

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT... GETTING YOUR SUPERVISORS ON BOARD



Getting your supervisors' support is essential. The most effective way to get your employees involved in your training programme is through a direct approach by their supervisor. You're also more likely to get better transfer of skills into jobs if your supervisors are closely involved in monitoring progress.

As you think about getting your supervisors on board here are some things to consider.

Involvement with the logistics

Your supervisors will need to sort out rostering and relief so your employees can attend training. Show your supervisors the benefits they'll gain but be clear that it means more work for them in the short term. There might be practical ways you can support them, such as additional assistance with rostering, providing floating cover and allocating a resource to check with employees to see if they are on track or having any difficulties attending the programme.

Ensuring they have all the practical information to share

Make sure your supervisors can answer all the questions they're likely to receive. For example, what is it, why am I on it, what will I get out of it, who is giving the training, when will it happen, will I be paid, how much will I have to do out of work time, will results be confidential? Run a supervisor briefing and provide a support handout with simple questions and answers they can refer to. Note that supervisors may initially feel reluctant about the training. This could be for a combination of reasons – the extra work they'll need to do to adjust rosters, concern about not making their targets with staff away and, for some, there may be sensitivities about their own literacy.

Your ITO may have suggestions about supporting your supervisors from their work with other businesses in your industry.

EMPLOYERS TALK ABOUT GETTING THEIR SUPERVISORS ON BOARD

WE ASKED FOR FEEDBACK ABOUT THE CHALLENGES EMPLOYERS FACED AND THE BENEFITS SUPERVISORS SAW IN THEIR TRAINING PROGRAMMES. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID.



We decided to target people in a leadership role - our section leaders were one group. It's their role to lead a group of people on a shift. Our team leaders were another group. They lead departments and manage teams. We knew that we needed their buy in for the training to be successful. They're the gatekeepers to everyone else and, as such, they are an extremely influential group within the business.

~ JUKEN NEW ZEALAND

Managers were encouraged to attend the training sessions. We found that when branch managers were actively involved, the sessions were much more effective. We've now modified the programme to ensure that branch managers are involved.

~ DOWNER EDI

We have put processes in place to identify staff with speaking, reading and writing needs during the course of their duties. And it's become the role of supervisors and managers to offer them the opportunity to participate in training.

~ RYMAN HEALTHCARE



Should they participate in the training?

Some businesses have specifically targeted supervisors for training. Others include supervisors on the course or run a version of the training for supervisors separately or an introduction and overview session for them. Talk to your training provider about how your supervisors are best involved in your training.

Reinforcing the need for commitment

If you want your employees to attend your training, you'll need your supervisors to tell them they need to go (and to release them to attend). Businesses with successful training programmes have reminded their supervisors that their programme is valuable and it is important they release their employees.

Involvement in needs analysis

One way to get your supervisors involved early on is in the needs analysis stage. What skills have they noticed your employees need? Which of your employees most need the training? You could get them to complete the skills gap indicator on the Skills Highway website for their teams.

Involvement in developing your programme

The most successful programmes use actual work activities as part of their material. Can your supervisors provide real work samples and materials to use in your training? Should some of your supervisors be involved in the team planning your training or the steering group?

Involvement in measurement

Talk with your training provider about getting your supervisors involved in measurement. Supervisors are best placed to notice changes in work practices following training. And make sure you update your supervisors on how your training is going.

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To help get people on board with the literacy training, we've developed an information pack for commanders (or leaders). It shares what's involved, why we are doing what we're doing and what they (the commanders) can do to support their soldiers and the organisation as a whole. The senior leadership of the Army has been very supportive by cascading their support down through the ranks. Their support is critical to the success of what we are trying to achieve.

~ NEW ZEALAND ARMY

Our approach is to see our general managers as our strategic partners in this work. It's not about telling them what to do. It's our job to develop and offer learning and development training modules, materials, systems and processes that will help general managers achieve their goals.

~ MILLENNIUM HOTELS AND RESORTS



For more information visit: www.skillshighway.govt.nz

