**THE ACT OF SUPERVISING A LA JOE DUFFY – ANOTHER 12 STEP PROGRAM**

1. **I meet with my direct reports for a regularly scheduled monthly meeting at a day and time convenient for both parties.** I am careful to avoid scheduling such meetings at the time of day I am least productive (which for me is in the mid afternoon when I might be at risk of dozing off or zoning out). It is understood that I am available PRN in between meetings and I tell staff not to hold a pressing issue for the regular meeting, rather pop in or call. I schedule these meetings as a means to assure minimal contact with staff, for mutual sharing and updating, and monitoring progress and goals and assignments. I use a standing agenda including progress on goals, projects, budget status, mission and main thing discussion and review, what is on your mind and plate, how can I help you, how can you help me and/or, the organization. Monthly meetings have worked for me. I schedule more frequent meetings for new hires until both of us are comfortable meeting less often. Some supervisors like to have more frequent individual meetings. Others prefer less structure as in I call or you call as needed/desired.
2. **I also meet with direct reports as a group once a month and similarly schedule as in Step 1.** The standing meeting is on everyone’s calendar. I send out a proposed agenda a few days in advance, inviting staff to add to it. The final agenda is sent out at least a day in advance. We have agreed upon ground rules for these (and all) meetings. Generally they include, start on time; end on time (or early); come prepared as in if there was an assignment from the prior meeting or on the agenda, have a progress report and or, do the reading; one person talks at a time; no yelling; no vulgarity; disagreement is allowed, even encouraged, but no personal attacks. Meetings are generally used to update each other on their respective areas of responsibility, policy review and discussion, education, budget review, and problem solving. I email brief minutes of these meetings within 24 hours of each meeting. It is good to have a record as evidence and for ease of follow up. Meeting as a group more or less often is at your discretion. As I checked out of a hotel once, I made a point of telling the front desk manager how pleased I was with the customer service of a particular housekeeping staff member. That manger asked my permission to share my compliment with that person in front of her staff at their morning staff briefing. Depending on the nature of your work, a daily group meeting or briefing may be helpful.
3. **I maintain an open door (modified) policy.** I keep my office door open as an invitation for folks to walk in. I tell staff they can always stop by or call PRN if they have a need to, rather than hold a pressing matter or burning question for the next scheduled meeting (balance this against time distractions covered in the chapter on time management). Staff also knows that if my door is closed, I prefer not to be interrupted unless it is an emergency. And if staff does interrupt and I do not see the matter as an emergency, I let the person know same, lest I reinforce such is acceptable.
4. **Communicate frequently and with variety.** Use a variety of communication tools (see chapters on communication). If something is important say it, say it again, and say it again but differently using different tools. Realize how different people respond to different forms of communication and when possible communicate to them in their preferred style. Attempt to share as much information as possible balancing what people want and need to know against privacy, confidentiality and legal concerns.
5. **Praise in public.** There is much truth to the saying “you get the behavior you reward”. People respond to praise. Positive reinforcement makes the recipient feel good about him/herself and sends the person the message that he/she is doing something well or right. Specific praise builds confidence (Blanchard, 2015, page 32). I believe when praise is given publicly, it is even a stronger reinforcement. It has the added benefit of encouraging others hearing the praise to want to emulate such behavior and possibly be the recipient of such praise in the future. Praise is most effective when it is specific. Rather than speak in generalities like saying Mary’s speech was great, the praise should include specifics about why you thought the speech was great. As often as I can, I attempt to give praise as close as possible to the event. The immediacy of the reinforcement increases its effectiveness. When you can, consider dual or multiple modalities. On occasion I have sent a person a personal note specifying the praise I am offering, announced the same at a staff meeting and concurrently sent a mass email. For example after a State inspection of licensed drug treatment program I ran, I sent a personal and tailored thank you to the key persons that made the visit a success, sent a mass email to the entire agency announcing the results, singling out particular people, and publicly acknowledged those people at the exit interview with the state team. I also kept a copy of any positive feedback in that employee’s personnel file for use at annual review time.
6. **Criticize in private.** Some people criticize in public, possibly as a teaching moment to discourage others from such failure, possibly to embarrass the person to change a behavior, and or, maybe (and hopefully not) because you like to exercise power that way. Criticizing in public may cause immediate compliance, but it also may demoralize that employee and others, and cause a toxic non-productive work environment. Providing negative feedback is a necessary part of the job. It can be helpful to the employee pointing out what was wrong, and or, how and why something can be done better. Blanchard (2002, page 47) calls this “One Minute Re-Direct” emphasizing the importance of ending such sessions by emphasizing your trust in them and support for their success. Constructive feedback helps the employee grow and helps to create and maintain a positive work environment. I also keep a copy of constructive criticism in the employee’s personnel file for use at review time and for ongoing monitoring of job performance.
7. **Performance Reviews.** In every organization I have worked, employees received an annual performance review. I offer a caveat. I believe an annual review is a useful and necessary tool. It is that time of year to formally review the entire year and to set goals for maintaining and improving performance and growing in the next year. But an employee should always know how he or she is doing. The annual review should be a confirmation of what the supervisor and employee already know, not a surprise. Performance should be part of the scheduled individual and group meetings, part of informal PRN meetings that occur throughout the year, and be reflected in the occasions for positive and negative feedback documented all year long. I offer a second caveat. Do not hope bad performance will improve if ignored or talked around. Deal with it timely, directly, and specifically (see Chapter 8 Hire Right, Fire Right). Doing so is the fair and right thing to do for that employee, his/her co-workers, clients and the organization.
8. **Be fair not necessarily equal.** When I have spoken at employee orientations I would tell the new hires that everyone will be treated fairly in accordance with policy and law and without favoritism. Employees have different needs at different times and they have different capabilities. If for example I were to treat everyone equally then in terms of monthly individual meetings, everyone would be allotted the same time. In fairness though some employees might only need a fraction of an hour a month and others the full hour. I give them the time they need. Some employees need more time to complete an assignment than another. So long as deadlines can be met, I allow for such differences (of course looking for ways to improve the productivity of the slower person).
9. **Reward.** One form of reward was already addressed above “praise in public”. Praise is a very effective reward tool. There are others. I have been offered tickets to plays and sporting events. I have given them to staff as a reward. While staff may appreciate the recognition of receiving those hockey tickets, if they hate hockey, the reward is less effective. So attempt to confirm what reward is effective for which employee, be it a book, a movie, dinner, sporting event, day off, tee shirt, special parking place, gift card, etc.
10. **Manage By Walking Around (MBWA).** I have been a proponent of MBWA throughout my career. I don't think a day has gone by that I did not purposely get up from my desk and walk around (and often drive around to our different locations). For much of my career I had responsibility for one or more 24 hour operations. In such situations I would schedule time for MBWA on other shifts. MBWA is the perfect tool for communicating (talking and listening), a way to help keep your finger on the pulse of the organization, testing mission awareness and telling others how the organization is doing.

1. **Ask “How am I doing”.** Three-term New York City Mayor Ed Koch was famous for his trademark question “How am I doing”? While he frequently asked his constituents the question, some critics say he often did not listen. You need to know how you are doing so you can take positive steps to improve. So ask that question of yourself and others often. Very importantly, listen to and act on the answers. See Chapter 13 ahead for suggestions on how to do this.
2. **Be a person of integrity.** Being a person of integrity means doing the right thing at all times, even when no one is watching (how do you know when no one is watching or listening). If you are not a person of integrity, people will lose trust in you. If people do not trust you, they will not follow you (for long). If people trust you they will give you their proverbial right hand, follow you to hell and back, ask how they can help, improve the work environment.