

**Leadership training
for shop-floor shift supervisors**
Successful role clarification for shift supervisors – a case study!

What can be done if employees and superiors are not satisfied with the role performance of their shift supervisors? The following text will show a real case and the process CONTUR initiated for personnel and organization development.

Clarifying the starting point

In a first meeting heads, human resources, and workers' council described the situation from their point of view. It became clear that shift supervisors seemed to be lacking clear role behavior; Employees were missing clear targets, decisions, sincerity, leadership, and quality in the employee dialogs.

By means of intensive interviewing and discussions we tried to find the reasons for such lack of leadership. Missing role understanding by the shift supervisors was only one cause; there were also problems at the interfaces to other areas like process engineering, production planning, and maintenance.

Designing the process

To begin with we agreed on a 2-step concept consisting of interviews with the shift supervisors (to hear all parties) and a workshop with the shift supervisors and their stand-ins.

Workshop I

A first workshop was to discuss the information gained in the interviews, to clarify expectations of all parties, to clearly define competencies and responsibilities, and how to communicate them.

The interviews showed that being responsible for one shift over a long period does not leave much room for change and learning. Shift leaders did not know much about each other; a sign that communication and exchange was missing.

Needs of the shift supervisors

Quickly it became clear that there was a great need for extensive discussion of the situation and frame conditions. The workshop gave ample opportunity for that. One result of the workshop was that our concern about clear role formation was a holistic one more than anything else. There was no question that the shift supervisors had to adjust their leadership style to the new frame conditions; the supervisors themselves saw this the same way.

Further agreements

Within the next 2-3 months of the change process heads reported first changes in the role behavior of the shift supervisors.

Two more meetings with the customer set the next steps for the process and content.

As a result another workshop took place after 4.5 months.

Workshop II

This workshop focused on the role of one manager. The following topics were covered: how to steer employee performance and behavior, conflict management, appreciation of employees, delegation, communication, and employee dialog.

The final feedback showed a high participant satisfaction regarding the workshop and its contents. Obviously, the first workshop was experienced as 'door

opener' for a more intensive and more trusting work in the follow-up workshop.

Outlook

The next months will show if a new understanding of roles could be achieved successfully and sustainable in heads, hearts, and hands. At the same time we will define next steps and measures that are to strengthen and support the change process that has started, that make success visible, and change sustainable. Of course, this will be in close communication with all parties.

All this sounds familiar to you? You feel challenged the same way? We are happy to assist you and design a tailored change process for you.



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