

# Skills for the First-Time Supervisor

You're very good at the work you do. The managers of your organization recognize your ability, and in due time they promote you. Now you're a boss yourself, and you're supervising others—a great achievement!

If this familiar scenario applies to you, your knowledge of the job, plus the work skills you've already developed, will help you lead others to superior performance.

Soon you'll discover, however, that understanding how to do the work yourself is only a fraction of your job as a supervisor. There's so much else you need to know. For instance, how do you encourage others to be as committed to the work as you are? How do you instruct employees and correct their mistakes without making them resent you?

If you're in a typical U.S. firm, your task as a supervisor is made even more challenging by the diversity of the workforce. Individuals of Hispanic, African American, and Asian heritage make up more than 25 percent of the civilian labor force, and the percentage continues to increase. Women hold close to half of all jobs, and that proportion too is rising. Overall, the

American workforce is older and better educated than ever before, but there are large gaps between the high-skilled and the low-skilled.

What do these numbers mean? They suggest that, as a supervisor, you'll probably be responsible for leading people who are very different

from you, not only in their degree of training, but also in their schooling, their heritage, and their cultural outlook.

In this

situation, you can't just "wing it." You need the skills of a supervisor.

This book will help you identify and develop those skills. To begin, try the self-assessment on the next page. For each statement, mark the response that best applies to you.



# Introduction

I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than for any other ability under the sun.

— JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

*Business Leader*

What is your perception of the skills needed to be a successful supervisor? To find out, try the assessment that follows. For each statement, mark the response that best appeals to you.

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. I like facing new challenges at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I don't mind assuming responsibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I adapt well to different situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I manage my time efficiently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I'm good at organizing tasks and delegating them to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I can plan out a project successfully from beginning to end.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I'm good at solving tough problems and making difficult decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I know how to get other people motivated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I'm a good, careful listener.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I can critique people's work without offending them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I can handle rapid change without getting upset.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I'm good at settling conflicts between others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you checked “Sometimes” or “Never” for any of the above items, this book will help you improve in those areas. If you checked “Often” in every

instance, you may still find that you have more to learn. Even experienced supervisors need to keep learning in order to meet new challenges.