

THE TRAINING PROGRAM (FABRICS, INC.)

JOB TITLE: SUPERVISOR

TASKS

Organize jobs in manner that ensures completion on time

Monitor progress of work

Listen effectively

And so forth . . .

SUBTASKS

Examine jobs and assess time required

Sort and give jobs to appropriate employees

Talk to employees about their progress on jobs

Examine specific job products during production to ensure quality

Provide feedback to employees about performance

SPECIFIC DUTY: BE SURE WORK IS COMPLETED AND SENT TO THE CUSTOMER ON TIME

KSAs

Knowledge of types of jobs we get
Knowledge of times required for jobs to be completed

Organization and prioritizing skills
Knowledge of employees' capabilities

Knowledge of proper feedback
Effective feedback skills
Helping attitude

Knowledge of quality standards
Quality assessment skills

Knowledge of effective listening skills
Knowledge of conflict styles

Conflict resolution skills
Knowledge of proper feedback

Effective feedback skills
Positive attitude for treating employees with respect

Next, the consultant met with the supervisors, first as a single group of nine to do an operational analysis and then individually to discuss individual performance. He chose to use a slightly different approach to the operational analysis because he expected that they might have some problems working from the form used with the owner. The following excerpt comes from that interview.

To begin the meeting, the consultant said:

I am here to find out just what your job as supervisor entails. This step is the first in determining what training we can provide to make you more effective in your job. First, we need to know what it is you do on the job. So I am going to let you provide me with a list of the things you do on the job—the tasks. Let me give you an example of what I mean. For the job of a salesperson, I might be told a required task was to "sell printers." This description is too general to be useful, or you might say you must

"introduce yourself to a new client," which is too specific. What we need is somewhere in between these two extremes, such as "make oral presentation to a small group of people." Are there any questions? OK, let's begin.

Q: Think of a typical Monday. What's the first thing you do when you arrive at work?

A: Check the answering machine.

Q: That is a little too specific. Why do you check the answering machine?

A: I need to return any important calls from suppliers or customers.

Q: What do these calls deal with?

A: Complaints usually, although some are checking on the status of their job.

Q: Anybody else do anything different from that?

A: No.

Q: What do you do next?

A: Examine the jobs that have come in and prioritize them based on their complexity and due date.

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- Q: The task, then, is organizing and prioritizing the new jobs you received. What next?
- A: Meet with each subordinate, see how they are doing, and distribute the new work.
- Q: Tell me what "see how they are doing" means.
- A: I make sure that they are on schedule with their work. I check their progress on the jobs they are working on.
- Q: OK, so check on progress of subordinates is the task. What next?
- A: After all the work is distributed, I check to see what orders are due to be completed and sent out today.
- Q: OK, but I guess that assumes everyone is on schedule. What do you do if someone is behind in their job?
- A: Depends how far behind the job is. If it is serious, I may simply take the job away and give it to someone I think can do the job faster.
- A: I do not do that. I find out what the problem is and help the person get back on track.
- Q: So you spend some time training that person?
- A: Well, sort of. It is not formal training, but I will see why the person is having problems and give some of my "tricks of the trade" to speed things up.
- Q: Anybody deal with this issue differently?
- A: I do not usually have the time to do any training. I will give it to someone who can do it, or in some cases, just do the job myself. Sometimes that is faster. After all, we have all this useless paperwork that we have to do.
- Q: I want to come back to the paperwork, but first, are you saying that no standard exists for dealing with employees who are having problems with particular jobs?
- A: Sure there is. The boss expects us to train them, but with the pressure for production, we often do not have time to do that.
- A: Well, I agree with that. Even though I do stop and spend time helping, I often feel the pressure to rush and probably do not do a good job of it. I do try and tell them what they need to do to improve in the particular area.

Although the format used in the session starts first thing in the morning and continues through a typical

day, clues often emerge as to other tasks that are done. The mentioning of "tell them what they need to do to improve" causes the consultant to focus on that task and what other tasks are related to it, because the owner did indicate that providing feedback was an important task.

- Q: OK, let's look at the issue of telling them how to improve. We could think of that as giving feedback to employees. What other tasks require you to discuss things with subordinates?
- A: We are supposed to deal with their concerns.
- A: Yeah, that's right, and also we are supposed to meet one-on-one with them and discuss their performance. Trouble is, these new employees are know-it-alls and not willing to listen.
- A: You're right about that. On more than one occasion, many of us resort to yelling at these guys to get them to respond.
- A: Boy, is that ever true.
- Q: What about the paperwork?
- A: Well, it is stupid. A clerk could do it, but we are expected to do it. If we do not, then billing and other problems come up, so we have to do it or else. . . .
- A: Yeah, it takes away from us being out here where we are needed.

And so forth. . . .

Other questions that might be asked:

What is the next thing you would do in the afternoon?

The next?

What is the last thing you do in the day?

That pretty much describes a typical day (Monday in this case). Is there anything you would do at the beginning of the week (Monday) that is not done at other times?

How about at the end of the week? Is there anything you do then that is not done during the rest of the week?

Is there anything that you do only once or twice a week that we missed?

Now think about the beginning of the month.

What do you do at the beginning of the month that is not done at other times?

How about the end of the month?

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