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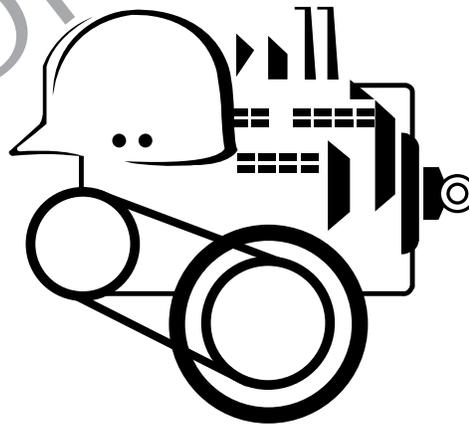
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**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR  
SUPERVISORS**

**Lesson One**

**Communicating  
Objectives**



**TPC Training Systems**

90501

**Lesson****1****Communicating Objectives****TOPICS**

How Communication Works  
 Training New Employees  
 Learning About Your Crew  
 Setting an Example  
 Giving and Receiving Instructions

Motivating Your Crew  
 Using Communication Tools  
 Speaking on the Telephone  
 Publishing in the Company Newsletter  
 Giving and Taking Interviews

**OBJECTIVES**

After studying this lesson, you should be able to...

- Explain how communication works.
- Explain how to use the various communication tools.
- Give examples of effective telephone use.
- Tell how to give and receive instructions effectively.
- Demonstrate effective interview techniques.

**KEY TECHNICAL TERMS**

**Sender** 1.01 the person who starts the communication

**Receiver** 1.02 the person toward whom the speaker directs the communication

**Message** 1.03 what the communication is about

**Motivation** 1.30 the ways a supervisor can convince workers to do what he or she wants

**Participation** 1.36 suggestions, complaints, or advice from workers about their work

**Criticism** 1.37 constructive and specific remarks about a worker's performance

How long is your job description? A page? Maybe two or three? No matter how long it is, a great deal of what you really do is not covered in it at all. Regardless of what your job description says, your primary task as a first-line supervisor is, above all, to see that the job gets done. And getting the job done means you must communicate effectively with the people who do the work.

In addition to being highly skilled at your craft, you must also become a human relations specialist. Your work involves planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling. All of these functions require an awareness of how you can best reach people.

This lesson is about communicating with people. You will learn how to communicate so that you can supervise your crew successfully. The main focus is on how to choose what you say so that you motivate the people you are working with.

### How Communication Works

1.01 All communication requires three elements (Fig. 1-1):

- the sender
- the receiver
- the message.

Each element affects the way the communication goes. The *sender* is the person with the message to get across. The sender begins the communication. However, if the sender has laryngitis, the receiver may have a difficult time hearing what is being said. And the message—or some critical part of it—may be lost.

1.02 The *receiver* is the person who receives the communication. If the receiver is preoccupied with other thoughts, he or she may not be listening carefully enough to what the sender is saying (Fig. 1-2). The message, again, may not get through.

1.03 The *message* is the thought that the sender wants to communicate to the receiver. If the message is not clear, or if there are gaps in the information, the communication will not be properly understood. Suppose someone (the sender) comes to you (the receiver) with a message: there is an emergency in the shop and your supervisor wants to see you right away. The message is simple enough. But suppose the sender forgets to tell you where the problem has occurred. You may be able to determine where the emergency has occurred by thinking about what was likely to go

Fig. 1-1. Three elements of communication



Fig. 1-2. A preoccupied receiver may not get the message



**Fig. 1-3. Get to know each worker's name and interests**



wrong that day, or by listening for loud noises. But you have lost valuable time in responding to the emergency.

1.04 You can see how the three parts involved in all communication must be carefully coordinated. In the discussion that follows, you, as the first-line supervisor, will often be the sender. You must learn how to produce clear, easily understood messages when dealing with your crew members, and when representing your crew to management or to other departments in the company. You must also learn how to receive messages sent to you by others.

### Training New Employees

1.05 Training new employees will be part of your job. Such training has one primary goal: helping the new employees become top performers in their jobs. Reaching this goal involves several related tasks:

- explaining company policies
- indicating your department's role in the larger picture
- learning about the new employee
- setting an example.

Take a close look at those last two tasks.

### Learning About Your Crew

1.06 You will want to learn about a new employee so that you can make informed decisions concerning how you will both work together. Simple tactics, like learning the new person's name and outside interests, will help you show the person that he or she is valuable. Obviously, calling someone by name is the best way to get a crew member's attention (Fig. 1-3). Using a worker's name does two other important things: it shows respect and it recognizes the receiver's individuality.

1.07 Learning about someone's outside interests—asking a worker questions about him or herself—is more than just a way to be friendly. In addition to making a new person feel at ease (or an old employee feel important), such questions give you valuable information about a new crew member's skills. You might discover a hobby that involves talents that could apply to your department's work. Or you might find out that a worker would be a good candidate for the company softball team.

1.08 There are other key questions to ask the people who work for you. In order to keep people satisfied with their work, you should keep track of their changing situations and goals. Someone who has a personality conflict with a co-worker can distract other workers and slow down production (Fig. 1-4). Someone else who has just completed a training course in welding may expect his or her job responsibilities to change accordingly. From time to time, ask your workers what they want to accomplish, why they are behaving in a certain way, or how well they think they are doing in your group.

### Setting an Example

1.09 There are lots of steps you can take to set an example that will keep things flowing smoothly. All these steps involve forms of communication (Fig. 1-5). This communication must be clear, sensible, and honest.

1.10 Suppose there is a rumor about a layoff. Your people are concerned and several of them ask you about it. Look at the suggestions in Fig. 1-5. What do you tell your workers?

1.11 "I don't know" may be a clear, honest answer, but it isn't the best under the circumstances. "I don't

**Fig. 1-4. Personality conflicts can lead to distractions**



know” doesn’t do much to calm people’s fears—fears which are understandable. “I don’t know but I’ll try to find out and tell you as soon as possible” is much better. Then, of course, you will want to tell them, in a calm, truthful way, what is planned and why.

1.12 Many words and phrases that are tempting to use break the rules in Fig. 1-5. Breaking those rules will harm your credibility. Your crew members will be less likely to trust and believe you. Consider the situation in the following example and think about what you would do.

1.13 Phil comes to you to complain about an order you gave. You see that his complaint makes sense and you understand why he feels that a different person should do an assignment he has been given. But he’s the only man available for the job. If you tell him to stop complaining, do the job, and leave you alone, which rules are you breaking? Of course, the answer is: all of them.

1.14 You probably would not treat Phil that way, although it sometimes might be tempting. Just as it might be tempting to say, “I didn’t make that

**Fig. 1-5. Elements of successful communication**



assignment—Kraus, from upstairs, did” (passing the buck).

1.15 Or to say, “Look, Phil, Morgan never gripes the way you do—stop belly-aching and just do the job, like Sam Morgan would” (not being impartial).

1.16 The best choice is to consider why you gave Phil the assignment. Let him know you see his point, but tell him that, at this time, he’s the best man for the job, and you think he can do it.

1.17 Some words like the following should do the trick:

“I see your point, Phil. Don Peters is supposed to handle electrical maintenance. I think you can get the job done for us this time, but I understand how you might be shaky about it. I didn’t ask Peters because he’s tied up in the shop. Why don’t you have a look at the job, then ask Don if you have any questions. If you still don’t know how to do it—come back and talk to me again.”

1.18 Obviously, you won’t always have the time to take the best route. The solution presented in paragraphs 1.16 and 1.17 takes a little longer than the more tempting solutions. But you can see why the longer response makes sense. You have:

- used the man’s name

- shown consideration for his problem
- reassured him about his skills
- given him the reasons for your assignment
- presented some guidance about how to approach his problem
- indicated that you are concerned and flexible.

Through your words and actions, you can positively affect a situation and build goodwill. Remember that sometimes you can aggravate a problem by your choice of words. You must think carefully about what you say.

### Giving and Receiving Instructions

1.19 Much of your job involves telling the people on your crew what to do and how to do it. Before you can communicate the important points about a task to someone, you must understand the task thoroughly yourself. So, how do you get a good understanding to begin with?

1.20 It’s best to get work orders in writing (Fig. 1-6) whenever you can. When people have to write something down, they think about it more carefully than when they just say it. Because of this, written orders are likely to be more clearly understood.

1.21 Although written instructions are ideal, the situation may not always work that way. And, of course, it’s possible that you still won’t understand what’s expected of you. If you can, find a quiet place to talk to the person giving the instructions. Although it may be easier for the message’s sender to try to talk to you out on the shop floor, the noise of machinery and the presence of other people could interfere with your ability to receive the message accurately (Fig. 1-7).

1.22 Anytime you are given instructions in writing or in person, be sure to ask questions about any details that are not clear. The most important question is: When does the work need to be done? The answer to this will help you determine what priority to assign the task, when and how to obtain any necessary supplies, and who to assign.

1.23 In addition to asking questions, repeat the important points of the order to the person who gave

**Fig. 1-6. Written instructions aid understanding**



Fig. 1-7. Noise makes giving instructions difficult



it to you. That way, the sender can check to be sure you received all parts of the message properly.

1.24 After you have an accurate idea of what the instructions are, you're ready to give them to someone else. Remember that communication is a two-way street. Before you actually speak to a crew member, you should think quickly about why you've selected that person and how he or she is likely to receive the assignment. Only then are you prepared to discuss it.

1.25 When you give instructions to crew members, you should consider how skilled they are. Suppose you are giving the assignment to a new and inexperi-

enced employee. For such a person, you may have to describe standard procedures, show how to use certain tools, or even define technical words. Such instructions must be more direct and more detailed than those you give an "old pro." Only a few words may be necessary for the "old pro."

**The Programmed Exercises on the following page will tell you how well you understand the material you have just read. Before starting the exercises, remove the Reveal Key from the back of your book. Read the instructions printed on the Reveal Key. Follow these instructions as you work through the Programmed Exercises.**

## 10 Programmed Exercises

<p>1-1. The three elements of communication are the sender, the receiver, and the _____.</p>	<p>1-1. MESSAGE Ref: 1.01</p>
<p>1-2. Using a worker's _____ shows respect and recognizes his or her individuality.</p>	<p>1-2. NAME Ref: 1.06</p>
<p>1-3. To keep people satisfied with their work, you should keep track of their _____.</p>	<p>1-3. CHANGING SITUATIONS or GOALS Ref: 1.08</p>
<p>1-4. Your communication must be clear, sensible, and _____.</p>	<p>1-4. HONEST Ref: 1.09</p>
<p>1-5. Comparing one worker to another breaks the rule of being _____.</p>	<p>1-5. IMPARTIAL Ref: 1.15</p>
<p>1-6. You must understand a task thoroughly before you can explain it. True or False?</p>	<p>1-6. TRUE Ref: 1.19</p>
<p>1-7. When you are receiving a message, besides asking questions, you should also _____ the important points to its sender.</p>	<p>1-7. REPEAT Ref: 1.23</p>
<p>1-8. You should always give an "old pro" the same instructions as you give a new worker. True or False?</p>	<p>1-8. FALSE Ref: 1.25</p>

### Giving and Receiving Instructions—Continued

1.26 The main goal in giving instructions is to tell the receiver what you expect (Fig. 1-8). Be careful to state clearly:

- what the job involves
- how it should be done
- where the work should be done
- why you have chosen him or her for the job
- when the job must be completed.

Do any other details apply? For example, will the crew member you choose for the job be working in another supervisor's area? Will the job involve a piece of equipment with special problems? Be sure to include all the extra information. List in your mind and then for your receiver all the information needed to get the job done right. Remember that it's also helpful to explain why a particular job must be done.

1.27 **Be flexible.** Listen to any comments the crew member makes about your instructions and his or her other assigned duties. If you are giving an order that will change another order you gave earlier, explain why. Be prepared to change plans if an emergency arises. Be able to justify your instructions if a worker has problems with them. Also be prepared to seek further information if your crew member asks a question you can't answer.

1.28 Finally, ask the receiver to repeat the instructions you've given. That way, you can check to see that the instructions have been completely understood. You might use phrases like: "Now, tell me how you're going to complete the job." Or you might say, "Please run that order by me so I know you understand what I want."

### Motivating Your Crew

1.29 One important part of giving instructions has not yet been discussed. In a survey conducted in two divisions of a large company, workers were asked, "Do you think your boss is qualified for the job he or she holds?" In one division, 98% of the workers

answered "yes." In the other division, only 32% answered "yes." The person evaluating the survey found that both supervisors were qualified technicians, but only one of them understood motivation.

1.30 The supervisor who knew how to *motivate* his workers ranked high with them on the survey. The average worker wants to be treated with respect. Workers like to be treated in a dignified manner. Crew members will respect the supervisor who follows the suggestions in paragraphs 1.06–1.17, along with the following suggestions.

1.31 We have already covered the main idea, which is to tell workers what you expect of them. The next goal is to convince them to do what you want. You do this by motivating them.

1.32 There are many tested ways to motivate workers. Figure 1-9, on the following page, lists some. For each kind of motivation on that list, you must choose appropriate words and tactics.

1.33 Suppose crew member Suzanne Kelly has developed an especially good system of preventive maintenance for her area. Emergency maintenance calls are way down. You want to reward Suzanne for her excellent work. What are the choices?

1.34 Certainly you will praise her. But, "Nice job, Suzanne," may not be enough for this person. Besides, you think the achievement deserves more attention. Try to praise her in front of other workers.

**Fig. 1-8. Guidelines for giving instructions**

#### Tell the receiver —

1. What your expectations are.
2. Where the work will be done.
3. How it will be done.
4. What the job involves.
5. Why you have chosen him or her for the job.
6. When the deadlines are.
7. Any other special information that the specific situation requires.

**Fig. 1-9. Ways to motivate workers**



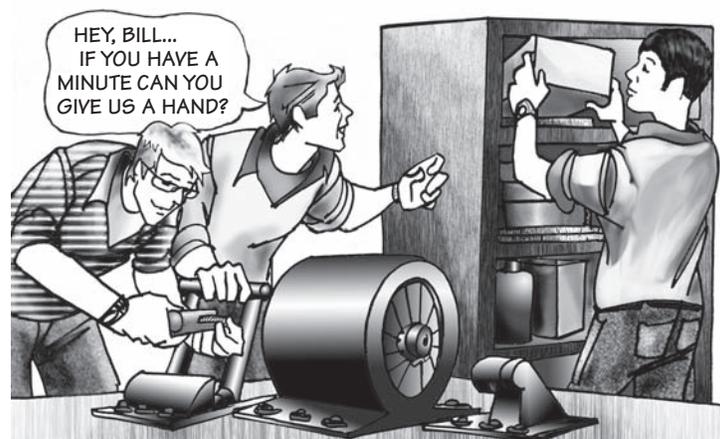
Praise specific acts, tying your compliment to the work itself: “Suzanne, that checklist approach you’ve been using on preventive maintenance items in Building 500 is great. Emergency maintenance calls have dropped by more than half. Keep up the good work.”

1.35 If Suzanne’s achievement is really special, and you want to use her as a model for others, you should provide recognition along with praise. Several ways to do this are the company newsletter, a notice on the bulletin board, or even an award. Along with these formal forms of recognition, don’t forget to use the typical, everyday forms. These include calling workers by name when you see them each day. Giving them a warm smile and a pat on the back. Remembering important events (a new child, a special award, an upcoming trip) and mentioning them.

1.36 Actively enlist *participation* from your crew. Ask them questions about jobs they’re on or have just finished. Ask them for help or advice with a particular task they do especially well (Fig. 1-10). When someone is giving you a suggestion or complaint, listen carefully. Acknowledge what they say and ask questions about their comments.

1.37 When you *criticize*, address your comments to a worker’s results or methods. Do not address your comments to his or her intentions. Look at the difference between: “Mark, you really blew it; you’re in big trouble now. Why did you ignore that spill?” and “Mark, you’re usually careful about safety. We could have avoided an accident here. Next time, clean up the spill on your station right away.”

**Fig. 1-10. Encourage participation from your crew**



**Fig. 1-11. Treat mistakes with constructive criticism**

1.38 You can see that the second choice does not attack Mark personally. In fact, it includes some praise for him. It also approaches the problem positively (Fig. 1-11) by offering a constructive suggestion (“clean up the spill on your station right away”). Criticize workers in private so they won’t be embarrassed or defensive. Once again, it is important to listen first to the worker’s version of an incident.

### Using Communication Tools

1.39 Along with your choice of words, there are various other devices that will help you reach your communication goals. Some particularly helpful tools are the telephone, the company newsletter, the bulletin board, and the interview.

### Speaking on the Telephone

1.40 You’ll need to use the telephone for many reasons (Fig. 1-12). Suppose one of your crew has been absent. You could call him to find out what’s wrong.

1.41 Or someone is out sick for a long time with a serious ailment. Since you care, you call just to see how he or she is doing. Or suppose you have a job candidate you want to learn more about. There are many kinds of ways to informally “check up.” A phone call is the quickest way to accomplish them. The difficulty is in taking the time and remembering to make the call. Haven’t we all heard a disgruntled employee say, “The whole time I was in the hospital, not a single person down at work bothered to call.” This should not happen.

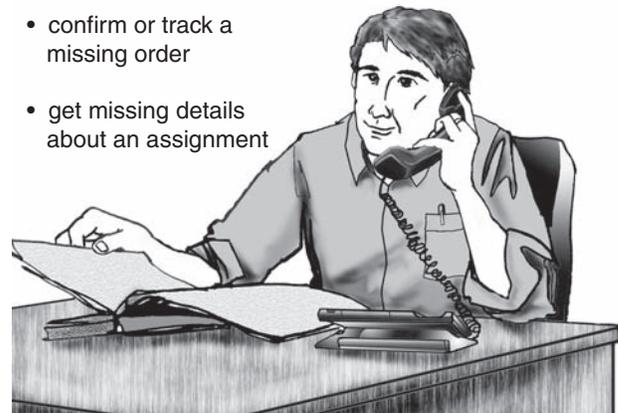
1.42 The phone is also a quick way to get your hands on a part that you need in a hurry. The telephone will help you find supplies that you ordered three months ago. Even though it’s someone else’s job to do the actual paperwork, there’s nothing wrong with your picking up the phone and talking directly to a vendor. Sometimes a phone call from you will cut through a lot of red tape and paperwork.

1.43 As stated earlier, you may need to clarify work assignments. The telephone is a good way to ask questions about an assignment.

**Fig. 1-12 Uses of the telephone**

Use the telephone to talk to someone not immediately available in order to:

- check on an employee
- order a part
- confirm or track a missing order
- get missing details about an assignment



1.44 Obviously, you know how to use the telephone. But there are some useful tips that can make the phone a more efficient tool for you. Try to call from a quiet place so you can hear well. Keep a pad and pencil handy in case the person you are calling tells you to call someone else or gives you a purchase order number or an address. Be prepared to follow up an important phone call in writing, since there's no record of a telephone conversation.

1.45 Before you dial, know exactly what you are calling about. Also, know who you want to speak to. Then, when you get through to that person, get to the point right away.

### Publishing in the Company Newsletter

1.46 We have already talked briefly about using the company newsletter for recognizing a worker's achievement. You can also use the newsletter to recognize an individual's special interests (Fig. 1-13). Here are examples of important personal events that might find a place in the newsletter: One of your crew scores 289 in a bowling tournament. A worker and her husband celebrate their 25th anniversary. A worker's child graduates from college.

1.47 You might use the newsletter for "pep talks" during bad times, too. You have just had a week when everything that could go wrong, did. You can either write the story yourself or tell the person who puts the

newsletter together about it. In either case, tell the rest of the company—they might help encourage your group to get them through the slump.

1.48 The use and publication of company newsletters will vary from one company to another. Some newsletters welcome contributions, others are unwilling to print "people" news. As a result, when you spot an item that you would like to see in the newsletter, you may need to consider an alternative means of publishing it. As an alternative, put up a bulletin board with a "Supervisor's Corner" for such items. Or post an announcement in the lunch room. You could even distribute a circular among the workers. Using a bulletin board or putting up a notice may take a bit of time, but use of such techniques will pay huge dividends in motivating your crew and making them feel like a part of the team.

### Giving and Taking Interviews

1.49 Your working life will be full of interviews. Some of them you will give—hiring or evaluating employees, for example. Some of them you take—being hired, promoted, or evaluated.

1.50 Whether you are giving or taking an interview, the sort of impression you make is vital. Your dress and manner—tone of voice, type of language—all contribute to the impression you make.

1.51 Before you give or take an interview, define its purpose. If you are being interviewed, what impression do you want to make? What do you want to happen because of this interview? If you are holding the interview, what do you want to learn?

1.52 Suppose you are being interviewed for a new job. Ask yourself questions like:

- What are the qualifications of the job?
- What new responsibilities does this step up have?
- What are my reasons for wanting this job?
- Why do I think I can handle it?

Make a list of your strong points. Know ahead of time why you would be good for the job. Don't be shy about telling the interviewer your strengths. When

**Fig. 1-13. Spread the news about workers' achievements**



you are asked questions about your strengths and weaknesses:

- state strengths and weaknesses clearly
- give examples that show your strengths
- relate strengths to the job.

Note that you should state strengths and weaknesses, but give examples only of strengths.

1.53 Many companies are too small to afford special personnel to interview potential employees. This job is often given to the supervisor who needs the worker. Choosing a good employee instead of a “dud” depends on your ability to judge the inner traits of an applicant. Giving an interview affords you the opportunity for personally gathering information about an applicant’s personality traits. Good employees have certain traits in common:

- interest in their work
- positive self-images and a belief that they can do the job
- reliable attendance and consistent performance

- good judgment, including an ability to look at problems realistically and objectively.

But how do you uncover these traits in an interview?

1.54 Since people don’t tend to change very much once they’re adults, a good way to assess a potential employee is to ask about his or her previous job. You might ask:

- What did you think of your previous supervisor? Was he or she fair?
- Did you like your previous job? Was it difficult? Why?
- What did you do? What responsibilities did you have?
- Did you influence the way the job was done in any way?
- What was your reason for leaving?

1.55 Interviewing is an application of the art of communicating—whether you are giving the interview or taking it. Either way, it’s important to keep the purpose of the interview in mind.

## 16 Programmed Exercises

<p>1-9. The main goal in giving instructions is to tell the receiver what you _____.</p>	<p>1-9. EXPECT Ref: 1.26</p>
<p>1-10. You should never praise a worker in front of the rest of the crew. True or False?</p>	<p>1-10. FALSE Ref: 1.34</p>
<p>1-11. The company newsletter, a notice on the bulletin board or an award all provide _____ as well as praise.</p>	<p>1-11. RECOGNITION Ref: 1.35</p>
<p>1-12. Asking your crew members questions about the job they're on encourages _____.</p>	<p>1-12. PARTICIPATION Ref: 1.36</p>
<p>1-13. When you criticize, address your comments to a worker's _____.</p>	<p>1-13. RESULTS or METHODS Ref: 1.37</p>
<p>1-14. Before you give or take an interview, define its _____.</p>	<p>1-14. PURPOSE Ref: 1.51</p>
<p>1-15. When interviewing for a job, you should give examples that show both your strengths and your weaknesses. True or False?</p>	<p>1-15. FALSE Ref: 1.52</p>
<p>1-16. A good way to assess a potential employee is to ask about his or her _____.</p>	<p>1-16. PREVIOUS JOB Ref: 1.54</p>

Answer the following questions by marking an “X” in the box next to the best answer.

- 1-1. It is impossible for communications to take place without
- a. the message
  - b. the receiver
  - c. the sender
  - d. all of the above
- 1-2. When training new employees, it is important to
- a. keep a “professional” distance
  - b. learn about their interests and goals
  - c. require obedience without explanations
  - d. tell them their previous experience is unimportant
- 1-3. If one of your crew members has just completed a training course in welding,
- a. he or she will be more responsible
  - b. his or her job goals may have changed
  - c. the other workers will respect him or her
  - d. all of the above
- 1-4. When dealing with rumors, you should
- a. always give an optimistic answer
  - b. give an honest, clear answer
  - c. tell workers to mind their own business
  - d. tell workers to put the rumor in writing
- 1-5. The best way to receive instruction is
- a. a week before the job is due
  - b. directly from the plant engineer
  - c. in writing
  - d. over the telephone
- 1-6. Which of the following should you *not* do after giving your crew instructions?
- a. Justify your instructions
  - b. Refuse to change assignments
  - c. Repeat key points
  - d. Seek further information on a job
- 1-7. Which of the following is a good method for motivating your workers?
- a. Criticize poor workers while praising good workers
  - b. Get additional training in your field
  - c. Provide recognition for good work
  - d. Publish mistakes workers make
- 1-8. Asking a crew member questions about jobs they’re on
- a. encourages participation
  - b. indicates a lack of trust
  - c. intimidates workers
  - d. makes workers think you’re ignorant
- 1-9. When criticizing a worker,
- a. always put it in writing
  - b. criticize only methods or results
  - c. do not use the worker’s name
  - d. urge the worker to get more training
- 1-10. When you are questioned about your strengths during an interview,
- a. give examples of strengths and weaknesses
  - b. relate strengths to your private life
  - c. state strengths and weaknesses clearly
  - d. all of the above

## SUMMARY

As a first-line supervisor, you are also responsible for being a human relations specialist. You have to train and supervise employees. You must learn about them by asking the right questions. You must also set a positive example by making your own communications clear, sensible, and honest.

Clear instructions tell an employee all the information he or she needs to know about a job. Praise and recognition will help motivate your crew, especially when they are offered publicly and impartially.

Using the telephone and the company newsletter broadens your communication abilities. When using the telephone, you must organize your thoughts carefully to get the information you need. The newsletter, bulletin board, and the handwritten notice can be useful tools in providing recognition or sharing information.

To perform well in interviews, first establish the purpose of the interview. Be thoroughly prepared beforehand and remember that your dress, manner, tone of voice, and type of language all contribute to the impression you make.

## Answers to Self-Check Quiz

- |      |                                                           |       |                                                      |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-1. | d. All of the above. Ref: 1.01                            | 1-6.  | b. Refuse to change assignments. Ref: 1.27           |
| 1-2. | b. Learn about their interests and goals. Ref: 1.07, 1.08 | 1-7.  | c. Provide recognition for good work. Ref: 1.35      |
| 1-3. | b. His or her job goals may have changed. Ref: 1.08       | 1-8.  | a. Encourages participation. Ref: 1.36               |
| 1-4. | b. Give an honest, clear answer. Ref: 1.09                | 1-9.  | b. Criticize only methods or results. Ref: 1.37      |
| 1-5. | c. In writing. Ref: 1.20                                  | 1-10. | c. State strengths and weaknesses clearly. Ref: 1.52 |

Contributions from the following sources are appreciated:

- Figure 1-3. Imperial Sugar Company  
 Figure 1-6. Hope Aero Propeller & Components, Inc.