

Publications

All You Need to Know About Supervision, and Then Some

A Review of

The Truth About Supervision: Coaching, Teamwork, Interviewing, Appraisals, 360° Assessments, and Recognition

by Anne O'Brien Carelli
Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 2004. 189 pp.
SBN 0-398-07470-4. \$28.95, paperback

Reviewed by
Donna DiMatteo-Gibson

How do I go about counseling my staff? What are the benefits of teamwork? What guidelines should a supervisor follow in conducting an interview? How can 360° assessments encourage teamwork? What steps should be done in a performance appraisal meeting? How can I reward my staff and delegate work?

In *The Truth about Supervision: Coaching, Teamwork, Interviewing, Appraisals, 360° Assessments, and Recognition*, Anne Carelli provides answers to all of these questions and many more. Her book offers straightforward and practical guidelines for both the new and seasoned supervisor on key managerial responsibilities. The format of the book allows a supervisor to review important topic areas with ease.

Carelli achieves her goal of providing information on key tasks of supervisors in the areas of coaching, interviewing, teamwork, performance evaluation, 360° assessments, delegation, and rewards/recognition. Because these tasks affect supervisors in all industries, every supervisor can use and implement these guidelines. Also, the practical knowledge, observations of best practices, and real-life experiences make this a book an excellent resource.

The book begins with a discussion on the importance of coaching, and Carelli describes numerous ways in which coaching might be appropriately used. The distinctions between coaching, disciplining, and counseling are illustrated. Helpful guidelines on what to include in a coaching session are described from beginning to end. There is also an excellent description of what to do when a coaching session is not going as planned. Supervisors can be excellent coaches by establishing trust, remaining patient, and being encouraging and supportive.

The author describes teamwork and explains what a team looks like and why teams are formed, providing guidelines for what makes an excellent team-based organization. Commitment from senior management, setting up a committee responsible for teamwork, informing the team of the organization's vision and mission, and determining steps to achieving goals are just a few of the guidelines illustrated. The book clearly documents how organizational culture can either support or sabotage team effectiveness. Although this section of the book is well written and useful, it would have been helpful if the author had provided more instruction on how to deal with employees who are undermining team progress.

A chapter on interviewing provides practical information on how to conduct interviews correctly and what questions are permissible. The rules of interviewing also describe essential information that every supervisor should know. There are also helpful guidelines on what to do to prepare for an interview.

A chapter on performance appraisals illustrates why appraisals are necessary and provides a format for a simple evaluation. Carelli provides basic competency areas and acknowledges the need to address specific job competencies. She provides excellent and practical information regarding evaluation, describing exactly what a supervisor should do before an appraisal meeting and the components of an excellent review. Understanding the barriers to successful evaluations is important for all supervisors.

A chapter on 360° assessments provides helpful instruction on how this process is implemented. All of the reader's questions about these assessments are answered in this section, from who should be included to how to guarantee

confidentiality.

The book's final chapters provide practical information about delegation, recognition, and rewards. The examples illustrate what is and is not delegation. Carelli also helps the supervisor who is afraid to delegate understand his or her fears. The signs that delegation is not working are important for supervisors to recognize.

The book has an important chapter devoted to rewards and recognition, a task for which many supervisors are unprepared. Rewards have a direct impact on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and potential turnover. I especially appreciated the author's emphasis on cost-free recognition. Carelli offers many suggestions for both reward and recognition ideas. I strongly recommend this book for everyone who supervises others-and that is most of us.

© 2005 by the American Psychological Association
