10 Tips for First-Time Supervisors



Here are 10 great tips for first-time supervisors from Sharlyn Lauby's blog HR Bartender. Psst, here's a secret – these tips are also great for any supervisor.

1. Don't try to be everyone's friend. This doesn't mean you shouldn't be friendly. There's a difference. But it's not realistic to think that you can be everyone's friend. Especially if at some point you need to discipline an employee or deliver bad news. This is particularly true if you've "moved up through the ranks" and are supervising recent coworkers.
2. Fair and equal are not the same thing. Employees want to be treated fairly. It's possible to be fair and not give everyone the same thing. Recognition is a good example. Everyone enjoys being recognized but all people do not want to be recognized the same way.
3. Ask for feedback and input. You don't have to know everything. Often, we put additional pressure on ourselves by assuming incorrectly that being a supervisor means we need to have all the answers. Being a supervisor means we should be able to find all the answers, not that all the answers are located in our heads.
4. Learn how to run a good meeting. People complain about meetings all the time. Developing a reputation for chairing a good meeting will do wonders for your career – because people will attend your meetings and participate at a high level. This leads to productive conversations and measurable results.
5. Find time to relax. Let's not sugar coat it – most times becoming a supervisor includes extra work. We must be able to effectively manage our workload without getting burned out. Our team relies upon us to be healthy and energetic. Otherwise, we're a drain on the organization.
6. Find someone you can trust (and vent to) about work. Sometimes as a supervisor, you will have access to confidential information. And you'll hear things that can be frustrating. Supervisors don't always have the ability to share everything with employees. Find a place where you can talk confidentially. It could be human resources, someone at home, or a colleague. Just make sure you can trust that the source will handle the conversation appropriately.
7. Take every opportunity to improve your people skills. No matter how long you're in the corporate world, never turn down training. You can even learn something from bad training.
8. Learn how to say "no" comfortably. The answer to everything is not "yes". Being able to say "no" when necessary will allow you to keep your sanity.

See #5.

9. Understand how you manage change. Business is all about change. No sooner do we get into our rhythm with a project or process and it changes. Get used to it. Become self-aware about how you personally process change and what resources you need to manage change successfully. Agility is critical.
10. Master the art of delegation. Remember #8? You do not have to complete every task. You are responsible for making sure the task is completed. But you don't have to do it all yourself.

Becoming a supervisor is about developing your team. When your team can effectively do the work, then you can attend training, take a vacation or go to a meeting and the department doesn't fall apart. That's the work of a supervisor.

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Lauby: https://www.hrbartender.com/2014/training/10-tips-for-first-time-supervisors/