

An Original



Article

TWI Job Relations – Help! I’m A Supervisor Now

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Businesses often promote their best operators to supervisory positions because they know best how to do the job. But often they fail to provide training on how to be a supervisor – and the skills required to be a world class operator are significantly different than those needed to be a world class supervisor.

For example – On Friday, Joe’s my co-worker and the following Monday, he’s my boss. Bad relationships between supervisors and employees can cause decreased productivity and increased absenteeism. Studies show that 90% of those who leave a job do so because of their relationship with their immediate supervisor. Companies invest a lot of dollars in hiring and training employees, but sometimes fail to train supervisors on how to maintain the relationships that will keep them productive.

One-day (once over lightly) classes in supervisory skills usually feature lectures about specific tools to use (communications, conflict resolution, etc) and a 2-inch training binder that sits on a shelf.

The Training Within Industry (TWI) program, offered by Missouri Enterprise, is very different. During the program, TWI participants spend two hours each day for five days **practicing** the TWI concepts presented using their own employee problems (*see below for more details about **Training Within Industry***). Preventing minor irritations from becoming major issues is foundational and the Job Relations modules of the Training Within Industry model teaches four

ways to develop and maintain good relationships; to prevent problems; and to earn loyalty and cooperation from others.

The four simple preventive steps, together with good judgment and common sense, can help supervisors, or anyone who directs the work of others, avoid problems. At the heart of all the steps is communication with the employee: Let them know how they're getting along, give credit when due, tell them about changes and use each person's abilities. Students take back to the workplace a 20-page workbook and a small laminated card which contains all the principles taught.

When problems do arise, Job Relations teaches a supervisors to get the facts, weigh the options and make decisions, take appropriate action and check results. Proven benefits include increased productivity, improved attendance, better morale and higher employee retention rates. Participants learn by doing, applying and using the techniques in the workplace and choosing real life examples to discuss and practice together in small classes.

One "aha!" moment happens when the class discusses personal opinions and feelings. Students learn that, right or wrong, an individual's opinions and feelings are a fact to that person, and must be treated as such. Class participants are also given several tips for encouraging employees to express personal opinions and discuss their feelings.

At the heart, the four-step method of Job Relations is actually pretty simple. It's what good supervisors have been doing all along. It's just taught in a way that not only helps supervisors learn the steps, but instills them as a habit through practice and repetition, using their own problems as case studies. One company even decided to incorporate the Job Relations course into the orientation training for their new lead operators. A side benefit of sharing real problems is that supervisors find out that their problems are not unique. They also benefit by the input from others concerning their problems as class members suggest possible actions.

More About Training Within Industry

Training Within Industry (TWI) was developed in the United States in the early 1940's to boost World War II industrial production and it was an unqualified success. After the war, the program was exported to Japan, where it was used extensively to rebuild that country's

industrial base. During the early 1950's, TWI was used to train employees in the Toyota Production System.

Still in use in Japan, it is now being rediscovered by American manufacturing companies and used as a foundation for their Lean Enterprise and Six Sigma Continuous Process Improvement programs.

The Elements of Training Within Industry

TWI consists of three standardized program that cover the essential skills that all supervisors and team leaders need, regardless of their industries. These skills are in instruction; improving methods; and leading.

To help supervisors and team leaders develop these skills, TWI incorporates a four-step process (preparation, presentation, application and testing) in each of three modules.

Module One – Job Instruction (JI) Training teaches supervisors how to quickly train employees to do the job correctly, safely and consistently. Supervisors are taught how to effectively break down a job for instruction. The method emphasizes preparing the employee to learn, giving a proper demonstration, identifying the key points in the job, observing the employee in trial runs and gradual reductions in coaching while continuing to follow up.

Module Two – Job Method (JM) Training teaches supervisors how to improve the way jobs are done and help produce greater quantities in less time by the best use of people, materials and machines available. Supervisors are taught how to break down jobs into their constituent operations and to develop new methods by eliminating, combining and rearranging these operations.

Module Three – Job Relations (JR) Training teaches supervisors that people must be treated as individuals and how to build positive employee relationships, increase cooperation and motivation as well as effectively resolve conflicts. Supervisors are taught to give constructive feedback and credit, to tell people in advance about changes that will affect them and are shown ways to make the best use of each person's abilities and to earn loyalty and cooperation.