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Be a Team Leader

The role of a leader is changing in the workplace. The concept of teamwork is replacing the idea of autocratic rule from the top down. However, many classic principles of good leadership still apply.

Try these tips for being a more effective supervisor:

- ◆ See yourself as a leader. Your job is to motivate your team to do the best and safest job it can – for the organization, and for its own personal fulfillment.
- ◆ Pay attention to the people you lead and take them seriously. Since they are the ones actually doing the work, they have good ideas for how to do it more effectively and how to do it safer.
- ◆ Listen. Let others talk without interruption. Look at the person who is talking and let them know you are following what they are saying.
- ◆ Ask questions. Don't jump to conclusions – try to get the whole story.
- ◆ Make the rounds often to meet with all members of your team. While you are making your rounds, look for workplace hazards and things that look out of place. You can pick up a lot of valuable information this way and you can prevent small problems from becoming large ones.
- ◆ Don't ignore problems or complaints, especially if they involve workplace safety. Even if no solution is immediately apparent, let the team know you are concerned and are looking for answers.
- ◆ Delegate work. Don't try to do it all yourself. Supervision is a job in itself and takes time and attention.
- ◆ Lead by example. Your commitment to the work can set the pace for others. Arriving at work on time yourself is a good example for others who may be tempted to be tardy.
- ◆ Make job safety a personal priority. Your actions in safety will encourage your team to do the same.
- ◆ Organize yourself so you can direct others in an organized manner. Figure out what you have to accomplish each day and do first things first.
- ◆ Cutting corners on safety can be fatal. Make sure production and work priorities never take precedence over safety.
- ◆ Minor incidents are a big deal. In many incidences, a minor incident could easily have been a major accident. Make sure you examine each incident so you can find ways to prevent them in the future.
- ◆ Spend time planning for successes. Don't simply deal with the crises which come up each day. Instead, learn to anticipate these problems so they can be managed better or avoided altogether.
- ◆ Be true to your word. When you make a promise, keep it.
- ◆ Control your temper. Cool off before you deal with problems so you don't say something you will regret.
- ◆ Don't try to please everyone. You'll have to make some unpopular decisions.
- ◆ Let people know what is expected of them. When someone is not doing his job, it could be because he does not know what that job is.
- ◆ Help people to obtain the training they need to do their work well and to advance their careers. Be alert to opportunities for education and training in the workplace and outside of the organization.



A good leader is someone who makes others want to do the work well and to do the work safely.