

How We Train Supervisors at the Hawaiian Telephone Company

Terry Plunkett

Introduction

Objectives of Management Training Program:

Last year we broke away from what we considered *typical* or *traditional* management courses. A basic question brought this about. We asked ourselves, "Are we taking the most effective approach in our attempt to help the supervisors do their jobs better?"

After an evaluation of our training program, it was concluded that our courses basically told the supervisors *what* their jobs were, rather than *how* they might more effectively supervise their people. With this conclusion in mind, we decided to design "our own" courses. We decided on a practical approach to training.

Practical Approach to Training

In an attempt to be practical, we first established two very important lists; namely, rank-and-file responsibilities, and, supervisory responsibilities. The first list was developed by responding to the question, "What do the rank-and-file employees get paid to do?"

We maintained there were ten rank-and-file responsibilities. They are listed here in no established priority value:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. Production | 6. Public Relations |
| 2. Quality | 7. Job Improvement |
| 3. Service | 8. Working Relationships with other Employees |
| 4. Safety | 9. Attendance |
| 5. Sales | 10. Adherence to Policies |

Once we had developed rank-and-file responsibilities, it became much easier to determine the following list of supervisory responsibilities:

1. Supervision of Subordinates
2. Administration (Planning, Organizing, Directing, Coordinating, Controlling)
3. Interviewing and Selection

4. Employee Indoctrination
5. Appraising and Evaluating
6. Employee Training
7. Cost Control
8. Records and Reports
9. Communications
10. Problem Solving and Decision Making
11. Establishing and Improving Methods and Procedures
12. Employee Relations
13. Contract Administration
14. Safety
15. Public Relations
16. Self Development

This list of supervisory responsibilities reflects the definition of supervision, which is: "Getting work done through other people."

Introductory Course

Since we were departing from the existing training program, we decided to design a basic course to help introduce our new program. We called it the "Initial Introduction to the Functions of Supervision."

This course was initially administered to a pilot group of ten second-line supervisors¹ who believed the change was an improvement to the training program. The group recommended the course be given to all second-line supervisors before offering it to the first-line forces.

After the first group of first-line supervisors participated in the introductory course, they evaluated it in much the same fashion as their superiors, except they asked: "Why didn't we have this before we became supervisors? It would have made us aware of the job of supervisor and we would have been better prepared."

The introductory course was then given to all new supervisors. In several instances, we have conducted the



Hawaiian Telephone Management Training Course—Employee Indoctrination Workshop—being presented to first-line supervisors by Terry Plunkett.

course for newly selected supervisors prior to their assumption of management duties. We have since developed what we call our Orientation to Management Program.

The Orientation to Management Program is a five-day training course which introduces the new supervisor to rank-and-file and supervisory responsibilities. It includes the two-day Initial Introduction to the Functions of Supervision Course and a three-day Personnel and Contract Administration Workshop. The three-day workshop allows the trainees to "wet their feet" in the policies, practices and procedures of the company.

Supervisory Training Program

Our "new" supervisory training program is designed in accordance with the list of supervisory responsibilities previously mentioned. Each responsibility is used as a

course title. We have identified what the supervisor does and now we train toward that end.

1969 Course Offerings

In 1969 we will have offered the following courses:

1. Initial Introduction to the Functions of Supervision (16 hours)
2. Orientation to Management (40 hours)—8 hours for follow up
3. Contract Administration (20 hours)
4. Interviewing and Selection (16 hours)
5. Employee Indoctrination (16 hours)
6. Workforce Management (Administrative Skills)—(24 hours)—8 hours follow up
7. Employee Training (Training and Development)—(24 hours)—8 hours follow up

Resources (Facilities, Staff, Trainees)

It is anticipated that there will be 4,000 Hawaiian Telephone employees by the end of 1969. Obviously the management training effort will be influenced by this growth. Presently, we have, for our use, two training rooms. Each can comfortably seat 12 to 14 trainees. Instruction is handled by the Management Training Supervisor and the Management Training Assistant. Clerical tasks keep one General Office Clerk busy. The need for additional staff personnel is already indicated by the ambitious proposed training program for 1970. There is need to free the Management Training Supervisor from instructional duties, so he can devote more time to the administrative tasks at hand.

Procedures

Upon completion of further research and development of the training courses, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Course announcement and offering sent to division and departments by Vice-President of Personnel.
2. Names sent to Management Training Supervisor.
3. Class schedule developed and routed to trainees through their supervisors.
4. Class attendance. Upon completion, trainees evaluate course and instructor.
5. Instructor appraises trainees participation and class-work. Evaluation and certificate of completion sent to trainees' supervisor.
6. Copy of appraisal kept in Management Training Master Record File.
7. Department and Division Secretaries are sent the list of names of those trainees who completed the course.
8. Each quarter a summary of management training hours is sent to the Department and Divisions.

Method of Instruction

Primarily, the instruction methods used include a combination of individual, group, and class involvement-oriented activities. In the workshop concept there is a minimum of lecture. It is believed group participation enhances learning capability. Students' evaluation relate this to us.

We maintain that task-oriented teaching is best for us. As often as possible, student presentations are structured into the training outline. This lends a certain metabolism change in the trainee, which in the final analysis, keeps him interested in what others have to say.

In the group-work assignments, we have found that the group leader usually emerges quite naturally. In some instances, however, it has been necessary to appoint the group leader. If possible each trainee rotates to the group leader position.

The role of the instructor is to set the stage and maintain the climate for learning. There is a certain amount of lecture, but this is kept to a minimum. The instructor attempts to have the trainees teach each other. The individual contributes to the class.

Measurement of Training Effectiveness

The immediate measurement of the training program comes from the trainee's evaluation of the course and the instructor. The trainee's evaluation will be correlated with on-the-job performance data. This information will be obtained from questionnaires completed by the trainee's superior.

The questionnaire will be in six parts. They are:

1. Responsibilities
2. Standards
3. Actual performance—(Below, At, or Above standard)
4. Reasons for quality of performance
5. Requirements for improvement
6. Supervisor' corrective action

Using the six-part evaluation format, comprehensive data will be obtained. The compiled data will enable us to determine the effectiveness of the management program, and to make necessary improvements.

We make no great claim to having the best training program, but if the trainees continue to be receptive to our method of instruction, we believe our established goals will be attained.

¹ Training courses are first presented to a pilot group. Recommendations from the group are incorporated into the training outline.

Terry Plunkett is Management Training Supervisor for the Hawaiian Telephone Company of Honolulu. A graduate of Kamehameha School for Boys, Mr. Plunkett received his degree from the College of Education, University of Hawaii. An indication of Mr. Plunkett's diverse talents include his being a professional night-club entertainer, a radio disc-jockey (KHHV Radio), and sports writer, Hawaii Sports Magazine.