The Art of Supervision

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

University of
South Australia

Contents

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 to the University by setting and achieving the goals for your work area and develop your own personal and professional skills. Supervisors are often the key change agents in an organisation, helping to shape both the stakeholder and the employee experience. 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 supervisory 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. While it is designed for Professional staff who are new to supervisory roles, more experienced supervisors may find sections of the toolkit beneficial for reference and tips. If you are looking for in-depth information and concepts, the main text recommended in this guide is an excellent resource for more extensive theoretical frameworks, case studies and activities.

What is it designed to do?
This 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 exhaustive 'how to' list. It is a guide to help trigger reflection, discussion and further research that will expand your knowledge and strengthen your 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 have been introduced to it by their manager. Whichever the case, you may like to consider a structured approach in which you undertake the suggested activities and then debrief your reflections with your manager.

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 and Developing Performance*. Each section is divided into topics.

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 experiences of those who have gone before you.

Activity

Suggested activities 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:**

- **A Learning Journal**

  Some people find it useful to document new ideas or new ways of looking at a current situation in a journal. 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 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 valuable way of incorporating new learning into your work practices.

- **Notes**

  Making brief informal notes on a separate piece of paper.

- **Discussions**

  Some people learn and grow best through discussion with others. You may find the impact of your learning is greater if you talk to others about your insights, the activities you undertake and any questions you might have. The Conversation Starters category makes suggestions about specific conversations you can undertake with others whose advice and feedback you value and trust.

Conversation Starters

Some of our most effective learning, development and solution-finding moments come from our 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 has two potential 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.

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 it 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.

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 (4rd edition)* by Kris Cole, published by Pearson Education, 2012. This is an excellent, comprehensive and very practical resource for managers at all levels, particularly supervisors at the front line level.

Extensive reference will be made to this book in the *Taking it Further* section.

SECTION 2 – MANAGING YOURSELF

TOPIC 2.1 – Managing your personal and professional development

There is a saying "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail". Planning is an important component to success. This applies to your own development as well as to 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 deadlines will mean you will need to plan your engagement with this guide if it is to positively impact your performance.

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 track your engagement with this toolkit.)

What are your strengths as a supervisor?

What are some specific examples of when you have demonstrated those strengths?

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 will 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 Index of Learning Styles (ILS) questionnaire at https://www.webtools.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ 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?

With your knowledge of your learning style, and your self-knowledge, what do you need to do now to ensure that you dedicate the necessary time and energy to this guide? Schedule some time in your diary every week? Make a catch-up time with a conversation partner? Whatever it is, do it now!

TOPIC 2.2 –Managing the responsibilities of your role

It is important that you have a clear understanding of the expectations that the University of South Australia has of supervisors. The People, Talent and Culture Unit has developed Supervising Staff @ UniSA: A Good Practice Guide which assists new supervisors to understand their responsibility. If you are unfamiliar with any of the topics in the Manager Essentials Resource, 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 toolkit are within the guidelines and expectations that the University of South Australia has of supervisors. If there is anything in Supervising Staff @ UniSA: A Good Practice Guide that is unclear to you, be sure to clarify it with your manager or another appropriate person.

Topics covered in the Manager Essentials Resource 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 and Development Management;
- Leave Management;
- Formal Grievance Resolution;
- End Of Employment;
- Occupational Health, Safety And Welfare;
- Valuing Equity And Diversity;
- Employee Assistance Program;
- Compliance, Risk Management And Finance;
- PTC Summary;
- Useful links – External Resources Available To You.

TOPIC 2.3 – Managing your emotions

'…it is how we handle ourselves in our relationships that determines how well we do once we are in a given job.' Daniel Goleman

While numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of emotional self-management in the workplace, many people still underestimate the degree to which emotional intelligence is critical to success. If you're new to supervision, you may find yourself experiencing more intense emotions than you have in the past, as you try to accommodate your teams' needs, manage different personalities and get your head around all your responsibilities.

When someone is having lots of strong feelings, the effect can be that they 'lose the plot', are 'at their wit's end', 'lose their mind' or 'can't think straight'. All of which are expressions of the fact that their feelings have, at that point in time, taken up their thinking space. As a result, when we're experiencing strong emotions, our capacity to think and act rationally is often diminished. It's important that you learn how to express these emotions productively and/or defuse them according to what is most appropriate to the situation.

Good practice

- Adopt the habit of identifying the thought that underpins a particular emotional or behavioural response. You can then work out if the thought is objectively true by asking yourself whether the thought is 'fact' or 'opinion'. You can then ask yourself what a more helpful thought or behaviour might be.
- Realise that you don't always have to act on your challenging emotions.
- Identify healthy ways in which you can 'defuse' – talking to a trusted friend, walking, meditation, etc.
- Work out what activities, practices and people keep you energised and positive, and make a priority to schedule them into your day, week, or month.

Common De-Railers

- Allowing the most challenging member of your team to influence your emotional state (e.g. thinking constantly about how frustrating one individual can be).
- Believing that as a supervisor, you need to appear completely invulnerable. While it's not appropriate to 'download' to your team members, acknowledging some weakness can be important in building trust.

- Failing to recognise how your own thinking about an event, situation or person shapes your emotion and behaviour. While you might not be able to change the event, situation or person, you can always change the way you think about them to help better manage your emotions.

Activity – Managing Your Emotions

What strategies work for you to manage challenging emotions in the moment (deep breathing? A walk around the block? Counting backwards from ten?)

Identify a time when you have behaved in a way that was unhelpful or unproductive. What thought led to that behaviour? What alternative thought would lead you to act in a more productive way? If you can't identify an alternative thought, what else could you have done to change your behaviour?
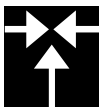
Conversation Starters

Think about someone you know in a supervisory role who appears to manage their emotions very effectively. Ask them what strategies they apply when strong emotions arise.

Taking it further

http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/emotional-intelligence-eq.htm - provides a helpful overview of the skills required for emotional self-management. UniSA's People and Organisational Development team also offer an Emotional Intelligence workshop as part of the Enterprising Essentials program.

TOPIC 2.4 – Managing your Work Priorities

"*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

Managing competing tasks, people, opportunities and challenges can be 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 unexpectedly and for which it can be difficult to plan.

Managing your time well involves a number of skills; three of the most important are identified below.

SKILL	EXAMPLE OF WHY IT IS IMPORTANT
Assertiveness and Influencing *(see Topic 3.2, Assertiveness)*	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. Most days it's unlikely you will get through everything you had planned. Prioritising will be the key to progressing the important tasks, projects and relationships.

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 own work while supervising the work of others. 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 (don't forget to schedule when!)
- Do it if time permits;
- Delegate it;
- Dump it.

Cole (233)

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.

Fulfilling these four criteria takes time, so inevitably time-poor managers can fall into the trap of believing 'it's easier and faster to do it myself'. While this may be true in the short run, in the long term, it can continue to contribute to the time pressures a manager is under. The 'do it yourself' approach also robs your team members of the opportunity to learn new skills and take on greater responsibility.

When the job is not done to the standard you need, 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

- Wherever possible delegate according to someone's interests and aspirations;
- Clearly define what outcome is needed, then let individuals use some creative thinking of their own as to how to get to that outcome;
- Agree on the frequency of monitoring and feedback meetings or reports between yourself and the person to whom you are delegating. Good communication will assure ongoing success;
  Find out what the talents and interests of your team are and you will be able to delegate more intelligently and effectively;
- 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.

Common De-Railers

- Giving insufficient time to delegating effectively, and/or for someone to complete the task to a desirable standard;
- Underestimating a person's potential. It can be useful to 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;
- Taking back a delegated task because you can do it better or faster. Instead, help the other person learn to do it better;
- 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 ability to delegate?

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 378-400

More on delegation
https://www.businessballs.com/team-management/delegation/

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

When you're juggling multiple priorities, consider what activities will have the highest return on investment for you and your team. At times stress and anxiety will cause you to spend a lot of time perfecting something that is relatively unimportant, while you neglect a task or relationship that is in need of attention. If you feel overwhelmed by your 'to do' list, it's worth taking a moment to slow down and spend some time prioritising. You can then be sure that you're using your limited time and resources and wisely as possible.

Good Practice

- Create a To Do list and label the items:

1 = Important and Urgent (Must)	3 = Routine (Could do or Delegate)
2 = Important (Should)	4 = Wasteful (Unnecessary to do at all).

- 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.

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

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

Taking it further
Cole, 226-274

TOPIC 2.5 – Blending Work and Life

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-achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz." He then pulled out a 4-litre, 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", to which he replied, "Really?"

He then reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped a few handfuls of gravel into the jar and shook it, causing the gravel to fall down into the space between the big rocks. 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*

Successfully blending your personal and professional life is about making sure you put the big rocks into your life and schedule first. It is probably most helpful to evaluate your work life balance from a longer term perspective. Some weeks work 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? It is probably no surprise to find that many strategies relate to good management practices.

- Schedule the big rocks (both personal and professional) into your diary as far in advance as possible. It can be helpful to 'systematise' big rocks (e.g. lunch with your brother every last Friday of the month) so that you're not constantly thinking about when to fit them in;
- Give the people in your life who are 'big rocks' permission to remind you (gently!) if grains of sand are taking up all your time;
- Be assertive and pro-active. If you believe that tasks or projects given to you are not in your scope of responsibility, raise this with your manager in a professional manner with sound rationale based on your priorities;
- 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;
- Believing 'there's nothing I can do about it';
- Allowing interruptions to intrude on your schedule;
- Forgetting that often done is better than perfect;
- 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:

https://worklifebalance.com/

https://worklifebalancecentre.org/

www.fastcompany.com is an online magazine that has a number of articles available when you search for work life balance.

SECTION 3 – MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

TOPIC 3.1 – Building personal power

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.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of power a person can have in an organisation: **positional power** and **personal power**. Positional power refers to your formal authority in the organisation. As a supervisor, your role gives you authority over the actions of others. **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 by positional power. The table below shows you the types of positional 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 the authority outlined in your position description.
	Coercive Power	The power to threaten and have people follow you out of fear (this is obviously not a constructive power).
	Reward Power	The ability 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.

While positional power can be important in crises, emergencies and times of change, personal power is generally more important for 21st Century managers. Recent research has demonstrated that the 'do as I say because I say so and I am the manager' approach to managing people rarely leads to optimal individual, team or organisational performance. Rather, managers need to engage and empower people, build trust and create an environment in which people can succeed.

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 you could improve your personal power?

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

Trust - The Cornerstone of Personal Power

"The glue that holds all relationships together — including the relationship between the leader and the led — is trust, and trust is based on integrity." ~ Brian Tracy

Developing trusting relationships is critical to establishing personal power. This is particularly important for people with line management responsibilities, who at times will be required to influence people to do things they're reluctant to do. Social scientist and author Brené Brown has developed a model of trust – 'BRAVING' - that identifies the specific actions required to develop and sustain trusting relationships.

- **Boundaries:** You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.
- **Reliability**: You do what you say you'll do. At work this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't overcommit and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.
- **Accountability:** You own your mistakes, apologise and make amends.
- **Vault:** You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.
- **Integrity:** You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.
- **Non-Judgmental:** I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgement.
- **Generosity:** You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words and actions of others.

As a supervisor, it is important that you model behaviours that instil trust; only then can you expect your team to view you as trustworthy. In fact, a generally sound principle is that you need to assess your own trustworthiness before determining other people's.

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 described above. How you demonstrate these qualities will depend on the nature of your relationship with the manager in question, and the context in which you deal with them.

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.

Make sure you understand the person and their context, including:
- their goals and needs
- pressures on them
- their strengths, weaknesses and blind spots
- their preferred working and conflict management styles

If you're not sure above any of the above, ask!

Assess yourself and your needs including:
- your own strengths and weaknesses
- your personal style and how you manage conflict
- how effective you are as a 'follower'
- your attitude to authority and dependence

Based on the work of John Gabbaro and John Kotter.

In the context of the University, you also need to understand and follow necessary formal and informal protocol. In a situation where you are seeking further resources or a decision, make sure of the correct process. Who needs to be informed? Is there a sequence of who to inform first? Do you put things in writing or verbally? Again, if you're not sure – ask!

Activity – Influencing your Manager
What do you already know about your manager's preferences (e.g. how does they like information presented? What is their preferred method of communication?)

In what ways are you accommodating your manager's preferences in order to impact your relationship positively?

What specifically could you do differently to increase your influence with your manager?

Good Practice

- Take time to understand the strategic position, goals and objectives of your organisation;
- Seek feedback frequently, and accept that *even if you disagree* with the other person's perspective, it is useful for you to know how they perceive you;
- Provide positive feedback to your manager (e.g. 'I really appreciate you giving me the opportunity to work on this project.');
- Pay attention to the day-to-day opportunities to build trust and credibility; these are often established incrementally over time, so make the most of opportunities to demonstrate BRAVING, however small.

Common De-Railers

- Failing to adapt your communication and work style to meet the needs of your manager.
- Complaining about how your manager or others above you treat you, rather than taking action to effectively manage the situation.
- An unwillingness to take on developmental feedback.
- Being a 'yes' person to score points. Sometimes you will need to challenge your manager.

Taking it further
Perform a Google search on 'Managing Up' and 'Bases of Power'.
See for example: https://hbr.org/2015/01/what-everyone-should-know-about-managing-up.

Building Personal Power with team members

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 a period 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 that require you as the supervisor to exercise leadership that will move the team forward. Sometimes it will take courage to move in a direction that not everyone supports or is enthusiastic about. In these cases, it is your personal power, rather than your role as a supervisor, that can lead to success.

Building and maintaining personal power with your team requires that you:
- Not take attacks or lack of co-operation personally;
- 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

- Stay focussed on the issues, projects, goals and tasks for which you and your team are responsible;
- 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.

Common De-Railers - This list could be called How Not To Win Friends and Influence People

- 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/*

Activity – Improving your personal power

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:

TOPIC 3.2 - Assertiveness

Our biological response to potential danger or conflict is to fight – to become aggressive – or to flee – to become passive. While these innate reactions served us well in millennia past when we were surrounded by threats to our survival, in the contemporary workplace an aggressive or passive communication style is rarely helpful. Aggression can be characterised as pursuing or expressing our own needs, goals and feelings with little respect for those of others, while passivity is placing the needs of others before our own. Assertiveness is a communication and behavioural style in which we are respectful both of others and of ourselves. Most of us need to learn to be assertive, and for most people it takes a great deal of practice.

The advantages of assertive behaviour:
- Both parties' needs, views and boundaries can be expressed and understood, which often strengthens relationships. It also saves the mental and emotional energy that is often spent on trying to guess what others think and feel;
- While you may engage in more challenging conversations, you are likely to experience fewer conflicts and arguments, as any issues are dealt with swiftly;
- Your sense of proactivity and control increases which leads to further confidence for future assertive behaviour, and a likely rise in self-esteem;
- You increase the chances of your needs etc. being met, or your opinions being considered;

Circumstances that require assertiveness as a supervisor:
- Instructing team members to do something that they don't want to do. Stronger assertiveness may be required if they 'push back'.
- Saying 'no' to a colleague or team member who asks you to fulfil a request with which you're not willing to comply.
- Providing feedback to team members.

- Expressing a dissenting view to senior managers or in a meeting.
- Asking someone to change their behaviour.

If you're uncomfortable being assertive, it can be useful to start practising with people you trust, about small things. You may even want to establish an 'assertiveness coaching' partnership with someone, in which you both plan and practise assertive conversations. Your partner can also help you debrief and reflect on any communication so that you can continue to learn from experience.

When the other person is not co-operating
At times, the other person will behave as though you're having an argument and want to yell, criticise and goad, even though you are trying to be calm and direct. In these moments it can be useful to use active listening to try and distinguish between the content that is being expressed and the *'meaning'* that is driving the reaction. Usually when a person responds in this way it is because they are applying a negative meaning to the situation, such as they aren't valued, respected or 'good enough'. By seeking to understand the 'meaning' they have applied and responding to it, you will not only help them become emotionally more aware, but also defuse the situation more quickly. Some other 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.

While being assertive is a great starting point for building trust, at times you may occasionally decide that being assertive is not worth the time and energy (e.g. about an issue in which you have a low investment). Remember that sometimes it's okay to 'let things go' – as long as you don't make a habit of doing so about issues that are important to you.

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

- Ask the other person for their perspective before sharing your own;
- Use a 'light and low' approach, keeping your tone light and your pitch low. This will increase your own confidence and help the other person stay calm;
- 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;
- 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.

Use appropriate body language
- Look the person in the eye;
- 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;
- Failing to show respect for others and yourself;
- Giving into anger and taking the conversation to an unproductive point;
- Being passive, which often leads to resentment that stews 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 184-226

A key reference point for effective behaviours in the University's workplace are UniSA's 5 core staff attributes.

TOPIC 3.3 – Giving and Receiving Feedback

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 needs 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 specifically why or how the job was done well. The more specific the feedback, the more the individual can learn about their behaviour and their ability to meet expectations. Most people believe they rarely receive positive feedback; the power of *genuine, detailed* positive feedback cannot 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.

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

In order to have an impact, feedback must be provided in a way that is specific, timely, and appropriate to the receiver's preferences and need. 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.

> **Describe** the situation
> *When you offer to help Sally when she struggles with budgets,*
>
> **Indicate** the **impact**
> *I've noticed that you explain the details to her very clearly and patiently.*
>
> **Steps of action**
> *I'd like to explore ways to help others take similar initiative,*
>
> **Consequences (positive)**-describe them
> *So that we can all benefit from each other's skills and knowledge.*

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
- Recognition in a team meeting or in front of more senior mangers
- 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?

Difficult Conversations

Some of the most challenging feedback to give someone is feedback regarding something that has to be done differently. While this is critical in your role as a supervisor, it may take some time before you feel confident about providing developmental feedback. It can be helpful to remember that providing appropriate developmental feedback is likely to garner you respect as a supervisor, and that timely feedback about minor issues will avoid them becoming major problems.

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.

Make sure you refer only to observable behaviour, and that you give the other person a chance to explain their perspective before you share your own.

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.

Finishing the Conversation
In winding up the conversation, ensure that you have agreed a way forward. You might like to ask:
- What support do you need from me?
- How likely do you think it is that our plan will work?
- Is there anything else we need to do to ensure success?

Once you've agreed a way forward, tell the other person that you'll send them a short email confirming your understanding of the agreement. It's also wise to schedule a 'check-in' time in the near future so that you can discuss whether the agreed strategy is working, and what needs to change if it's not.

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. This usually happens when the person receiving the feedback makes a strong statement that is hard to move beyond, or when they 'clam up'. The following 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	
NEGATIVE • It's too expensive • We've tried that already • I don't want to, can't, etc	**RETHINKING** • 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 ….	**RETHINKING** • 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 ….	**REFRAMING** • 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**	
• I'm too old to change	• 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.	• If a person is putting up barriers, ask questions that present limited choices	• What do you think would work best, some extra training with a mentor or setting tighter deadlines? • Would you like to do XXXX first or would you rather do YYYY or even ZZZZ?

Activity – Practice Open Ended Questions active listening

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.

Common De-Railers

- Waiting too long to give feedback;
- Focusing on personality rather than observable behaviours;
- Approaching feedback with an accusatory tone;
- Not offering support
- …………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 they saw.

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

Scott, S 2002, *Fierce Conversations,* Hachette Digital, London.
Patterson, et al 2012, Crucial Conversations (2nd ed.), McGraw-Hill, New York.
Cole, 474-510

TOPIC 3.4 – Your Relationship with your Manager

Managing Up: An Overlooked Factor in Career Success

by Joanne Murray @ Management.Monster.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. They 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 their job effectively. Your supervisor needs your support and insight to advance their priorities and agenda. They need 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 them? 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? Do they 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 them in the loop, their 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 their 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?
- Do they 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

"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 them 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 them or against them. And it's a lot easier to work with them. You probably already go out of your way to accommodate clients or customers. So why not think of your manager as your client. They have 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 their manager and any outside pressures. Placing yourself in their shoes can provide insight into the demands they may also be under and help you gain perspective with regard to your own projects. Perhaps they are experiencing stress from their 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 them 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 them 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."

SECTION 4 – MANAGING YOUR TEAM: COMMON CHALLENGES

TOPIC 4.1 - Driving motivation and engagement

In his 2009 best-selling book, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us,* Dan Pink identified three factors that form the foundation of motivation at work:

- Autonomy – the desire to direct our own lives;
- Mastery – the urge to make progress and get better at something that matters; and
- Purpose – the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

Obviously, the degree to which you can provide opportunities for autonomy is to some extent limited by the purpose of your team, and the individual roles within it. However, Pink found that experiencing a sense of autonomy in any one of the four domains of *task*, *time*, *technique* or *team* can increase an individual's motivation significantly. Increasing workers' autonomy has the additional benefit of enhancing their capacity to problem-solve and innovate.

Mastery is all about improving our skills; becoming highly proficient at something that is challenging for us, but not *too* challenging. Pink suggests that asking employees to set their own goals, rather than imposing mastery goals upon them, will result in higher productivity and motivation. Think about your own career trajectory; many of us begin to think about 'moving on' when we feel we have learned all there is to learn in our current role. Helping your team members stay focussed on what they have yet to learn is an important part of retention, as well as motivation.

It can be difficult for those working at the lower levels of organisations to remember their role in the big-picture mission and goals of the organisation. Supervisors who remind their team and individuals of the value and purpose of their work – the *why* of what they do every day – are often those whose teams demonstrate high levels of motivation.

While Pink's work is helpful in identifying the critical components of motivation, it is important that supervisors take the time to understand the specific motivators for the individuals who report to them. This requires getting to know your staff both formally – through regular catch-ups, team meetings and briefings – and informally – over coffee, in the lunch room, and at the occasional team social event. If you're a task-oriented person yourself, this aspect of supervising can be quite tiring, but in the long-run investing in strong relationships with your team members will pay great dividends.

Good practice

- Encouraging everyone to think creatively about how they do what they do. Be open to suggestions that increase a sense of autonomy;
- Asking employees about their short and long-term learning and career goals;
- Regularly updating your team on how their work fits into the University's strategy and mission. This can be particularly important during times of change;
- Rewarding strong performance or effort *after* it has been exhibited (e.g. 'now that we've finished that project, let's go out to lunch').

Common De-Railers

- Ignoring the small opportunities to connect and get to know your team members;
- Exerting control over elements of work that are unimportant (e.g. imposing unnecessary deadlines);
- Setting up extrinsic rewards (e.g. 'if we get this done by Friday we'll go out to lunch');
- Judging people on their current performance, rather than on their potential;

- Assuming that because the strategy, mission and value of your team is clear to you, the rest of the team will recognise and understand it without you needing to reinforce it regularly. Fostering a sense of purpose for your team requires constant reinforcement.

Activity –

Consider the individuals in your team in relation to the three domains of Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose. If you have not yet established key motivators for each person, schedule a time to meet with them and find out what you can do to help maintain motivation. Some questions you might ask include:

- In what ways would you like to have more autonomy in your work?
- How do you like to be recognised and rewarded?
- What skills would you like to develop or improve upon?
- What are the tasks/relationships/projects that you thrive upon? Why?

TOPIC 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.

Supervisors play a critical role in employee engagement and retention. Research into what drives employee retention consistently cite the following as retention boosters:
- a positive relationship between the employee and their manager;
- the opportunity to develop and grow professionally;
- effective management of work-related stress.

Applying the principles outlined in this document will go a long way to maximising both employee attraction and retention.

Good practice

- Check-in regularly with employees about how they are feeling about their work and the team as a whole;
- Where people do leave the team, ask them to provide feedback by way of an exit interview to better understand what factors influenced their decision to leave.

Common De-Railers

- Not recognising that the team is comprised of a range of individuals who will have different motivations, values and preferences, and not seeking to understand those differences;
- Thinking that because you can't offer them more money, there is nothing you can do to attract or retain the best talent.

TOPIC 4.3 - Creating a cohesive and inclusive team

In today's workplaces, teams are comprised of an incredibly diverse range of individuals in terms of both the primary dimensions of diversity; gender, age, race, sexual orientation etc, – and the secondary dimensions of diversity – for example, family status, work background, religion and education. A large body of research demonstrates that diverse groups outperform homogenous groups in a range of ways; increased innovation, better decision-making, improved customer responsiveness – but that an inclusive team and organisational culture is essential if these benefits are to be harnessed.

The key to inclusion is a leader who is willing not just to tolerate diversity, but to encourage debate, discussion and even dissent.

Finally, it may be that there are people on your team with significantly more knowledge and/or experience than you have. While it is understandable to feel threatened by someone who has years more experience in the University environment than you do, or is far more tech-savvy than you are, these people can be a fantastic asset to you as a supervisor and to your team more broadly.

Good practice

- Systematise ways in which individuals can share their strengths, skills, knowledge and experience with one another, for example, undertaking short presentations at team meetings;
- Encourage collaboration not competition.

Common De-Railers

- Being defensive about someone else's skills, abilities or background;
- Shutting down perceptions or opinions that are different from your own.

Taking it further
Winter, G 2016, Think One Team (2nd Edition), Wiley, Melbourne has a wide array of good ideas on team building.

TOPIC 4.4 - Team Meetings - An Important Tool for Communication

Regular, well-run team meetings are fundamental to team success; poorly-run team meetings can lead to apathy and disengagement. Ideally, your team meetings will provide an opportunity to:

1. Strengthen and deepen relationships between team members;
2. Provide an opportunity for updates, feedback and evaluation of current projects;
3. Allocate responsibilities;
4. Make decisions.

Good Practice

- Schedule a regular time and place for team meetings, and let it be known that attendance is compulsory;
- Consult with your team about Chair and Note-taking roles. Some teams will want to share these responsibilities, but you may wish to be the Chair until the meetings are running smoothly. Make sure everyone is clear about the role of the Chair and Note-taker;

- Send out a meeting notice and agenda with purpose, place, time and any required preparation as far in advance as possible;
- 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;
- 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.

Common De-Railers

- Allowing one or two people to dominate the meeting;
- Digressing from the main topic;
- 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.

TOPIC 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*

TOPIC 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. Bookmark, print or save useful sections of it and add them to your toolkit.

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 PTC contact person;
- Remember the Employee Assistance Program is available and may be part of the solution (https://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/ptc/safety-and-wellbeing/wellbeing/employee-assistance-program/);
- If you are in an open office, it is important to move to a private meeting room for any discussion around resolving conflict.

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.

Taking it further
Cole, 218-221
The Conflict Resolution Network http://www.crnhq.org/

SECTION 5 – MANAGING DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE

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

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

- Daily interactions and meaningful conversations;
- Regular catch ups to exchange ideas and progress and give and receive feedback;
- Formal review (which should 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
On any given day, performance development and 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, commends someone on a job well done or suggests where a project, clinical practice or task needs to be 'tweaked' they are undertaking the most important part of performance development and management: **meaningful conversations** as situations arise**.

Planned Feedback Sessions
Many managers plan regular catch-up meetings with their staff members weekly or fortnightly. While this is not usually based on formal documentation, it does provide greater structure for the feedback process. It also gives staff members an opportunity to provide feedback to their supervisors, seek clarification on delegated tasks, share information and keep track of ongoing projects.

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.

Formal Feedback
Formal performance management reviews are usually undertaken at 6 month and 12-month intervals.
The formal review **should contain no surprises** for either party. Issues, progress, and challenges should all have been discussed as part of the daily working routine. The formal review simply 'puts into print' a summary of activities and outcomes that have occurred over a period of time.

The 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;
- Giving feedback only on the outcome of a task/project and failing to highlight the behavioural attributes that supported or impeded the task/project;
- 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 Development and Management page](#) or:

Managing Your Development @ UniSA: A Quick Guide for Professional Staff
https://i.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/human-resources/ptc/files/guidelines/staff-training/managing_your_development_GQ.pdf

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 development and performance should be a KPI in your performance plan.

Taking it further
Cole, Chapter 12

UniSA's [Induction,](#) [Performance and Development,](#) and [People, Talent and Culture](#) websites contain a wealth of additional information and resources.