Essentials of Supervision

Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc.

presented for

2011 Nonprofit Essentials
The Nuts and Bolts of Practical Management
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Session Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, you will have begun the process of:

- Recognizing the characteristics of “heroic” management and their effects on a work group.

- Understanding the central orientation and core components of post-heroic management approaches.

- Identifying six distinct types of management approaches, analyzing the benefits of each, and identifying under what circumstances these approaches are likely to be effective.

- Identifying specific competencies and skills most important to the development of management effectiveness.

- Understanding three key characteristics of excellent communicators and effective managers.

- Improving listening skills.

- Avoiding roadblocks to communication and employing listening skills as a key skill in solving problems as a manager.

- Improving skills in the delivery of performance feedback to employees.
What is a “Good” Manager?

“My ideal of a manager is a person who would really be looked up to by those around him as a model for their lives and for help and guidance. Many people might even have a kind of an awe or reverence for him. He would be much more concerned with being respected than liked. Close personal relationships would be somewhat incidental. The person would clearly be seen as in control of the organization and know everything that is going on and how to handle it. He would be viewed as infallible and unaffected by things going on around him, not very emotional, and rarely, if ever, displaying emotions to others. He’d usually be perceived as the brightest person in the organization, able to solve things quickly and with a high degree of sophistication. This manager would be essential to the functioning of the organization; without him it would quickly fall apart. He’s responsible for orchestrating the workings of the entire system.”

— adapted from *Managing for Excellence*
David L. Bradford and Allan R. Cohen
The “Hero” Manager

Core characteristics of Heroism:

- Takes sole responsibility for the unit or department
- Has the most information - always knows what’s going on
- Has the greatest expertise
- Can solve any problem by himself/herself
Vicious Cycle of Heroic Management

Tough, cool, star-quality hero wanted

Heroic manager arrives to “save the day”

Manager becomes over-responsible . . .

... for coordination
- Employees feel over-controlled

... for answers
- Employees feel blocked, underused

... for unit results
- Employees have commitment only to own goals

Employees feel lower commitment and sense of responsibility; strive only for adequate performance
Characteristics of Hero-as-Technician

One reason why the “heroic” approach is common is that most persons are considered for an ultimately promoted into management because of their past performance in the technical aspects of the job - they become managers of a particular function because of their demonstrated success in (and love of?) that function. It is a challenge for most organizations to find those with functional expertise and demonstrated expertise in dealing with people. He/she likely presumes (consciously or unconsciously): “If technical expertise got me into management, why wouldn’t I manage employees through acting as a technical expert?” The hero-as-technician needs to know all aspects of the technical work, know what to do in every situation, and have the answers to all problems. Saying “I don’t know” is a sign of personal and managerial failure.

- Knows all aspects of the job
- Exerts control through demanding task excellence
- Solves employees’ problems for them - does not effectively promote development
- Focuses on functional problems, not human factors

Characteristics of Hero-as-Conductor

Many managers recognize that managing using a “hero-as-technician” approach can be counter-productive, and so have shifted to more of a people focus - but continue to carry the “hero” characteristics into this change of focus. Here, the “hero” manager involves employees, but still casts himself/herself as the central, heroic figure who orchestrates all the individual parts of the unit into one harmonious whole. The manager has as grand plan and keeps everyone working at his or her piece of it, and uses technical/functional knowledge as a tool for keeping order and for getting everyone to do what is needed.

- Controls activities of employees to be sure that work is done “right”
- Acts as central decision-maker and coordinator
- Determines how work is divided and integrated
- Works hard to stay on top of all activities to prevent chaos, inertia, rebellion, and incompetence
A Heroic Management “Acid Test”

This excerpt provides a wonderful “acid test” for whether we are developing our employees’ capacity to perform at a high level, or whether we are increasing their dependency on us as managers:

If you can answer the questions that make it to your desk, something’s wrong with your system. The supervisor/manager gets paid, 100 percent as I see it, for dealing only with dilemmas that cannot be dealt with by those closer to the action. If you can readily answer the questions that come to you, then “they” aren’t stepping up to the plate. (Doubtless because you haven’t allowed them to!) Look at the queries that come your way in the course of the next week. If they aren’t imponderables, if you can answer most of them, then take a serious look at your system - and wonder why such stuff makes it to you and distracts you from the issues you should be dealing with.

— adapted from Liberation Management
Tom Peters
Virtuous Cycle of Post-Heroic Management

Tough, cool, star-quality hero wanted

Manager recognizes that shared responsibility will achieve better results

Manager develops shared responsibility with employees . . .

... for coordination  ... for answers  ... for unit results

Employees feel involved  Employees feel valued, apply knowledge and skills  Employees develop commitment to unit goals

Employees develop internal commitment and sense of shared responsibility; strive for excellent performance
Post-Heroic Approaches

Central Orientation

How can each problem be solved in a way that further develops my employees’ commitment and capabilities?

Core Components

- Building a common vision/mission
- Building a shared-responsibility work group
- Continuous development of individual skills
# Six Management Approaches

Hay/McBer Study - Daniel Goleman  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General approach</th>
<th>Style in a phrase</th>
<th>Emotional intelligence competencies</th>
<th>When it works best</th>
<th>Impact on climate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>“Do what I tell you”</td>
<td>Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control</td>
<td>In a crisis, to kick start a turnaround, or with problem employees</td>
<td>Negative (-.26)</td>
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<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>“Come with me”</td>
<td>Self-confidence, empathy, change catalyst</td>
<td>When changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed</td>
<td>Positive (.54)</td>
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<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>“People come first”</td>
<td>Empathy, building relationships, communication</td>
<td>To heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances</td>
<td>Positive (.46)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>“What do you think?”</td>
<td>Collaboration, team leadership, communication</td>
<td>To build buy-in or consensus, or to get input from valuable employees</td>
<td>Positive (.43)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacesetting</td>
<td>“Do as I do, now”</td>
<td>Conscientiousness, drive to achieve, initiative</td>
<td>To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team</td>
<td>Negative (-.25)</td>
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<td>Coaching</td>
<td>“Try this”</td>
<td>Developing others, empathy, self-awareness</td>
<td>To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths</td>
<td>Positive (.42)</td>
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## Capabilities, Competencies & Skills

### Self-Awareness

**Emotional self-awareness:** the ability to read and understand your emotions as well as recognize their impact on work performance, relationships, and the like.

**Accurate self-assessment:** a realistic evaluation of your strengths and limitations

**Self-confidence:** a strong and positive sense of self-worth.

### Self-Management

**Self-control:** the ability to keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control

**Trustworthiness:** a consistent display of honesty and integrity.

**Conscientiousness:** the ability to manage yourself and your responsibilities.

**Adaptability:** skill at adjusting to changing situations and overcoming obstacles.

**Achievement orientation:** the drive to meet an internal standard of excellence.

**Initiative:** a readiness to seize opportunities.

### Social Awareness

**Empathy:** skill at sensing other people’s emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking an active interest in their concerns.

**Organizational awareness:** the ability to read the currents of organizational life, build decision networks, and navigate politics.

**Service orientation:** the ability to recognize and meet customers’ needs.

### Social Skill

**Visionary leadership:** the ability to take charge and inspire with a compelling vision.

**Influence:** the ability to wield a range of persuasive tactics.

**Developing others:** the propensity to bolster the abilities of others through feedback and guidance.

**Communication:** skill at listening and at sending clear, convincing, and well-tuned messages.

**Change catalyst:** proficiency in initiating new ideas and leading people in a new direction.

**Conflict management:** the ability to de-escalate disagreements and orchestrate resolutions.

**Building bonds:** proficiency at cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships.

**Teamwork and collaboration:** competence at promoting cooperation and building teams.
Peer Consulting Opportunity

- Describe a key challenge you are facing as a manager right now.
- How have you approached this challenge up to now?
- What about your approach so far has been effective? Ineffective?
Characteristics of Excellent Communicators

Well-formed expectations

*They know what they expect and communicate it clearly to others*

Keen observational skills

*They are keen observers of others during interactions and recognize when they are failing to achieve desired outcomes*

Behavioral flexibility

*They use failure to achieve desired outcomes as feedback and adjust personal behaviors accordingly*
Problem Solving – Two Approaches

**Heroic**

Employee brings problem or concern to the manager

Manager listens

Manager solves problem or concern

**Post-Heroic**

Employee brings problem or concern to the manager

Manager listens

Employee solves problem or solves it jointly with the manager

- For each approach - who “owns” the problem?
- For each approach - who “owns” the solution?
- Which approach will more effectively develop employee commitment?
- Which approach will more effectively develop employee capability?
Roadblocks to Communication

When a problem comes to you, do you:

- First try to analyze what’s wrong and give him/her suggestions?
- Immediately offer advice from your own experience?
- Ask pertinent questions to get more information so you can determine what solutions are likely to work best?
- Compliment the employee and reassure him/her that he/she will be able to work out the problem?

These approaches, though well-intended, are often roadblocks to communication and signs of the “hero” manager welling up within us. When we engage in the following roadblocks to communication, we limit the development of our employees’ capabilities and commitment:
Characteristics of Listening

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<th>Door Openers</th>
<th>Passive Listening</th>
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<th>Acknowledgement Responses</th>
<th>Active Listening</th>
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Door openers, passive listening, and acknowledgement responses - important though they are - show only the listener’s intent to understand. Only active listening actually confirms and demonstrates that the listener has understood.
Active Listening

Active listening is the process of:

- Checking for understanding, and
- Encouraging more discussion

**Examples:**

**Sender:** I don’t know how I’m going to sort out this problem.
**Listener:** *It sounds like you’re nervous about figuring out the cause of the problem.* - or -
**Listener:** *You’re concerned that you might not succeed in solving this issue.*

**Sender:** I thought that the meeting today accomplished nothing!
**Listener:** *You feel we could have accomplished much more.* - or -
**Listener:** *You’re thinking that we didn’t agree on practical action plans.*

**Sender:** The program that we use for this is totally useless!
**Listener:** *You don’t feel that it is an effective, practical application for us.* - or -
**Listener:** *You’re finding that it holds back your productivity.*

Active listening is honestly and accurately confirming what you’ve heard the speaker say. The listener should concentrate on reflecting both the content of the message and the feeling of the speaker whenever possible. It takes focus and a heartfelt genuineness to do this. Here are some generic ways to prompt your own active listening responses:

When you are reasonably confident you understand the speaker’s message:

- It sounds like you are saying . . .
- What I hear you saying is . . .
- You feel angry about . . .
- You’re getting frustrated with . . .

If you’re not so confident, leave room for confirmation like this:

- It sounds like you’re saying . . .
- If I understand you, you’re saying . . .
- What I’m hearing you say is . . .

Active listening is **not**:

- Parroting back exactly what is being said (condescending)
- Twisting the speaker’s words into a different interpretation (manipulative)
Effects of Active Listening

Using active listening responses demonstrates empathy and acceptance of the individual - two elements critical to beginning the problem-solving process. They communicate:

- I sense what you are feeling
- I understand how you are seeing things now
- I see you as you are
- I am interested and concerned
- You need not feel afraid of my censure

*Active listening helps you as a manager keep the ownership of the problem with the employee, rather than taking it from the employee.*

*When you take the responsibility for problem resolution away from the employee and onto yourself, you strip the employee of being able to have internal commitment for problem resolution.*
Reluctance to Use Active Listening

Often, managers are reluctant to use active listening because:

- They are afraid that active listening communicates agreement with the sender’s predicament and will foster complacency
- They are afraid that the feelings which have been communicated by the sender are permanent
- They see it as unnatural and/or are afraid it will look “fake”

Key points:

- Communicating acceptance of the individual is the first stage of effective problem resolution
- Communicating acceptance of the individual is not the same as communicating agreement with the nature or “permanency” of the problem
- Active listening responses tend to defuse emotions and get to the real heart of the matter
- With difficult problems, it is rare for an employee to present the “whole” problem right away - especially when he/she knows that some or all of the problem’s cause may really be his/her own!

People’s problems are like onions - they come in layers. Only after the outside layers are peeled off do they get down to the core problem. Sometimes people know what the real problem is but are afraid to start there; more often they are not even aware of what is underneath. When a person starts out talking to you about some bothersome problem, you generally hear only the “presenting problem.” Active listening effectively facilitates the [employee] to move through the presenting problem and finally get down to the core problem.

- Thomas Gordon
Active Listening Exercise

In the space provided, write down one or two active listening response(s) to the statements given:

1. That was a great meeting this morning.

2. I’m having trouble with that project.

3. [Name] is always monopolizing the discussion in meetings.

4. My work is never appreciated.
Peer Consulting Opportunity

- Describe a key challenge you are facing as a manager right now.

- How have you approached this challenge up to now?

- What about your approach so far has been effective? Ineffective?
Praise of Positive Performance

How effectively are you using praise as positive feedback to motivate employees?

*Provide a specific example of positive performance for employees who report to you.*

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>C</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Specific Performance Example</th>
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*Place a check mark in the box labeled “C” next to the employee’s name if you have already communicated a positive comment to him/her about the performance.*

*Place a check mark in the box labeled “D” if you have documented this performance example in writing.*
Components of Effective Performance Feedback

**Expectation**
A statement of the performance and/or results you expect.

**Observation**
A specific description of what you observed and/or data you have seen that indicates the results of the employee’s performance.

**Importance**
A statement of the importance of what you have observed - grounded in tangible business consequences and supported by your actions.

*To be most effective, feedback must be immediate.*
Action Planning

What must I do to recognize heroic management approaches and ensure that my approaches to situations, opportunities and problems are effective?

What must I do to avoid roadblocks to communication, listen more effectively, and use active listening as a key problem-solving tool?

What must I do to recognize opportunities for performance feedback and deliver effective performance feedback?
Key Coaching Questions

When working one-on-one with an employee, a performance coaching discussion that utilizes these eight questions as a format for guiding the discussion can be very effective.

1. How would you describe this opportunity or area for improvement? Specifically, what is it to you?

2. Overall, how are you doing right now in this area? If you were to rate your performance from 1 to 10, how would you rate your performance?

3. What would you be doing differently or better if you were doing what you feel is needed to perform at a level of 8, 9 or 10?

4. What are two or three positive things you are doing now that have helped you to reach your present level in this area?

5. What are things you feel you should stop doing or minimize that would help improve your performance in this area?

6. What new skills, techniques or knowledge/information do you need to help you improve your performance in this area?

7. How can I personally help you? How would you like to get feedback on your progress?

8. After this discussion, what steps will you take to improve performance and reach your goals in this area?
Performance feedback must be managed in two segments - preparation for performance coaching, and the process of actually providing performance coaching.

**Preparation**
- Create an effective learning environment
- Vary your role in the learning process
- Create a coaching plan (you) and a learning plan (employee)

**Process**
- Work one-on-one
- Orchestrate learning opportunities
- Enhance self-reliance
- Recommend resources
- Conduct debriefing sessions, using effective feedback techniques