Course Description

BA 315 DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT SKILLS (3.00)

This course introduces effective management skills and their impact on organizational, team and individual performance. Familiarizes students with the skills of management such as delegating, coaching, conflict resolution, stress-management, problem solving, and building effective teams.

Portfolio Essay

When I joined the Navy I really had no idea of what I was going to do, where I was going to be, or when. All I knew was that I was going to use my natural people abilities and do the best that I could. I had many journeys, many adventures, and many opportunities to excel and show off my technical, supervisory, and managerial skills.

During this twenty year span I was able to gain valuable experience and a great reputation as a manager and supervisor. I believe I would have never gained this experience if I had not decided to make the military my career. I believe it made me a better person and consequently, I was respected by my peers and those under my supervision.

I will not be so conceited as to even attempt to claim I made no mistakes as a supervisor. However, on those occasions when I made errors, these afforded me an opportunity to learn – to understand my error, correct it and therefore become a better supervisor.

Effective Delegation

As a young seaman I remember having orders and direction given to me by the whole gamut of petty officers. I noticed there were particular individuals that were able to delegate duties to those below them with confidence and authority and maintain the respect of his subordinates. I also noticed that there were those of higher rank who delegated duties reluctantly
and gained little respect from those under them. I made it a habit to watch and learn from the former. I wanted to learn and understand how effectively delegate to the diverse personalities and cultural backgrounds of the people I had met so far in the Navy.

Once I received the rank of E4, Third Class Petty Officer, I was able to use some of the effective delegation processes that I had observed. I understood, unfortunately, that the delegation processes I used at this time were not complete. The Navy was predominately male with very few minorities or females within the special project I worked. However I delegated and learned from what I could.

Since I was still at a relatively lower enlisted grade, I found that the most effective process of delegation was to show that it was not below my rank or person to perform those tasks I would assign to others under me. For instance, if we were a little low on manpower when it came to cleanup time I would readily assign myself to the most loved of all jobs, cleaning the heads (bathrooms). I believe this proved to be the most effective process at this point in my career.

Fortunately for me, by my eighth year, a couple of major changes occurred. I had now quickly climbed to the rank of E6, First Class Petty Officer, and the navy had started to diversify by assigning more minorities and females within our special project.

What a challenge! The challenge was how to effectively delegate and supervisor a crew mixed with male and female sailors. Since the majority of the senior petty officers had never encountered this, I noticed that a lot of them were struggling with issues of effective delegation.

I observed that the female sailors were just as capable in the most jobs, and sometimes better, as the males. There would be times however, where physical strength requirements for
tasks prohibited the delegation of a task to a female. In these circumstances I made my reasoning for using male sailor vice a female sailor clear to all if questioned

Effective delegation is not that difficult in the military. Most delegation is regulated as orders and all individuals that make it past boot camp understand that following orders, no matter how trivial or undesirable, are a matter of military life.

But, like everything else, even in the military, I found that you cannot have effective delegation as a supervisor without employee motivation.

**Employee Motivation**

In the early years it became apparent that a supervisor should try and maintain a highly motivated crew. I noticed that a motivated crew tended to work hard, become more skilled at their jobs and respected each member in the crew both personally and professionally. It became apparent to me that this could be the building block to all the other skills and processes incumbent on a supervisor or manager.

I found that employee motivation went beyond the job. While stationed in Scotland, I wondered what I could do to ensure my crew would stay motivated and continue to be top producers. After much reflection and watching, it became time to act.

I created opportunities for the crew to gather in social functions off the job in order to get to know each other and their families (See Attachment 8).

I had a rather large flat in Scotland so I would have monthly parties for the crew members and their significant others. I also organized gatherings at the small lake on the base so the crew members could bring their children.
After a couple of these functions, I noticed that this created a family atmosphere among the whole crew married or single. These gatherings did a lot to keeping my crew motivated and feeling like one unit.

I wondered, since this worked so well with a small crew of twenty or less if this could work on a division of one hundred plus.

I soon got the chance to see if this would work. I assumed the responsibilities as Leading Petty Officer of our division in Scotland whose size was two hundred plus and overall moral was pretty dismal. I instituted a quarterly social gathering for the division called a “Hail and Farewell.” These functions were attended by every member of the division to welcome those that had recently arrived and to thank those that were departing soon for a job well done. For those arriving we introduced them to everyone in the division and for those departing we gave them a command plaque and a picture of the command surrounded by a paper frame for the division members to write memorable sayings on.

These functions proved very effective in raising the motivation of the division. Upon my transfer to Winter Harbor, Maine I was also assigned as Leading Petty Officer and instituted the same “Hail and Farewell” function there with much success.

As I mentioned earlier, a highly motivated crew tended to work hard and become skilled. This could only be accomplished with training and professional development.

**Training and Development**

I noticed that there was a lot of inefficient work that was being accomplished due to the low skill levels of some of the operators. It was obvious to me that there needed to be some
types of formal and information training in order to ensure operations were performed at the optimum.

Even though all of the new operators coming on board were all “A” school graduates, simply meaning that they attended some formal Navy training that gave them the basics of what the program was about and what position they were going to work, when it came to the actual operation of the system most were not capable of performing even the most routine day-day functions.

I developed what was known as Job Qualification Requirements (JQRs) for the position that I sat and ran (See Attachment 4). These were steps and information that was required for the operator to run the every-day operations of this specific position. These JQRs proved to be very beneficial in the continued operations and was significant in reducing the amount of downtime related to operator error. Because they were so essential to the sites operations and ensuring that operators performed at the optimum level, these JQRs were soon adopted system wide. All sites, both in the U.S. and outside the states, used these JQRs to enhance the abilities of their operators. These JQRs were geared to qualify the operator in a three month period.

I also noticed that, unfortunately an evil of military life, there were training initiatives that needed to be accomplished for those going up for rate and promotions. I watched as a lot of the sailors struggled to glean information from books in order to take a bi-annual test. This was not information that we used on a daily basis and as such there was a lot of book studying that was required for young sailors to make it to the next pay grade.

I wondered what it would take to make life a little easier for them. I remember that it was difficult for me to sit for hours at a time reading dull technical books in order to take this test every six months. I observed that there were some sailors that were smart in certain areas and
others that were proficient in yet others areas. I wondered what would happen if we put them together and let each individual quiz the others on the areas that he or she was smartest in.

I formed study groups of these individuals that met at lunch for one hour and then again after work for one hour (See Attachment 9). In my opinion, there was no need to spend eight hours at work and then another four or more hours after work studying for these exams. There was no way to gauge how effective this would be until the time came to take the exam.

Results from the exam came out, typically, three months after the test. At this time I would be able to determine how effective our little study groups had been. I knew that typically our promotion rate was at thirty percent. When the exam results came out for this cycle I was astonishingly surprised to see that our promotion rate had risen dramatically to seventy percent. Although it would have been nice to have achieved a promotion rate of one hundred percent, impossible to know, however it made me feel good to have found an easy way to help my shipmates attain their rank goals (See Attachment 8).

Conclusion

“Natural Leaders.” This is the phrase giving to those who get their first official chance at some type of leadership, supervisory or management position and do very well at it. There seems to be no obvious supervisory or management training for these individuals – they naturally pick it up. I don’t think so. What these individuals have done is watch, learn and remember what supervisors or managers did that they have had the opportunity to work with.

I have learned that supervisors and managers come in all shapes and sizes. However, the effective supervisors or managers are those that realized there is more to these positions than just a title.
I believe that anyone can become an effective supervisor or manager. With good mentors and a lot of dedication, effective supervision is attainable by anyone.

Finally, I believe, that if you treat those that you are supervising the way that you yourself would like to be supervised, you will not only be an effective supervisor but an outstanding leader as well.
Index of Documentation

1. Copy of newspaper article
2. Letter of Recognition
3. Letter of nomination
4. Letter recognizing Training
5. Letter of nomination
6. Classification description
7. Certification of Completion