

DIRECTING

Directing involves issuing orders to subordinates & supervise how these orders are carried out & if necessary motivate employees for higher performance & achieve the objectives effectively.

According to **Joseph Massie** "directing concerns the total manner in which a manager influences the actions of subordinates. It is the final action of a manager in getting orders to act after all preparations have been completed."

According to **Charles E. Redfield** "directing deals with the steps a manager takes to get subordinates & others to carry out plans."

Importance of direction as a function of management

- Important function of management is directing. Directing involves issuing orders to subordinates & supervise how these orders are carried out by them, and if necessary, motivate the employees for higher performance & hence to the accomplishment of the organisational objectives effectively.

{ Supervision + communication + Motivation + leadership }
Importance of 'Directing' as a Function of Management

It is the process around which all other management functions revolve. Direction is a kin to 'nucleus' of an organisation. The individual goals & organisational objectives are integrated only through directing function.

Principles of direction

- (i) Harmony of objectives
- (ii) Unity of command – the subordinates should receive orders from one & only one superior or boss. For achieving efficiency, unity of direction should be strictly followed.
- (iii) Direct Supervision – One of the important principles of effective direction is supervision by the manager himself. When manager is directly involved in supervising the employees i.e. when he comes into personal contact with the employees, subordinates feel happy. & this paves way for high morale & face-to-face communication.
- (iv) Appropriate leadership style
- (v) Use of motivational techniques
- (vi) Follow up

In this process, a manager would be able to point out the deficiency in the methods of work being followed by the subordinates, and suggest the ways of improving the work.

A. Supervision

Supervision means overseeing the subordinates at work. All managers, at whatever level, perform a supervisory function. However, at the top level of an organisation the proportion of direct supervision in each position becomes smaller & smaller than at the lower levels. While supervising, a manager draws his attention to the day-to-day work of employees & the inter relationship among them & the groups in the organisation. *A supervisor is an effective link between workers & management.* A supervisor is directly responsible for getting the work done by the workers & hence he becomes careful in discharging his function of issuing orders, instructions, laying down methods & procedures & guiding the people under him sincerely. Thus supervision primarily consists of instructing, guiding & inspiring human beings towards better performance which in a sense amounts to effective directing.

Role of Supervisor

A supervisor, according to **Fred Luthans & Mortinko**, performs three kinds of roles viz scientific management roles, human relations roles, & functional roles.

(a) Scientific Management Roles— These roles include the role of a technician, analyst & controller. First of all, in order to supervise, he must be fully equipped with enough technical knowledge of the machines being operated by the workers. Only then it becomes possible for the supervisor to give technical advise to the employees. Secondly, the supervisor should be an analyst or researcher. The supervisor is expected to design the new & scientific job procedure & methods to achieve efficiency in work operations. Thirdly, the supervisor should be a controller. He should ensure that actual performance is compared to that of pre-established standards & reward the better performance and punish when there are negative deviations.

(b) Human relations roles— The supervisor should be sensitive to the needs & desires of employees for effective integration of individual goals with the organisational objectives. Here, the supervisor should act as a counsellor by rendering the advice to the employees concerning work-related problems so that

productivity at work does not suffer. Further, a supervisor should act as a linking pin between management & employees. A supervisor is in the-middle because he carries the voice of top management to the workers & at the same time, he represents the workers demands & wishes to the top management. A supervisor acts as a motivator in the sense he inspires the employees by providing good working conditions, tangible & intangible rewards (incentives) for higher productivity.

(c) Functional roles— The functional roles of a supervisor include planning, organising, leading & controlling. Here, supervisor acts as a planner, organiser, leader & controller. He carries out the important managerial functions at the operational level. As a planner, the supervisor has the major responsibility for identifying & determining what exactly is to be done by the workers & communicate these goals to the workers. In the role of organising a supervisor, to be effective, must be a good leader. He should exhibit task oriented approach as well as relations-oriented approach depending on the situation. Finally, a supervisor is entrusted with the responsibility of controlling the operations within his purview. The supervisor is entrusted with the task of controlling the operations in the department or the factory.

Functions of Supervisor

Supervisors are line executives with command authority. Specifically, every manager, in the capacity of supervisor, are entrusted with the following functions:

- Communicating the orders;
- Introduction of new methods of work;
- Making the work more interesting;
- Selecting the workers;
- Inducting the new employees;
- Training the employees;
- Handling grievances;

- Enforcing discipline;
- Effective communication;
- Enforcing safety.

Communicating the orders— The first duty of every supervisor is to communicate the orders to subordinates. In the absence of specific instructions or orders confusion results, work gets hampered. Subordinates would not be able to identify what to do and what not to do. The orders should be simple, complete and in a language easily understandable to the subordinates. Every order should be one that seek cooperation, rather than forced compliance on the part of employees.

Introduction of new methods of performing work— Every supervisor should examine the existing methods of work and try his level best to improve the methods of performing work in order to increase the productivity per worker. He should keep himself abreast of the latest techniques of production and make the workers aware of such techniques. If the supervisor himself does not show interest in innovation or introduction of new methods, workers would get least bothered about these and prefer to maintain status quo. While introducing new methods, many a time, workers may resist strongly but the supervisor is expected to overcome the resistance to change by subordinates.

Make the work interesting— A supervisor should make the work interesting, instead of dull and boring. A subordinate would feel like working only when he is comfortable at work. This is possible only when the worker is placed on the job in which he is interested, qualified, and best suited to work. A supervisor should see whether employees are deriving job satisfaction. When he notices job dissatisfaction among workers, he should probe deep into the causes contributing to such dissatisfaction. By removing the causes of dissatisfaction, he can make the work interesting.

Selecting the workers— In small and medium sized organisations, supervisor plays a crucial role in selecting the workers. A supervisor should outline the job specification, and job description so that, right people are selected for right places and at right time. Of course, in big organisations personnel department

undertakes the responsibility of recruiting and selecting people required for the enterprise from time to time.

Induction of new employees— Induction is very important to make the new employee familiar with the organisation, work, peers, superiors etc. By induction, a supervisor will be able to brief the new employee regarding his immediate and ultimate supervisors (or superiors), products being manufactured by the enterprise, overall responsibilities of the section /department to which the new employee will be sent for placement, working hours including the lunch and tea breaks, his duties & responsibilities, remuneration package including the particulars of bonus and hours of work, particulars about the provident fund scheme or pension scheme etc., physical working environment and public facilities, leave rules and details etc. At the same time, a supervisor should also know the likes and dislikes of the new employee, the previous work experience of the new employee, family particulars of new employee and his friends, the place of residence etc. In other words, a supervisor should obtain information about the new employee so that he will be able to motivate him towards higher performance.

Training the employees— Any training programme will be incomplete if the supervisor is not included as a trainee, A supervisor should make the training programme a success by making it interesting to the employees.

He should inspect workers' performance during the training period and suggest ways to improve it. From time to time, the supervisor should ascertain feedback whether the workers have learnt what was taught to them. After successful completion of training, employees would be in a position to increase the productivity at the shop floor.

Handling grievances— Grievance handling and redressal itself is a complicated procedure no doubt, but the supervisor should attend to them at the grass root level, if possible. A supervisor should not carry every petty problems to the management. He should be able to distinguish between the genuine grievances & silly complaints. If he encourages non-genuine complaints of all the employees, the result would be tremendous loss of management's time. A supervisor should handle the grievances with care and do everything possible to remove the causes of grievances.

Enforcing discipline— One of the indispensable duties of a supervisor is to maintain discipline among the employees in the organisation. Indiscipline among employees may be attributable to several reasons such as low wages, low possibilities of career advancement, ill-healthy human relations, bias of top management, poor working conditions, etc. The supervisor should analyse the cause of indiscipline and try to remove them, if possible. If necessary, he can bring the causes of indiscipline to top management for appropriate action. Indiscipline, if unchecked at right time, may result in problems that can never be solved easily.

Effective communication— A supervisor should have good communicative skills. A supervisor should see that the channels of communication are effective. The flow of communication should be smooth, quick and uninterrupted. A supervisor should see that the message transmitted is received in terms of the meaning i.e. without any distortion. In organisations, it is the distorted message that creates misunderstandings, conflicts & problems. It is, therefore, necessary to see that the message is sent by the correct source to correct destination by proper channel.

Enforcing safety— A supervisor is generally concerned with blue-collar workers and hence should show great concern to the employees' safety. He should make the workers safety-conscious. This is possible by making them aware of the problems of non following safety precautions, providing them safety training. Organisations should educate the workers to follow safety rules. Publicity could be the better means of educating the employees to follow safety guidelines and precautions.

In factories, when people are required to work on machine, it is to discover the possible safety hazards & take necessary precautions, it is essentials: see that safety tools and equipment are available with the workers. A supervisor should verify whether sufficient number of safety signs and warning signals are installed at right place factory. A supervisor should arrange for safe handling of heavy and inflammable materials The supervisor should check the machines, their working condition, so that obsolete out) machinery gets replaced by the new ones, if any accident in the factory takes supervisor should take necessary action & analyse the causes of accident. He should take all steps to see that such accidents do not recur.