

Introduction

Directing (also referred to as leading)¹ is a process in which the management tells its employees what is to be done and ensures through guidance and supervision that it is done. It basically deals with the interpersonal relations and aims at converting plans into action. Directing makes sure that the organizational objectives and plans are effectively accomplished within the available resources and time frame. In a way, directing is considered to be the heart of the management process as planning and organizing serve no purpose without it. Even though directing in general includes all those activities performed by the managers to make employees to work willingly and efficiently, it basically involves leading, motivating and communicating with the employees. Management provides directions to its members by performing leadership, motivation and communication functions.

Directing, which is a physical act of managing employees, is not an easy task as human behaviours are rarely similar, consistent or predictable. Behaviour not only differs from one individual to another, but also differs within an individual from one situation to another. Individuals have different personality, attitudes, values, perception, motives, abilities and aspirations. Managers cannot perform their tasks satisfactorily without developing a reasonable degree of understanding of the people around them. To be successful in directing, managers need to be good at emotional intelligence, communication, motivation, teamwork, delegation and relationship management.²

Definitions of Directing

Directing is instructing, guiding and overseeing of employee performance. This is the essence of many definitions of directing. Let us now look at a few definitions of directing.

“Directing is the process by which personnel are inspired or motivated to accomplish work.”—Russell C. Swansburg³

“Directing concerns the total manner in which a manager influences the actions of subordinates.”—Joseph L. Massie⁴

“Directing (leading) is a management function that involves working with and through people to accomplish organizational goals.”—Stephen P. Robbins⁵

“Directing (leading) is the management function that involves the manager’s efforts to simulate high performance by employees.”—Bateman⁶

Characteristics of Directing

The main features of directing based on the definitions are as follows:

- **Top-down approach**—In directing, the directions are issued from the higher levels to lower levels in the organizational hierarchy.
- **Command function**—Directing as a command function typically involves the issue of orders or instructions by the superiors to their subordinates. However, directing also includes activities like guiding, inspiring and mentoring of the subordinates by their superiors.

- **Pervasive function**—Directing per se is performed at different levels across the whole organization. Certainly, directing is an integral part of any level of management and it invariably happens wherever superior–subordinate relations exist.
- **Continuous activity**—Directing, as a managerial function, is continuously performed throughout the life of an organization. It is essential for the performance of other managerial functions such as planning, organizing, staffing etc.
- **Influences human behaviour**—Directing is an act of influencing the behaviour of the subordinates by the superiors. The purpose of influencing other's behaviour is to get their willing cooperation for organizational goal accomplishment.
- **Delegated function**—Directing powers are usually delegated to the lower levels of the management for the sake of better administration and time management. Delegating is a major aspect of directing function of the management.

Importance of Directing

The primary purpose of directing is to inspire the organizational members to produce products or services that satisfy the customers and promote the vitality of the organization. We shall now look at the other specific purposes of directing.

- **Directing facilitates managers to get the best out of their employees** through their effective performance and willing cooperation.
- **It helps the employees to know what is expected of them in their job.** It also helps them to begin their activities needed for goal accomplishment. Instruction and orders issued by managers as a part of the directing process helps the employees to understand, commence, proceed with and complete their work.
- **It enables managers to continuously coordinate the different activities performed by their subordinates.** Proper coordination between all members in an organization is essential for effective achievement of the goals of the organization.
- **Directing helps the management to make optimum utilization of the human and physical resources of the organization.** Clear and specific directions can help the employees understand their jobs better and minimize the wastage of resources.
- **Directing enables managers to encourage and motivate the employees to willingly cooperate and perform better in their jobs through direct interactions.** In other words, directing initiates and maintains actions towards desired objectives.⁷
- Good and harmonious relationship with subordinates is an essential prerequisite for the superiors in achieving success in their directing function. This way, direction helps in improving the relationships existing among the organizational members.
- Directing helps employees to accomplish their organizational as well as personal goals. In case of conflict between organizational interest and individual interest, directing ensures that the individual interests do not interfere with the organizational interest.⁸

- Directing enables the management to initiate, conduct and complete changes in the environment. This is done by invoking thoughts and discussion among employees about such changes. Directing done through communication and motivation allows the management to achieve success in the organizational change process by generating employee awareness and willingness necessary to adapt to changes.
- Long-term stability of the organization can be ensured by the management through various elements of directing like trustworthy leadership, open and effectual communication, effective motivation and proper supervision. Conflicts that threaten the stability of the organization can be resolved by managers by resorting to direct and immediate actions.

Process of Directing

Planning function involves the determination of organizational goals for the future while organizing function involves the arrangement of the resources required to perform the jobs. Staffing function brings and maintains the necessary human resources whereas controlling function monitors and checks the employee performance towards the end. Coordinating function harmonizes the various organizational activities. But it is the directing function that actually initiates, manages and completes the activities necessary for goal accomplishment.

The process of directing may differ from one organization to another depending on the factors inherent in its environment. The following directing process has been developed keeping in mind the specific requirements of nursing management.⁹ However, the basic steps in this directing process can be adopted by any organization by making necessary modifications. The steps involved in this process are as follows:

1. **Motivating**
2. **Facilitating collaboration**
3. **Coordinating**
4. **Delegating**
5. **Effectively managing conflict**

The eventual outcome of any directing process is the accomplishment of organizational goals, objectives and mission. In this context, it is essential to ensure that there is commitment, competency and clarity of purpose among all those involved in the directing process to ensure its success. It is also essential to evaluate the efficacy of the directing process through feedback and performance indicators since directing is a lifelong process of an organization. The results of such feedback and performance evaluation must be promptly and objectively used to improve the directing process. Further, the directing process of an organization must be flexible enough to quickly adapt itself to the emerging trends and changes in its environment.

Techniques of Directing

Managers can develop and adopt their own style to direct the activities of their employees. Any decision relating to a technique or style of directing fundamentally

depends on the characteristics of the environment. Figure 13.1 shows some general techniques of directing that are available for managers to choose from to suit the occasion and serve their purpose. We shall now look at these techniques briefly.

1. **Democratic or consultative directing**—When managers consult their subordinates and obtain their opinion before arriving at decisions, then that directing style is described as consultative directing. However, the final authority to decide on the matter on hand and issuing orders rests with the managers. The subordinates' suggestions will have no binding effect on the managers as managers will usually retain the right to accept or reject those suggestions. This form of directing normally improves the relationship between the superior and subordinates and makes the latter more responsible in their job. This method also promotes free exchange of ideas and opinions within the organization and also enhances the quality of decisions made. It also improves employee morale and job satisfaction.

However, democratic directing is a time-consuming decision-making process. It may make the subordinates feel that they have the right to be consulted in every decision made by the managers.

2. **Autocratic or dictatorial directing**—When managers decide and issue orders on organizational matters without consulting their subordinates, it is called autocratic directing. Here, managers typically hold and exercise vast powers and expect their subordinates to merely carry out their orders. The focus of these managers is on task completion and goal achievement, and human relations get less priority in their administration. It also deprives the subordinates of learning managerial and decision-making skills. This style of directing can discourage employee initiatives, innovation and participation in decisions. However, this style of directing facilitates faster decision making by managers in a rapidly changing environment.
3. **Free-rein or *laissez-faire* directing**—When directing and decision-making powers are almost fully delegated to the subordinates by the managers, then such directing style is called free-rein directing. In this technique, the subordinates themselves develop the ideas to solve the problems and also execute them.

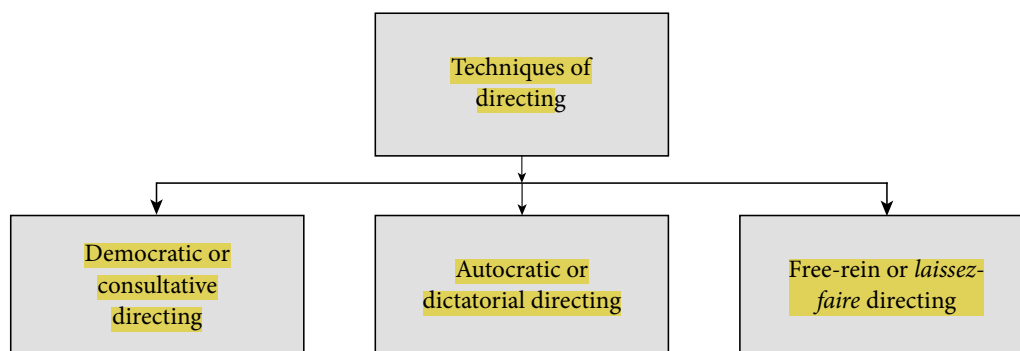


Figure 13.1

Techniques of Directing

Here, the role of the superior is predominantly that of an observer. Superiors are readily available for consultation but offer their suggestions only when explicitly asked for by their subordinates. The typical process involved in this directing style is that the superior transfers the task, explains the problem, provides a broad outline but leaves the decision and its execution to the subordinates. This method is practicable only when the subordinates are knowledgeable, skilled and possess the capability to handle the problems independently. This method may be effective only when it is combined with other techniques.¹⁰

Depending on the prevailing environment, nature and number of employees, and characteristics and urgency of the problem, managers may choose to adopt a specific directing technique.

Activities in Directing

Through the elements of directing like communication and motivation, managers can successfully perform diverse organizational activities. The activities generally carried out by managers through directing function are as follows:¹¹

- Facilitating the accomplishment of organizational mission, vision, objectives and goals.
- Developing and using strategic and tactical plans and implementing operational plans.
- Maintaining and supplying requisite resources, including physical and human resources.
- Providing training and development programmes necessary to preserve and promote employee knowledge, skills and competency.
- Ensuring effective and faster communication for well-organized information dissemination.
- Offering guidance and motivation through leadership process.
- Maintaining and promoting interpersonal relationships among organizational members.
- Setting standards through rules, regulations, policies and procedures and also facilitating the interpretation of those rules, policies, procedures, etc.
- Keeping up and fostering employee morale.
- Providing counselling and coaching to the employees.
- Inspiring employees by emphasizing on trust, cooperation and team work among employees.
- Ensuring effective coordination among the organizational members.
- Identifying and resolving employee grievances and conflicts.
- Controlling the activities and process to maintain quality and performance.
- Guiding and counselling employees in deciding and designing their career plans.

- Facilitating the development of new methods, process and procedure for effective performance of jobs and tasks.
- Preserving and promoting group dynamics necessary for successful job performance and goal accomplishment.

Principles of Effective Directing

Principle is an accepted or perceived rule of action or conduct. The principle of directing states the rules to be followed in the case of activities concerning the directing functions. We shall now see the important principles governing the direction function of the management.

1. **Principle of harmony of objectives**—According to this principle, the effectiveness of directing depends on the degree to which the individual objectives of the employees are harmonized with the group and organizational objectives. When managers succeed in reconciling the employees' personal objectives with that of the organizational objectives, better compliance from employees can be achieved.
2. **Principle of direct supervision**—This principle insists that the managers should maintain direct and constant contact with their employees to create a sense of security and oneness among them. According to Harold Koontz,¹² "the more the direct personal contact with subordinates is, the more effective will their direction be." Direct and personalized contact with subordinates will enable managers to achieve the desired levels of employee motivation and commitment. This will enable managers to detect dissatisfaction and grievances among employee early and solve them promptly.
3. **Principle of unity of command**—This principle insists that each subordinate should report to one boss only. When an employee is accountable to a single boss for a given assignment, then he or she cannot avoid accountability and indulge in "passing the buck." Moreover, unity of command enables managers to develop supportive relationship with their subordinates and thus achieve high morale in the work environment.¹³
4. **Principle of appropriateness of direction technique**—According to this principle, the direction technique to be used by managers should be suitable for the situation, people and job or task. Organizations typically apply democratic, autocratic or free-rein technique to direct the activities of the employees. The choice of direction technique can affect the efficacy of the directing function in the organization.
5. **Principle of maximum individual contribution**—According to this principle, there should be maximum contribution from each organizational member towards goal fulfilment. Organizations should create a facilitating environment in which employees play a voluntary, spontaneous and proactive role in organizational activities.
6. **Principle of flow of information**—This principle states that the communication system must be good enough to permit free flow of information between

the superiors and the subordinates. Adherence to this principle in direction will facilitate better mutual understanding and cooperation among organizational members.

7. **Principle of leadership**—This principle emphasizes that managers should possess all the qualities of a good leader. Managers with good leadership skills can inspire, guide and counsel their employees well and also win over their trust, confidence and goodwill.
8. **Principle of strategic use of informal organization**—As per this principle, direction will be effective only when informal organizations support and supplement the role of the formal organizational structure and official relationship existing within the organization. It is essential to strengthen informal organization that allows accelerated and improved responses to unanticipated events, and enable managers to solve problems through collaboration and cooperation.
9. **Principle of follow-through**—Since directing is a continuous affair of an organization, it is essential to ascertain its efficacy through appropriate feedback and follow-up. After issuing orders and guiding subordinates, managers should find out how effective their directions are in accomplishing the goals and plans and also in achieving compliance from employees. If necessary, managers must relook and revise their directing style to make it more effective and suitable in future.

Elements of Directing

Directing is the ultimate action of managers in getting others to act after the plans and preparations are completed. Managers implement the organizational plans through the process of directing. As illustrated in Figure 13.2, the important elements of directing are motivation, communication and leadership, besides supervision. We shall now briefly discuss each of these elements.

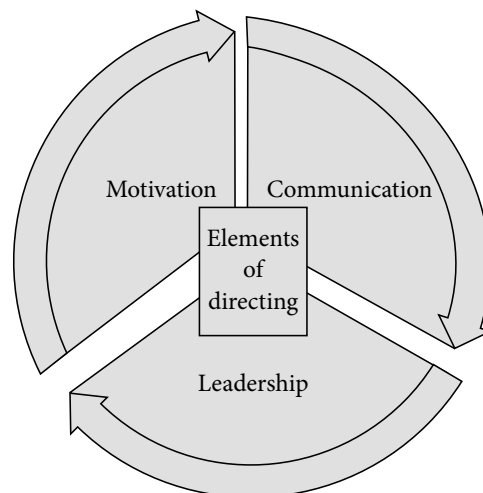


Figure 13.2

Important Elements of Directing

Motivation

Motivation is an internal state that arouses employees to action and assists them in maintaining that arousal and action. In simple terms, motivation is the set of factors that causes people to behave in a certain way.¹⁴ It is the process of encouraging employees to voluntarily give their best in the job so that the performance goals are achieved effectively. It involves identifying and influencing people's behaviour in a specific direction. Motivation works with the individuals' desire, energy and determination and stimulates them adequately to realize the predetermined goals. People's desire for money, success, job satisfaction, recognition and team work can be used for stimulating them. Motivating employees is an important and continuous management concern as lack of employee motivation can affect the organization's initiatives and individual's performance.

Since every individual has a different set of needs and goals, it is essential to identify and fulfil those needs through appropriate motivational techniques and tools. Basically, motivation can be classified into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation usually comes from inside an individual without any external rewards. In contrast, extrinsic motivation usually comes from outside an individual. Increased pay, promotion, etc. are examples of extrinsic motivation while the satisfaction derived from the completion of the job can be an instance of intrinsic motivation.

Generally, the extent of effectiveness of motivation is decided by the presence of three Cs namely, collaboration, content and choice.¹⁵ Employees are better motivated to work harder when they are encouraged to collaborate and cooperate with others. Similarly, employees are more motivated when they feel that their work adds value to the organization, society, etc. Likewise, employees are greatly motivated when they believe that they have the power to make decisions on their job. The success of motivation is determined by the direction of a person's behaviour, his or her level of effort in the job and level of persistence in the face of obstacles.¹⁶ Chapter 16 discusses motivation in detail.

Communication

Communication is a process by which information is shared and understood by people. It is one of the major determinants of success of directing function. Effective communication is important for managers in improving interpersonal relations with others in the organization. It is important for managers to ensure that their communication practices are systematic, constant and well-connected with the organizational structure. Managers need to acquire specialization in all forms of communication to effectively manage the diverse workforce. Typically, managers should have expertise over two distinct forms of communication, namely, interpersonal communication and organizational communication. Interpersonal communication refers to the communication between two or more persons. Organizational communication includes all forms, patterns and systems of communication available within the organization.¹⁷ Communication practices can also be classified as formal and informal, verbal and non-verbal, and oral and written communications.

Communication is essential for efficient execution of other managerial functions like planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating and controlling the organizational

resources. Effective communication enables managers to convey messages to their subordinates and others powerfully and persuasively. Managers can also get their subordinates and others act on their messages quickly and properly. Communication is thus critical for managers in performing four major functions, namely, information dissemination, control, motivation and emotional expression.¹⁸

Normally, managerial communication passes through formal as well as informal channels of the organization. Formal channel refers to the official organizational structure. Formal channels are frequently used to transmit orders, reports, policy, manuals, procedures, etc. Informal channels, in contrast, are those channels that remain outside the formal organizational structure. Informal channel is built around the social relationship existing among the organizational members. In fact, members use informal channels mainly for fulfilling their personal and/or emotional needs. Communication is discussed further in Chapter 14.

Leadership

Leadership is the process of influencing the behaviour of members in such a way that they work willingly and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of goals and plans of the organization. Leadership may be defined as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal-setting and goal achievement.¹⁹ Effective and dynamic leadership is one major characteristic that can separate successful organizations from unsuccessful organizations. The successful leader's commands are willingly and voluntarily followed by others in an organization. Leadership usually has three dimensions, namely, the leader, the followers and the situation. Each dimension influences and gets influenced by other dimensions. The success of leadership depends on the nature, type and frequency of interactions happening among these factors. The degree of success in goal accomplishment does not depend on the personal attribute of a leader alone, but also on the needs of the followers and nature of the situation. Box 13.1 shows the initiatives of a private company in enhancing the efficacy of its directing function.

Managers become successful leaders when they possess diverse skills and abilities necessary for managing the workforce. They need to have technical qualities, initiative qualities, administrative abilities, intellectual skills, emotional control, enthusiasm, self-awareness, situation awareness, human relations skill and communication skills, besides personal qualities. This leadership is usually classified into autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic, *laissez-faire*, participative, transactional and transformational leaderships. Chapter 15 discusses leadership in detail.

Supervision

Supervisors are typically the link between the managers and the workers. They are the members of the first level of management. They directly interact with the workers to get the organizational goals accomplished. Supervisors generally spend more time on directing and less time on planning as compared to the managers belonging to higher levels. To be successful, supervisors need to focus more on their technical and human relations skills and relatively less on administrative skills.²⁰ Supervision is

**Box
13.1****Enhancing the Efficacy of Directing Function—A Blue Dart Express Initiative**

After talent shortage and attrition became the burgeoning problems for today's organizations, managements tried to incorporate motivational values in their system of administration. In this regard, there is growing realization among the Indian managers that their employees cannot be continually motivated through stereotyped motivational means. They need to develop motivational techniques that fulfil the different needs of different people at different times. In this regard, the motivational initiatives of Blue Dart Express are worth mentioning.

Blue Dart Express is a premier courier and integrated express package distribution company in India. It has won the award for "Best Motivational Practice in Services" from the All India Management Association for its motivational programmes and

practices. This company conducts an annual Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) to evaluate employee satisfaction levels across the entire organization. The satisfaction survey focuses on dimensions like immediate leadership, corporate leadership, organizational identification, work-group co-operation, job conditions, etc. The survey results provide the management with a glimpse of the extent of its workforce motivation and morale. The "People First" policy of this company focuses on internal communication systems, constant feedback, rewards and recognition and other employee support mechanisms, which ensure that its workforce remain loyal to the organization.

Source: <http://www.bluedart.com/careers.html> & <http://www.bluedart.com/press164.html> (last accessed in May 2014).

basically a process by which superiors guide their immediate subordinates in a way that benefits the organization as well as the employees. The twin aim of supervision is to ensure that subordinates make optimum use of their knowledge, skills and abilities and customers get enhanced satisfaction.

Supervisors are generally involved in the activities of: (i) issuing oral and written orders and instructions, (ii) framing time schedules for completion of work, (iii) assigning duties to the workers, (iv) checking the quality and neatness of the work done, (v) correcting the errors and mistakes and (vi) maintaining harmony among the workers. Since supervisors have to deal with the diverse workforce, it is essential that they possess a wide range of skills, qualities and competencies. These skills and competencies may include, among others, technical knowledge, interpersonal relations skills, self-motivation, problem-solving skills, stress management, loyalty and leadership skills besides good physical and mental health. Supervisors usually deal with the routine problems that arise during the course of their work. A few examples of these problems are employee absenteeism and customer complaints.

Definitions of Supervisor

Direct contact with the subordinates to supervise their day-to-day activities is the essence of many definitions of supervisors. We shall now look at a few definitions of supervisors.

"Supervisor is a manager who is in charge of, and coordinator of, the activities of a group of employees engaged in related activities within a department, section or unit of an organization."—Lester R. Bittel²¹

“A supervisor is anyone at the first level of management who has responsibility for the work of others.”—Noel Harvey²²

“Supervisor is the term used to describe the first line authority that spends the majority of his or her time of supervisory duties.”—Bolton W²³

“A supervisor is member of the most junior level of management in the organization.”—David Evans²⁴

Characteristics of Supervisors

Based on the definitions, the following characteristics can be listed about supervisors and supervisory jobs.

- Supervisors are the interface between the management and non-managerial workforce of the organization. They are often seen as the face of the management by the workers since supervisors are their immediate superiors.
- Supervisors make operational decisions concerning their department, division, units, etc.
- They are engaged in the process of converting the organizational resources into output. For instance, workforce, material, equipment and information are converted into output such as product, service or profit.
- Supervisors help their subordinates when the latter face problems and make mistakes in their performance.
- Supervisors perform the roles of a leader, decision maker, planner, organizer, motivator, coordinator, communicator, controller, reward administrator, change agent and trainer.²⁵
- They supervise the day-to-day activities of the organization. For instance, production supervisors are in charge of the everyday production process of the organization.
- Supervisors ensure effective execution of tasks by the subordinates and also maintain the standards prescribed for each of these tasks. They are thus responsible for the work of their subordinates.

Based on the style of functioning, supervision can be classified into employee-centred supervision and job- or task-centred supervision. We shall now discuss these two kinds of supervisions.

Employee-centred supervision—In this kind of supervision, the emphasis of supervisors is on understanding the feelings and sensibilities of the subordinates. They develop a genuine concern for the well-being, i.e. the physical and mental health of their employees. They give top priority to maintaining a cordial and mutually-beneficial relationship with the workforce. In the long run, this approach can help the management to get continued support and cooperation of its employees for all its ambitious goals and plans. This approach can also minimize the employees’ resistance to change programmes initiated by the management.

Job- or task-centred supervision—In this kind of supervision, the primary focus of the supervisors is on achieving the performance targets and organizational goals through subordinates. Supervisors tend to adopt a goal- or result-oriented behaviour in their dealings with the subordinates. They are also mainly concerned with the impact of subordinates' performance and productivity on organizational goals and plans.

Approaches to Supervisory Management

Even though a supervisor can develop and practice their own style and approach in dealing with the operational situations, a few universal approaches are also available. As shown in Figure 13.3, these approaches are: systematic management approach, human relations approach, quantitative approach and contingency approach.²⁶ We shall now briefly look at each of these approaches.

1. **Systematic management approach**—This approach insists on the proper measurement and analysis of the different activities (tasks) performed by the subordinates to complete the work assigned and achieve the organizational goals.
2. **Human relations approach**—This approach assumes that the success of supervisors lies in their ability to understand the likely behaviour of their subordinates. According to this approach, such an understanding is essential for receiving the willing cooperation and support of the subordinates for achieving performance targets and goals.
3. **Quantitative approach**—This approach provides greater importance to the science of number, namely, mathematics and statistics. This approach insists on the extensive use of mathematics and statistics in supervisory management.
4. **Contingency approach**—This approach implies that the supervisors cannot depend on any one approach to deal with all kinds of environments and problems. According to this approach, the situation alone decides the type of approach to be adopted by the supervisors. It is hence imperative for the supervisors to understand the situation and the nature of the problem prior to choosing the management approach. In a nutshell, supervisors use one or more approaches depending on the characteristics of the situation or operation.

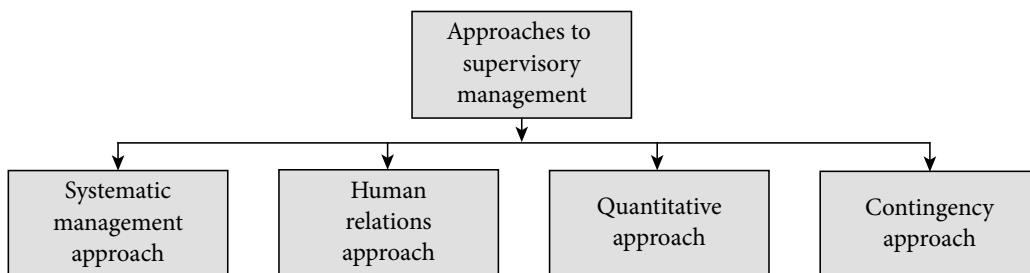


Figure 13.3

Approaches to Supervisory Management

Challenges Facing Supervisory Management

While getting the work done through their subordinates, supervisors face quite a few challenges from different sources. According to David Evans,²⁷ the major challenges faced by supervisors are: (i) lack of management support, (ii) lack of training, (iii) changes in technology, (iv) role confusion, (v) role overload and (vi) role conflict. We shall now discuss a few important challenges faced by supervisors in the course of their work.

- Supervisors act as representatives of the management to the workers and also deal directly with them. Consequently, they face the direct and immediate consequences of employee anger and displeasure, especially when the labour–management relations are strained.
- Supervisors are constantly under pressure to earn the trust and goodwill of both the higher-level management and the labour force. They often get caught in the middle when the demands and expectation of the management and employees are irreconcilable.
- They often experience difficulties in motivating heterogeneous workforce that has different needs, preferences, commitments and aspirations.
- Supervisors' job becomes all the more difficult in a constantly-changing and difficult environment. Frequent changes in the technology, consumer tastes and preference, workforce characteristics and management policies can create negative impact on the supervisors' job and preparedness.
- Besides their routine work, supervisors are also given the responsibility of training and motivating the employees to grow and improve in their respective fields.²⁸ Box 13.2 shows the efforts of a steel company to sharpen the skills and knowledge of its supervisory staff.

Essential Characteristics of Effective Supervisors

Since supervisors play a vital role in the managerial efforts to execute organizational goals, it is necessary to enhance their effectiveness constantly. Top management should concentrate on the development of the dual skills of the supervisors, namely, the behaviour-based skills and job- or task-based skills. Development of behaviour-based skills of supervisors will enable them to: (i) understand their subordinates well and build teams effectively, (ii) undertake initiatives to improve performance, (iii) clearly communicate their feelings and expectations, (iv) promote workforce diversity, (v) carry out performance evaluation objectively, (vi) settle conflicts amicably and (vii) effect changes successfully. In contrast, the fostering of job- or task-based skills will enable supervisors to: (i) improve the quality of work, (ii) identify the cost-reduction possibilities, (iii) develop and execute performance improvement plans and (iv) enhance process analysis and design.²⁹ However, supervisors must possess the following characteristics necessary to do the supervisory job effectively:

1. They should possess thorough knowledge of their job as this is an important prerequisite for commanding respect from their subordinates.

**Box
13.2*****Manthan Ab Shop-floor Se (MASS) at Tata Steel***

In almost every organization, supervisors who act as the linking pins of the management and the workforce face the challenge of achieving results through the efforts of others. Since they work with and through their subordinates, they need to be aware of the supervisory functions and skills and also know how to apply modern supervisory management principles in the job situation. Given the complex nature of the supervisors' job, many organizations have undertaken specific and persistent measures to expand the knowledge and skills base of those people who perform supervisory jobs. In this regard, Tata Steel has introduced a knowledge discovery and sharing intervention programme for its supervisors. Let us look at its initiatives.

Tata Steel has launched ambitious programmes called "Aspire Knowledge *Manthan*" ("*Manthan*" means "churning of knowledge") and MASS ("*Manthan Ab Shop-floor Se*") for its supervisors. The objective of Aspire Knowledge *Manthan* is to instil confidence in employees and help them perform better. It

aims at increasing the flow of knowledge throughout the organization by capturing tacit knowledge directly from the grass-root level and then using this across the whole organization. MASS ("*Manthan Ab Shop-floor Se*") is a supervisor-specific programme. It looks to promote the horizontal deployment of available knowledge assets at the plant-floor operator level. Supervisors at the shop-floor level are drawn from a variety of departments for participating in an eight-week knowledge discovery and sharing intervention. The entire programme is carried out in four phases of: (i) training and defining the scope of work, (ii) searching of knowledge assets, harvesting with shop-floor employees and experts, (iii) identifying good practices and (iv) syndication with departments and documentation.

Source: http://www.ikmagazine.com/xq/asp/sid.0/articleid.4DB81CD0-1CC8-475F-9B93-EFBC11405FBD/eTitle.Case_study_Tata_Steel/qx/display.htm (last accessed in May 2014).

2. They should remain open to the ideas, suggestions and thoughts of their subordinates. Openness, good listening and a proactive approach will enable supervisors to gain the confidence of their subordinates.
3. They should issue reasonable orders, only then can they expect compliance from their subordinates. Such orders should be compatible with the organizational objectives and the subordinates' job.³⁰
4. They must learn to recognize the good work of the people and praise them when they deserve it.
5. They must be good at motivating others and themselves. They should have the capability to motivate the employees, especially when they lack confidence in their ability to perform the jobs assigned to them. They must remain cool, composed and self-assured, particularly when they face challenging situations.
6. They should provide due importance for training the subordinates in their job so that they develop their full potential and do their work professionally and effectively.
7. Supervisors should allow their subordinates to enjoy job autonomy through proper delegation of authority and responsibility. However, the subordinates must be held accountable for the results.

8. They must understand the reason behind the failure of their subordinates, if any, and make subordinates accountable, just in proportion to their role in failure.
9. Supervisors must be impartial in all their dealings with the employees, especially when there are interpersonal conflicts.
10. They should remain approachable by making themselves available to the subordinates whenever they have concerns and problems.
11. They should be ethical and disciplined, only then can they expect their subordinates to behave so.
12. Supervisors must have the ability and dynamism to adapt quickly to the changes in the environment.

Human Behaviour in an Organization —An Overview

Any study of human behaviour in an organizational situation and of the interface between human behaviour and organization is called organizational behaviour.³¹ Managers need to understand the behaviour of people at different levels of the organization, especially of those who directly work under them. This is because each individual working for the organization has a unique set of personal characteristics, distinct personal background and past experience. These characteristics and experiences influence and shape their behaviour and the resulting performance. An understanding of such behaviour will enable managers to predict and manage the employee behaviour at the workplace. Moreover, most of the activities relating to directing (like motivating, leading and communicating) aim at influencing the work-related behaviour of the members. Certainly, individual behaviour is at the heart of human motivation.³² Managers can properly determine the type of directing technique to be used in a situation only on the basis of their understanding of the subordinates' mindset.

MARS Model of Individual Behaviour

According to the MARS Model, the four factors that influence the individual behaviour of employees in an organization are: (i) motivation, (ii) ability, (iii) role perceptions and (iv) situations.

- *Motivation* refers to the forces within the persons that affect his/her direction, strength and persistence of choice of behaviour.
- *Ability* refers to the capacity of a person to do a particular job. The ability of a person generally denotes a combination of mental ability (like memory and inductive reasoning), physical ability (like stamina, body coordination and physical strength) and motor ability (like reaction time, finger dexterity, etc).
- *Role perception* refers to an individual's views or beliefs on the suitability of a specific behaviour in a given situation.
- *Situation* refers to the situational factors that positively or negatively affect the behaviour and performance of an individual.

The MARS Model states that these four factors have a collective influence on an individual's behaviour. An individual's performance is bound to decline if any of these factors get weakened.³³ Usually, the behaviours of individuals in organizations can be classified into one of the five forms, namely, task performance, organizational citizenship, counterproductive work behaviours, joining and staying with the organization and work attendance.³⁴ Let us discuss them briefly.

- *Task performance* means the voluntary goal-oriented behaviour of individuals which results in the production of goods or service and fulfilment of organizational goals.
- *Organizational citizenship* refers to employee performance that exceeds the standards or requirements. It is an exemplary and selfless behaviour that promotes organizational interest.
- *Counterproductive work behaviours* refer to the kind of individual behaviours (like work avoidance, work sabotage, etc.) that directly or indirectly hurt the organizational interests and goal-fulfilment initiatives.
- *Joining and staying with the organization* is a kind of behaviour that is essential for achieving positive behaviours such as task performance or organizational citizenship. If individuals do not like to stay with the organization for certain job-related reasons, they will be motivated to look for alternate employment.
- *Work attendance* refers to individuals reporting to work at scheduled time. Employees may abstain from work for reasons like work-related stress, job dissatisfaction and easy availability of leave with pay, including medical leave facilities.

Summary

1. Directing is a process in which the management tells its employees what is to be done, and ensures through guidance and supervision that it is done.
2. Features of directing are: (i) top-down approach, (ii) command function, (iii) pervasive function, (iv) continuous activity, (v) influencing human behaviour and (vi) delegated function.
3. The steps involved in the directing process are motivating, facilitating collaboration, coordinating, delegating and effectively managing conflict.
4. Techniques of directing are democratic or consultative directing, autocratic or dictatorial directing and free-rein or *laissez-faire* directing.
5. Principles governing the directing function of management are: (i) principle of harmony of objectives, (ii) principle of direct supervision, (iii) principle of unity of command, (iv) principle of appropriateness of direction technique, (v) principle of maximum individual contribution, (vi) principle of flow of information, (vii) principle of leadership, (viii) principle of strategic use of informal organization and (ix) principle of follow through.
6. Elements of directing are motivation, communication and leadership, besides supervision.
7. Supervision is a process by which superiors guide their immediate subordinates in a way that benefits the organization as well as the employees.
8. The two kinds of supervision are employee-centred supervision and job-or task-centred supervision.

9. Approaches to supervisory management are systematic management approach, human relation approach, quantitative approach and contingency approach.
10. Any study of human behaviour in an organizational situation and of the interface between human behaviour and organization is called organizational behaviour.
11. Factors influencing the individual behaviour of employees in an organization are: (i) motivation, (ii) ability, (iii) role perceptions and (iv) situations.

Review Questions

Short-answer questions

1. Define the term directing.
2. What are the characteristics of directing?
3. Briefly explain the process of directing.
4. Distinguish between democratic directing and autocratic directing.
5. Write a note on *laissez-faire* directing.
6. State the meaning of supervision.
7. What are the different kinds of supervision?
8. Explain the characteristics of supervision.
9. What are the various approaches to supervisory management?
10. State the MARS model of individual behaviour.

Essay-type questions

1. Enumerate the importance of directing as a managerial function.
2. Discuss in detail the activities usually carried out through the directing function.
3. Describe the important principles governing the directing function of management.
4. Critically evaluate the different elements of directing with appropriate examples.
5. Enumerate the challenges facing supervisory management in organizations.
6. Examine the essential characteristics of effective supervisors.
7. Explain the need for understanding human behaviour in an organization for effective directing.
8. Supervisors are the interface between the management and non-managerial workforce in organizations. Discuss.

Case Study

Production Woes at Ameen Textile Mills

Ameen Textile Mills Private Limited came into existence in 1980 as a spinning mill to provide a wide range of products and services to the textile and apparel markets. This company produces premium quality yarn in different diameters and in long and continuous lengths. The yarn produced by the company is widely used for textiles, sewing, knitting, weaving, embroidery, etc. Ameen Textile has made ambitious plans to meet the growing market demand by extending its reach to clients through quick business expansion within the country and to eventually obtain leadership position in the industry.

In its quest to become a major player in the textile field, this reasonably peaceful company began to pursue

aggressive growth policies by formulating highly challenging organizational goals in terms of production and sales volume. As a part of one such measure, it asked its production managers to achieve manifold increase in production by setting new production goals and targets that test employees' production capability. Production managers were given the liberty to introduce a two-shift system for workers as against the present single shift and also involve them in overtime work for up to four hours beyond the shift timings to meet the stiff production targets.

Wasting no time, production managers issued directives to the production supervisors to implement the new measures immediately. Consequently, new measures were introduced at different levels with the promise of