continue to fine tune your skills by practicing what you have learned today.

Keera Godfrey: One other thing I want to leave you with is for those on the call who are responsible for supervisors, or for aspiring supervisors, you can develop strengths of effective supervisors by assessing and identifying what they do, how they need to be developed, and also where are the performance gaps. Again, just a recap. You're responsible for what they do well, how they need to be developed, and where are those performance gaps. To help you, there is an online supervisory skill assessment tool that's developed by HRDQ. For those current supervisors, you can take the assessment as well and begin to fine tune and add to the skills that you already have.

Keera Godfrey: Thank you so much for your time today. Thank you for all of the questions that I'm about to receive. I think we have time for questions. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Sara.

Sara: Great, thank you so much, Keera. We do have time for questions, so go ahead and use your questions area. If you open that up, there's a white space in there. You can type, and then hit submit, and those questions will come over to us. While we're waiting for some of those to come in, I know there are some new people on the line that's new to HRDQ, so I just want to introduce you to us. We publish research based experiential learning products that you can deliver in your own organization. Check out our online or print self assessments like the supervisory skills questionnaire, which was the foundation of today's webinar. The scenarios you went through are the questions from that assessment, and then the five model is right from that assessment as well. Check that out.

Sara: We also have up out of your seat games. We have a supervisory game called Flight From Savo. We have reproducible workshops that you can customize as well. If you do need help either learning a training program, or you would like one of our expert trainers to come onsite and deliver the session for you like Keera, definitely we have those

services for you. We look forward to being your soft-skills training resource. Reach out, check us out, and we'll be happy to help you with your training needs. Okay, I have some questions coming in. Let's start here. Our first question is from Bill, and he asks, "How do you transition effectively from employee to supervisor?"

Keera Godfrey:

Oh, that's a very good question. When you're transitioning from the employee to supervisor, it's important to make sure that that change is clearly announced within the organization, that all your peers that were a part of the work group, that they understand that now you are a supervisor of the work group, and in some cases you may now be the supervisor to your former peers. Making sure that that transition is clearly announced, and also that you develop ... that the new supervisor develop these skills. I would definitely start off with the assessment, and then going into making sure that this training is actually done for all new supervisors.

Sara:

Great. We have another question here from Judy that's talking about remote work. She says, "My staff work in different countries. What advice do you have for managing remotely?"

Keera Godfrey:

I would say ... That's a really good question. For managing remotely, definitely make use of technology in the process. If there's any online type of video conferencing ... I enjoy video conferencing because sometimes it's very good to see a face as you're moving along in the process. But it does require for clear communication. So just as we were talking about in all of these steps, it requires clear communication. This model, you will still use every step in this model, and actually even more, I would say, to make sure that every step of the way, that there's clear communication, that you maintain still clear lines and connection with your team even though they are remote. Even more, I would say that all five of these steps become important, especially when you're dealing with a remote team.

Sara:

Good, and we have one more question here, it looks like, that's come in today. This is from Chet. He asks, "What is the best technique for dealing with resistance to change in direction of the organization?"

Keera Godfrey:

Let's see. That's a good question. The best technique that I've seen, especially in my experience as a change management consultant, in dealing with resistance, is to really have a clear sense of why is this change occurring, being able to communicate that. Research has shown that the best people to communicate change to a team is the supervisor, or is the manager. As a supervisor, if your organization is experiencing a high level of change, you are the best person to talk about that change to your work group or to your team. Therefore, that

requires that you understand why is this change occurring, who does this change affect, what are the changes that's occurring, and how will this affect my job on the day to day basis. Being able to understand that, understand the vision for that change, and then being able to clearly communicate that to your team, that's the clear way of managing resistance because it gets buy in from your team. Once they buy into the process, once they buy in and see the vision of that change and what's in it for them, and they see the benefits of it, then usually that curtails resistance.

Sara: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Keera. It's always wonderful to hear your expertise.

Keera Godfrey: Thank you so much.

Sara: Thank you, everyone, for participating today. Check out our upcoming webinars, and if you have any additional questions you think of after, feel free to reach out to us by phone or website. We look forward to seeing you in our next webinar. Happy training.