

Critical Role Supervisors Play in Safety

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Today's Focus

- ▶ What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?
- ▶ You, the Supervisor, are the Organization
- ▶ Setting the Example
- ▶ Holding Employees Accountable

What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?

- ▶ Production
- ▶ Quality
- ▶ Inventory control
- ▶ Human resources
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Enforce rules
- ▶ Delegate work
- ▶ Organize the work
- ▶ Solve routine problems
- ▶ Train employees

What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?

- ▶ What are they responsible for specifically and solely in safety?
 - ▶ Perform daily inspections
 - ▶ Report/correct unsafe conditions
 - ▶ Assist in accident investigations
 - ▶ Train employees on hazards
 - ▶ Develop safe work procedures/JHA's
 - ▶ Equipment is maintained
 - ▶ Enforce safety regulations/policies
 - ▶ Ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided
 - ▶ Prevent accidents

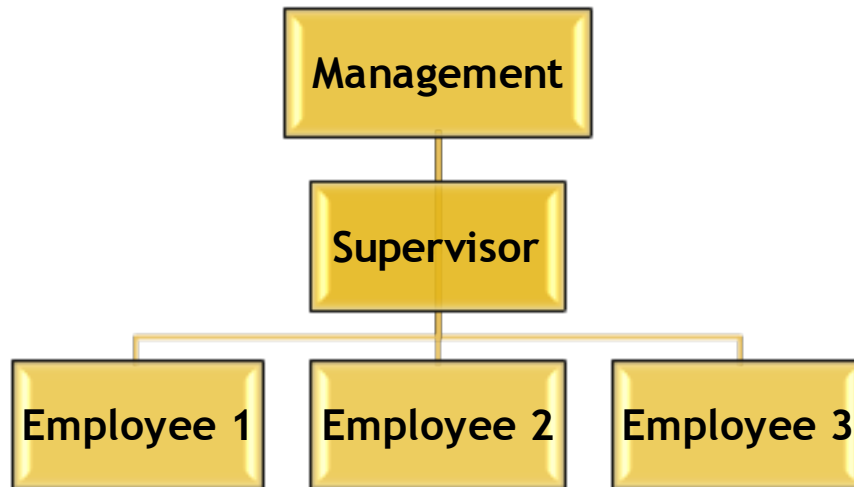
What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?

- ▶ Who generally gets promoted to Supervisor?
 - ▶ The best worker
 - ▶ But are they going to make a good/great/amazing supervisor?

What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?

- ▶ Now we know how they're chosen
- ▶ Now we know ALL that they're responsible for
- ▶ Now we know everything they have to manage for safety
- ▶ So, what?
- ▶ Big deal!

What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?



- ▶ What's significant in this simplified chart?
- ▶ Who interfaces with the employees?
- ▶ More specifically, who from the Organization, interacts with the employees?
- ▶ **SUPERVISOR!**

What are Supervisors' Responsibilities?

- ▶ Safety 101 we learn the supervisor is the key.
- ▶ “The supervisor bears the greatest responsibility and accountability for implementing the safety and health program because it is he or she who works most directly with the employee.”
 - ▶ *Occupational Safety and Health Management,*
Thomas J. Anton

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ Which leads us to the next topic listed above.
- ▶ Is that accurate?
- ▶ Do you believe it?
- ▶ That's ok, I'll show you that my opinion is true.
- ▶ Just stick with me.

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ The corporate office has a message to give to the employees - who delivers it?
- ▶ There's a new policy developed and everyone needs trained on it - who does it?
- ▶ An employee has a problem with implementation of a work procedure - who do they discuss it with?
- ▶ An employee is injured, has a machine not working properly, has a problem with a co-worker, is mad at their spouse - who do they turn to?

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ Let's take this to another level:
 - ▶ Employees view you as "Management"
 - ▶ Courts may view you as "Employer"

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ The Organization's dirty little secret:
 - ▶ Liability
 - ▶ Responsible for your employees leaving work without any injuries and without dying
 - ▶ Implement all of our directives
 - ▶ When there's an employee issue YOU are the first person we're going to turn to for answers
 - ▶ When there's ANY issue on the floor/the field/the office we're turning to YOU for an explanation first

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

▶ My point:

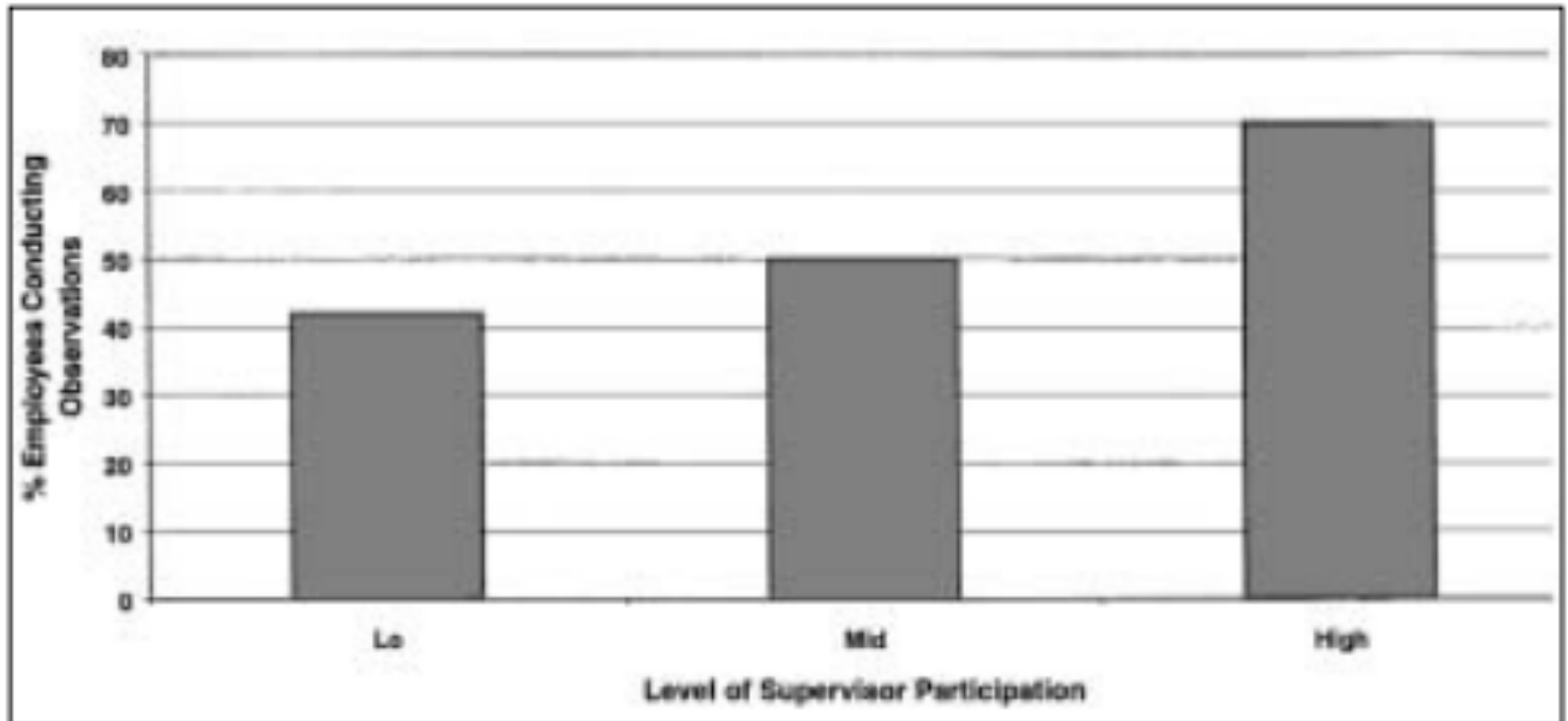
- ▶ YOU, THE SUPERVISOR, HAVE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF RESPONSIBILITY
- ▶ YOU, THE SUPERVISOR, HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ *The Role of Supervisors in Behavioral Safety Observations*, study in Professional Safety, October 2000, page 33.
- ▶ A company trained their employees and supervisors on how to conduct observations and asked them to conduct two observations a month at many locations.
- ▶ Participation was measured.

You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

FIGURE 1
Employee Observations as a Function of Supervisor Observations



You, the Supervisor, Are the Organization

- ▶ Now that you know I'm right and what's listed above IS how it is...
- ▶ It's time for me to come clean...
- ▶ I've been setting you up for the two most important topics today

Setting The Example

- ▶ Given, that you ARE the organization everything you say and do will be seen by employees as the organization's words and actions.
 - ▶ Holy crap...that's heavy

Setting The Example

- ▶ How does this apply, specifically, to safety?
 - ▶ Employees watch your actions to determine your attitude toward safety
 - ▶ Employees believe that whatever your attitude toward safety is IS that of the organization

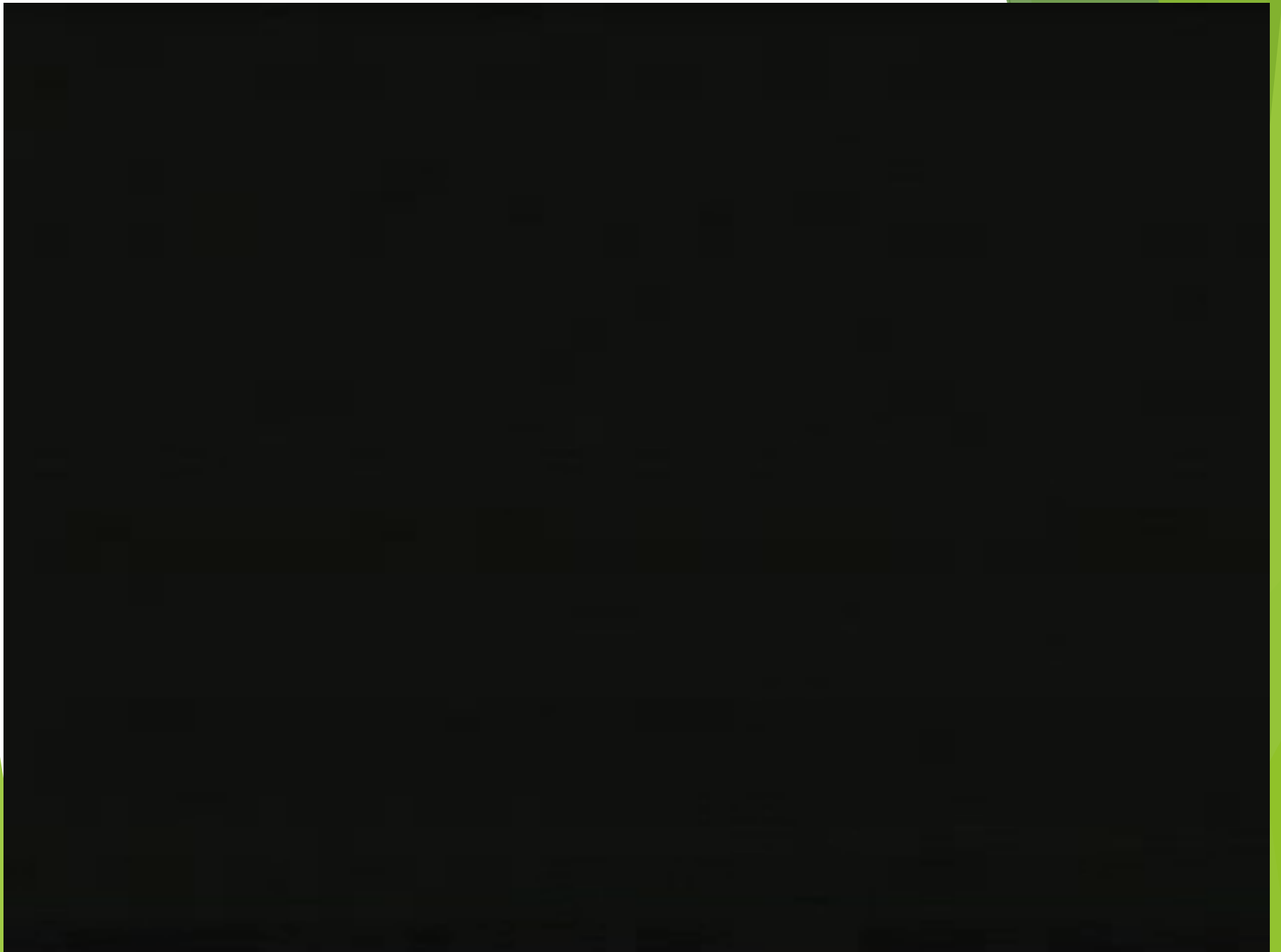
Setting The Example

- Employees will watch your actions to determine your attitude toward safety.
- What that means for Supervisors is that you're always on stage.
- They watch how you handle different situations.











Setting The Example

- What happens when unsafe behavior is condoned?
 - ▶ People are more willing to take risks
 - ▶ People will take short cuts because they'll assume that's expected
 - ▶ People don't bother to wear their PPE
 - ▶ People will assume you don't care about their safety
 - ▶ People will become resentful
 - ▶ People will know that the "safety program" is a sham and is all for OSHA
 - ▶ Safety degrades

Setting The Example

- Since we don't want safety to degrade what can we do?
- Quite simply, address safety concerns when you see or hear or are told them.
 - ▶ Get the item fixed
 - ▶ Provide coaching to the employee
 - ▶ Wear all of your PPE
 - ▶ Ensure everyone's following proper procedures
 - ▶ Stop the task/work when there's a safety issue
 - ▶ Hold employees accountable (must do this yourself first)

Holding Employees Accountable

- Worthy of discussion
 - ▶ Nobody likes to do it
 - ▶ Nobody's trained on how to do it
 - ▶ It's easier to look the other way
 - ▶ People are simply uncomfortable addressing issues that are deemed "bad" with other people (that's why there's so much bickering behind others' backs)

Holding Employees Accountable

- Some common issues with holding people accountable:
 - ▶ We don't hold the "good producers" accountable for safety because we don't want to impact their production (same is true for the opposite)
 - ▶ We only hold people accountable for safety issues when it impacts production or machinery is broke or someone is injured
 - ▶ We don't hold people accountable for safety but we do hold them accountable for production issues
 - ▶ We only hold the employee accountable but NOT the supervisor
- It only works if done consistently and fairly

Holding Employees Accountable

- One other note:
 - ▶ OSHA comes onto your sight and sees an employee not wearing the appropriate PPE.
 - ▶ Your response to OSHA is “All employees are required to wear PPE”.
 - ▶ Does OSHA says “OK, that’s good enough”?
 - ▶ OSHA will want to see records of where the organization enforced their policy of wearing the appropriate PPE.
 - ▶ If you have no documentation OSHA will then know that the PPE policy is NOT REAL.

Holding Employees Accountable

- Let's discuss how we could be handling employee accountability
 - ▶ Usually employees are held accountable with some type of disciplinary system
 - ▶ Usually progressive
 - ▶ Verbal (this is documented)
 - ▶ Written
 - ▶ Days Off without Pay
 - ▶ Termination

Holding Employees Accountable

- Vanessa's advice:
 - Know your discipline policy
 - Keep an open mind when approaching someone not following policy
 - Use your discipline policy fairly and consistently
 - Use your Human Resources and Safety Managers for support/advice
 - DOCUMENT
 - DOCUMENT
 - DOCUMENT

Summary

- Supervisors have a unique and challenging role within organizations
- Safety is one of the many areas supervisors are charged to manage
- It is critical that supervisors understand the example they are for all employees
- If a supervisor does not hold their employees accountable for safety there is no safety
- Support your supervisors - they have too much on their plate to do it alone

Summary

- **Management**
 - ▶ Provide training your Supervisors
 - ▶ Give them the tools to do the job
 - ▶ Support their decisions
 - ▶ Hold them accountable for safety
- **Safety**
 - ▶ Provide support to your Supervisors
 - ▶ Provide education to your Supervisors

Questions

There are no stupid questions, only questions that show your stupidity.



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If there are no stupid questions, then what kind of questions do stupid people ask? Do they get smart just in time to ask questions?

(Scott Adams)

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