



Improving Supervision

*Please note this is a preview copy.
If you would like printed copies please complete the on-line order form.*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim of this brochure

This brochure gives supervisors in the field tools to solve typical supervisory problems and on-the-job training tips to improve their skills. It helps both the facilitator and the participating supervisors, who may go on to act as facilitators themselves. The brochure aims to improve the skills of recently appointed supervisors and to provide a refresher course for more experienced personnel, helping supervisors to run an operation that is safe as well as profitable. (For this brochure, a supervisor is anyone who has one or more people working for them.)

There are a number of information sections about supervision, two diagnosis tools, and a section with advice about improving supervision focused on personal skills. The Step by Step plan in the Centrefold will guide you through the whole process. This brochure is designed so that all tools and tips provided can be used without extra training. The focus is on what YOU as a supervisor can change yourself. As managers also supervise, this brochure and the improvement process also apply to them; they should treat their staff as their 'crew'.

1.2 Using this brochure

The Step by Step process, in the Centrefold, is recommended to identify problems with the quality of supervision and drive improvement. The facilitator is supported by the website information, such as the powerpoint presentation and the pre-printed flipcharts.

New supervisors, on being promoted, should engage in this process with a number of more experienced colleagues. More experienced supervisors can then take the opportunity to do a refresher course in their supervisory skills as well as imparting their knowledge to newcomers.

Areas where attention needs to be directed, such as specific assets, worksites or functions, should be identified and groups of supervisors and managers brought together for the workshop. All involved will benefit from reading this brochure in advance of the workshop.

1.3 Process

Up to 18 supervisors can be managed by a facilitator, breaking out into small syndicate groups of 4-6 when working on specific issues. Once these groups have been identified the process can take 4-6 hours, or can be split up into smaller sessions (3.3, 3.4 & 3.5) that may only take 45-60 minutes, for example in morning meetings or as part of an on-going improvement process.

Small syndicate groups concentrate on common problem areas identified in the first part of the process, using worksheets related to the *HSE – Understanding your Culture* brochure. Supervisors can also examine, either on their own or in the group, their personal leadership style and discover whether it is appropriate for the current levels of motivation and competence of their crew and the tasks they are required to perform.

Once the workshop process is complete each supervisor will have developed a Personal Action Plan, including specific targets and review dates and an identification of their dominant Leadership Style. Supervisors take this plan away and work with it. If more people have the same problems, especially when they cannot be resolved by individual action, these should be reported to management. The process in this brochure will provide a well-founded case for management to take common problems further.

The process can be repeated every 6-12 months in order to assess whether improvements have taken place and to discover and work on those areas that are still in need of improvement. Management should ensure that the action plans are supported and, where necessary, that the proposed improvements are implemented within an agreed, short time span.

1.4 Why focus on Supervision?

Technicians are often promoted to supervisors because of their technical skills and ability to meet production targets. However, a very skilled employee will not necessarily be a good supervisor. Many incidents within the energy industry have occurred because of a lack of, or ineffective supervision.

Management and people skills training, however, is often given after all technical courses have been completed, when a supervisor has already been working in a new position for a period of several months, or even years. The problem with this delay in training is that the supervisor may have already adopted unsuitable supervisory styles that are very hard to change through training.

1.5 Supervisors and incident prevention

Initially safety improvements were made by applying technology and standards. Later, introducing HSE Management Systems improved performance by providing assurance that the technology and standards were applied consistently. Nowadays continuous improvement requires creating a culture in which people are intrinsically motivated to operate the elements of the Management System (See illustration opposite). Supervisors are key in creating such a culture. Supervisors also run extra risks; studies of fatal accidents have found that supervisors have a greater risk of being killed than their workforce when they stop supervising and intervene themselves.

The role of supervisors is critical in the workplace, as they are the key people in accident prevention. On a day-to-day basis the supervisor manages the barriers that control workplace hazards. Supervisors can prevent accidents by setting high personal standards, providing clear work instructions, assigning competent people to jobs, motivating people to work safely and adhering to the highest standards of housekeeping. They are not just there to ensure production targets are met. In short, supervisors make a considerable contribution to the safe working conditions of the workforce and the HSE culture.

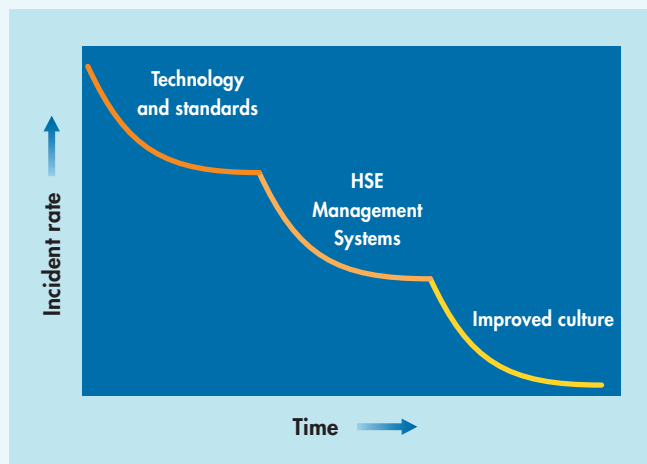
Most supervisors report that 80 - 90% of their problems are not caused by lack of technical knowledge, but are problems relating to managing their work and their workforce. For this reason, this brochure concentrates mainly on the non-technical aspects of supervision.

1.6 What is Hearts and Minds about?

The Hearts and Minds project was started in 1998, to promote the understanding and development of personal motivation for safety in the workforce. A century of scientific knowledge about how and why people behave the way they do has been packaged in brochures for people to use in their daily work.

All brochures can be used without any extra training by you and your team; they are intended to create less work instead of more, and most importantly, to be enjoyable and fun to use.

Improving Supervision helps you identify non-technical problems in supervision, and provides solutions to manage and improve these issues.



HSE performance over time

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	What a supervisor should be doing	4
3	Finding your way: Step by Step	6
4	Leadership styles	8
5	What next after completing this brochure?	10
	Worksheets	11
	Summary	12

4.0 Leadership Styles

All supervisors have their own style of managing their job and their people. Unfortunately, a successful leadership style in one situation will not guarantee success in another. We can distinguish four styles that supervisors can adopt. These four styles are:

- **Telling** - a strongly directive style
- **Teaching** - a style that adds explanation to direction and encourages people
- **Participating** - a style where leadership is shown by providing an example
- **Delegating** - a style where the leader demonstrates trust in the competence and motivation of the crew.

There is no one perfect style of leadership and supervision (see box **The right style at the right time**). Taken to extremes each style can become undesirable. Sections 4.1 to 4.4 describe both the normal and the undesirable behaviours. Table 1 breaks down different leadership styles into specific behavioural aspects to help you recognise the leadership style you prefer using and define how you might behave when applying a different style. Table 2 shows how differences in a crew's motivation and competence require different leadership styles, with the undesirable styles shown in red. You should realise that success in developing and motivating your team will require you to change your style from time to time.

ASPECTS		Telling	Teaching	Participating	Delegating
A	Response to technical problems	Always 'reacting' to problems: Team plan always changing	Use problems to coach the team	Learning lessons to avoid repeats	Planning in advance to minimise problems.
B	Job planning	Detail down to individual level. Define goals clearly	Detail with explanation. develop alternatives.	Facilitate planning process. Less attention to detail, more to solving possible problems	Target setting. No detail but monitoring of progress
C	Personal planning	React to events as they happen. Always on site	Time spent coaching takes precedence over demands from outside	Get things done, if necessary outside of normal working hours	Work planned and prioritised for others, leaving time for strategic thinking and the team
D	Team Leadership	Clear hierarchy, No arguments about who is boss	Hierarchy by agreement and respect for experience	Lead by example	Set strategy, provide support when needed
E	Work-related behaviour	Physically present, watch the work being done	Teaching role, lots of observation, feedback and on the job training	One of the team, but the best qualified	Ahead of events. Manage the program and the paperwork
F	Communication	Specific instructions about what to do	Explain decisions, allowing time to make things clear	Share ideas and facilitate discussions	Turn over responsibility for day to day activities. Talk about long term goals
G	Motivation & Trust	Give motivational speeches but do not trust them until they have earned it	Interested in relationships and people. Work to develop trust in both directions	Inclusive, everyone is involved; supervisor is one of us. You can do it if I can	Exude trust. Listen, show belief in team's abilities

Crew motivation HIGH LOW	Teaching - Patronising	Delegating - Abdicating
	Telling - Yelling	Participating - "Do it all"
	LOW	HIGH

Crew Competence

4.1 Telling versus Yelling Supervisor

Telling supervisors give detailed instructions and supervise their crew's performance closely. These supervisors mainly concentrate on the task to be performed and less on their relations with people. They tell the crew *what* to do, *where* and *when* to do it, and *how* to do it. This leadership style is very effective when the crew is low in competence and motivation, when clear direction is required. The leader must provide clear objectives, outcomes, sub-tasks etc. before it is possible to concentrate on developing personal relations within the group.

Yelling supervisors do not have a very friendly leadership style. They shout and scream, call people names and make personal verbal attacks. They dominate the group, use their power to get things done and blame everybody when things go wrong. People are afraid of this supervisor.

4.2 Teaching versus Patronising Supervisor

Teaching supervisors need to manage a group that is not fully competent and needs coaching, but is motivated to perform. The best way to guide these people is, like a good teacher, to focus on both people and tasks. The focus on the task is important because the people are still unable to perform the task independently. Since they are trying, it is important to keep the group motivated. As well as guidance and direction, teaching supervisors provide room for dialogue in order to get the crew 'on board' – i.e. win their hearts and minds. Teaching supervisors explain *why* people have to do certain things.

Patronising supervisors can be over-enthusiastic and may be over-focused on a specific detail that becomes a topic in itself. Other negative aspects of patronising supervisors are manipulative behaviour, subjective interpretation of data, pushing their own agenda and offending the workforce by underestimating them.

4.3 Participating versus Do-it-all Supervisor

Participating supervisors are in charge of a group that has the competence to do a job, but who are not motivated or confident about doing it on their own. The best way to deal with this situation is to encourage an open two-way communication and supportive behaviour. It is not necessary to put a detailed focus on the task, as they already have the skills. Discussion and supportive behaviour is the appropriate way to deal with this situation. This type of supervisor shares ideas and facilitates the making of decisions.

Do-it-all supervisors have difficulty in delegating responsibilities, thinking they are the only ones who can perform a job in a quick and safe way, assuming that this behaviour will be appreciated by the crew. Such supervisors have no real faith in either their crew or management and feel

powerless because they won't be understood anyway. Do-it-all supervisors get killed while doing the job without anyone else supervising them.

4.4 The Delegating versus Abdicating Supervisor

Delegating supervisors do not need to be present all the time. The crew has enough skills and motivation to perform a job without any guidance from the supervisor. Delegating supervisors do not need to provide guidance on what, how, where or when to work because the crew already has the ability. This also applies to providing supportive behaviour, as their crew are confident, committed and self-motivated. The appropriate style is to give people the maximum amount of freedom. Delegating supervisors have to keep in mind that some supportive behaviour is still needed, but it is less than average. It is important to monitor what is going on, but people need to have the opportunity to take responsibility and implement their own ideas.

A delegating supervisor gives responsibility for decisions and implementation to the crew, giving them the opportunity to find best practice themselves with the background support of the supervisor.

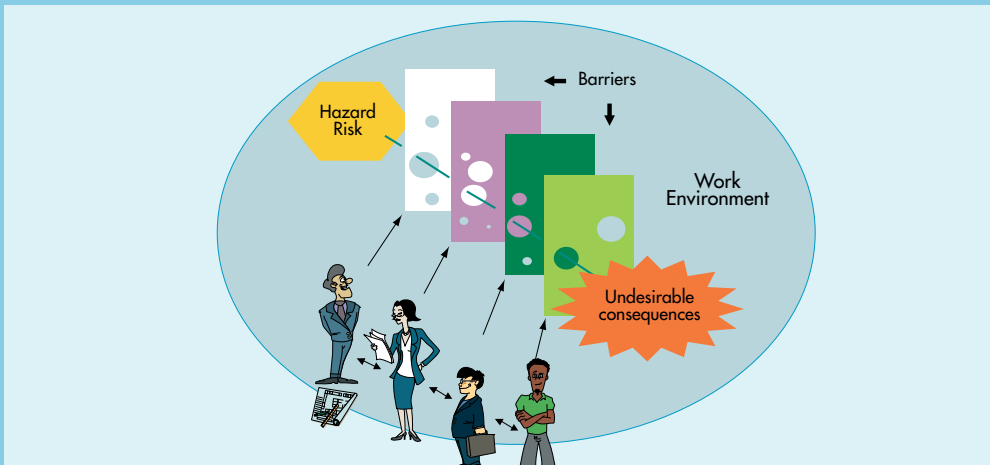
Abdicating supervisors have given their crew so much freedom that they get disconnected from their people. The crew feels that their supervisor is not interested in the job and is not a part of the team anymore. He hardly goes out to site, the only thing he does is receive credit from the management for what his crew achieves.

The right style at the right time

Applying a leadership style in the wrong situation can result in an unwanted situation. For instance, some national cultures are more comfortable with a participating style. Other cultures may prefer a more authoritarian style, but crews may need to be left to work on their own. Even in cultures that are used to being controlled, if a 'telling' leadership style is used with an experienced, motivated crew, problems can still arise; they may feel controlled, and that there is a lack of trust. Yet in the same culture a 'delegating' style with an inexperienced crew, low on motivation, leaves the crew with too much freedom, feeling lost, and lacking knowledge about what they have to do. The best supervisors realise what style their crew needs as well as which style they feel comfortable with. They learn to adapt their style to the local culture and the needs of the task. This is very important when supervisors and crew are from different cultures.

Improving Supervision

In managing hazards and risks in our business the effective implementation and maintenance of barriers and controls are critical to prevent undesirable outcomes from occurring (see figure below). Our supervisors are essential to ensure this happens. If there is a lack of supervision, or ineffective supervision, then these barriers and controls become difficult to implement and maintain. This can result in the release of the hazard, which could result in an incident. All too often incident investigations have established that if there had been effective supervision the incident would not have happened. The conclusion is that supervision is a major component of the integrity of the HSE Management System.



Historically, technical excellence and the technical aspects of supervision have been given full more emphasis than the non-technical aspects of supervision such as how to manage a team you are supervising. This brochure helps supervisors to identify where they stand and which aspects of non-technical supervision they need to improve.

The process in the brochure should not be seen as a one-off event or initiative, that the supervisor can walk away from. If that were the case the process would “die” and so would improvement in supervision in the company. Instead, the brochure and process are designed to be applied regularly. If this is done it will be “alive”, enabling supervisors to improve in all their supervisory skills in the long term.

For more information please visit www.energyinst.org.uk/heartsandminds

Inserts can be ordered separately from the brochure.



The Hearts and Minds logo is a Trademark of Shell and can only be used with written permission from SIEP, EPS-HSE. Documents with the Trademark have been checked for their correctness and effectiveness.

This brochure has been developed by SIEP B.V. for use by Shell Group Companies but can also be made available to third parties. SIEP B.V. does not accept responsibility for any consequences whatsoever of its use.