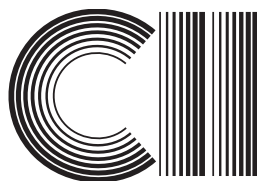


A Framework for Continuing Supervisory Education



Construction Industry Institute

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A Framework for Continuing Supervisory Education

Prepared by the

Construction Industry Institute

Continuing Supervisory Education Research Team

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The University of Texas at Austin.

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Introduction:

About the Framework

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A wealth of information and expertise is available that can be used to improve supervisory performance within an organization. Continuity of support and funding is often lacking a consistent program of training, education, and development. Also lacking is a comprehensive implementation structure with a built-in mechanism for follow-up to assure that it is responsive to a changing organization.

The framework presented in this publication is specifically for continuing supervisory education within a construction or design organization. Developed by the CII Continuing Supervisory Education Research Team, this framework provides a mechanism to respond to or to lead organizational change and, although designed specifically for supervisory development, the framework is valid for all types of training, education, and development. When implemented, it will provide development and delivery of all programs.

Table 1 below presents the seven major steps of the framework. The flow chart in Figure 1 shows how these major steps interact. During the development of a program, each step should be addressed in at least minimal fashion. An organization with no supervisory development program would be well advised to begin as simply as possible. Organizations with existing programs may choose to invest in more sophisticated techniques.

Later sections of this publication discuss each of the seven steps in detail, providing examples and discussions of both simple and sophisticated techniques. Below is an overview of the framework.

Table 1. Framework Overview

Step 1: Establishing and Demonstrating Commitment
Step 2: Identification of Critical Supervisory Competencies
Step 3: Emphasizing Supervisor Selection
Step 4: Identification of Supervisory Performance Improvement Goals
Step 5: Creation and Delivery of Supervisory Development Programs
Step 6: Assessment of Performance
Step 7: Periodic Review and Adjustment

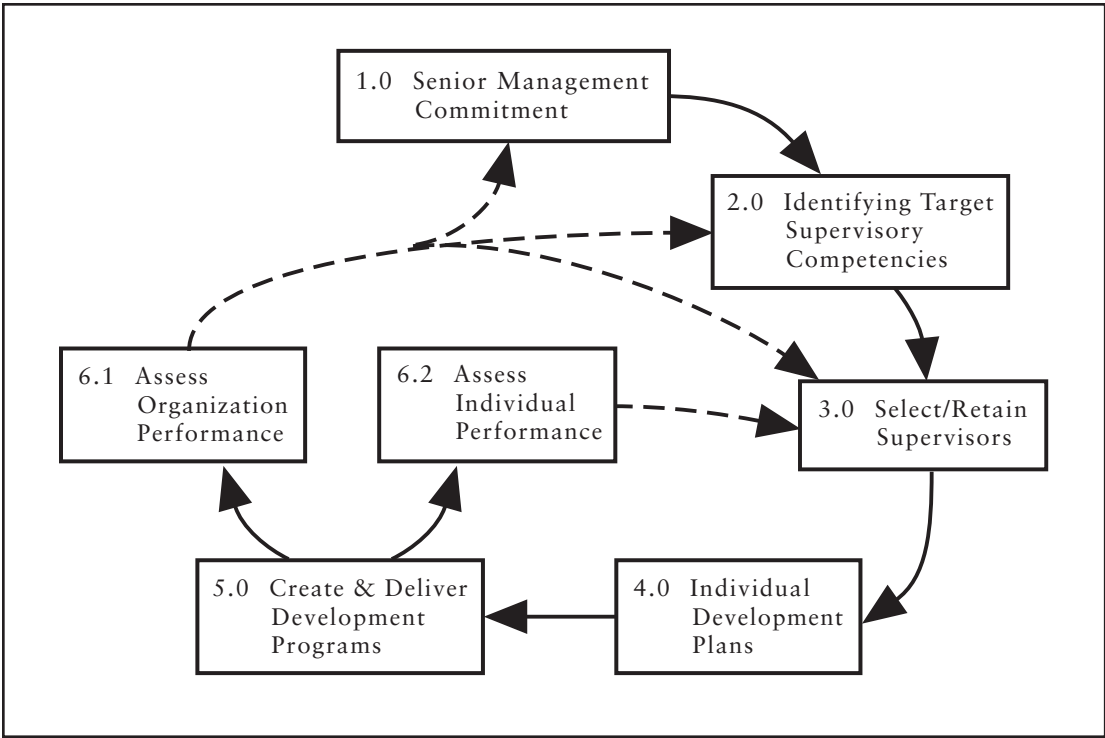


Figure 1. Interaction of Seven Major Steps

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Step 1: Establishing and Demonstrating Commitment. Figure 1 shows that the supervisory development process begins with strong senior management commitment, participation, and leadership for a continuing, targeted, education process. Senior management has recognized the potential benefits of supervisory development, and is committed to making it happen. If senior management has not made this commitment, supervisory development efforts will be haphazard, unfocused, and have only minimal impact.

Step 2: Identification of Critical Supervisory Competencies. The second step in the process is the targeting of the specific supervisory competencies to be developed. This includes the essential knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors required for successful supervisors. These are adjusted by management's vision of the needs in the future organization. If education and training resources are to be utilized effectively, it is vital that the organization determine the competencies required for successful supervision.

Step 3: Emphasizing Supervisor Selection. Once target competencies for supervisors have been determined, new supervisors will be selected based on their strengths and development potential in each of the areas of competency. Competencies also should be used when determining which supervisors to retain.

Step 4: Identification of Supervisory Performance Improvement Goals. Each supervisor and potential supervisor must be measured against the supervisory competencies. Areas of relative strength and weakness will be determined, and individual development plans will be formulated. These development plans serve two important functions: they are specific targets for individual improvement; and collectively, they are the basis for determining organizational supervisory performance improvement needs.

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Step 5: Creation and Delivery of Supervisory Development Programs. When the collective performance improvement needs of all supervisors and potential supervisors in the organization have been identified, a variety of programs for improvement may be formulated. Valuable training and education resources should be focused in the areas of greatest potential gain, i.e., the most critical competencies with the greatest potential for growth.

Step 6: Assessment of Performance. Figure 1 shows two different assessments: organizational performance and individual performance. Both are important. If organizational performance is disappointing, it may be due to external factors, poor supervisory performance, or ineffective education and training efforts. It may be necessary to alter methods of delivery of supervisory development programs or the content of the programs themselves. It is also possible that supervisory competencies may not have been correctly identified, or changing business conditions may have required different competencies.

Assessment of performance for individual supervisors is important in working toward continual growth. Checking progress against individual development plans serves as a discipline to help assure that development activities are not abandoned in the pressures of the work place. Over time, this process provides a record of growth (or stagnation).

Tracking of performance factors such as safety, productivity, and absenteeism by supervisors also serves to validate the previously defined supervisory competencies. Good results should occur when supervisors have well-developed competencies. If not, the competencies should be re-evaluated.

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Step 7: Periodic Review and Adjustment. Based on individual and organizational assessment, some adjustment of earlier steps may be required. Training, education, and development programs may need to be changed or their methods of delivery altered. Periodically, changing business conditions or changing management philosophies may require redefinition of supervisory competencies.

Analysis of individual assessments may suggest changes in selection procedures for new supervisors. It may be determined that some current supervisors should not be kept in supervisory positions, and perhaps should change career goals to achieve high technological competencies.

Step 1:

Establishing and Demonstrating Commitment

High-level commitment is the single most important necessity for successful supervisory development. The research team's study found no successful training, education, and development programs where support is lacking from the top of the organization. Successful programs must have demonstrated commitment from top-level management. Management of training, education, and development is much like management of safety programs. Consistently positive results are obtained only with continuous, non-contradictory emphasis from the highest levels of management. The following paragraphs describe how this high-level commitment can be demonstrated.

Strategic Documents

Goals, strategic initiatives, and critical processes provide visibility and credibility to an organization's training program. Examples from companies studied by the research team follow.

One company lists the following as a company basic:

All employees will successfully complete Training Certification to ensure they understand how to perform to the company standards in their position.

This same company includes a "manager's coaching/mentoring process" in its Fundamentals of the Business Management System.

Another company includes under the heading "Employee Achievement" in its "vision," the following:

The company is committed to providing opportunities for individual fulfillment and professional development.

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One company has adopted the following learning policy to aid in pursuing corporate mission and goals:

It is our policy that each employee take personal responsibility to become and remain proficient in the technical, business, and leadership skills necessary to achieve the corporate mission and goals. It is also our policy to provide the opportunity for high quality, cost-effective, timely training and learning to assist employees to obtain these skills.

Bestow Prestigious Designation to Training, Education, and Development

Creating and promoting a so-called college, school, or university to serve as the focal point for company training, education, and development gives visibility and prestige. Examples follow.

One company college has a three-fold mission:

- Serve as an instrument of strategic culture change.
- Aid individual development.
- Provide training and education consulting (if cost-effective) to operating business units.

This college has a dean who is highly respected both within the company and at the highest levels of management. Operating company CEOs serve as board members for the college's advisory board.

One medium-size construction firm has a university with a one-room campus. The chancellor and deans of marketing, production, control, and general studies are chosen from company management. Supervisors develop courses, review them with management, and

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present them to students. The focus is on quality, productivity, and safety applied to their market and even to specific projects. All employees are encouraged to attend. One hundred thirty-two classroom hours are required for graduation.

Senior Management Involvement

Highly visible support of senior management is a strong contributor to success. This support and involvement can take many forms, some of which are presented below.

One company requires a presidential signature to excuse attendance from a scheduled training session. (The fact that this was true even for an employee wanting to be excused for hip replacement surgery sends a strong message regarding the importance of training.)

One company CEO annually teaches a leadership course offered to all company managers and leaders.

One company CEO created an Education Policy Board with himself as chair. The corporate training group served as staff support, organizing employee focus groups and developing a Blueprint for Learning, which includes a strategic business approach and a learning policy.

Leadership in Training and Development as a Path to the Top

Demonstrating that leadership in training, education, and development is highly valued by the organization can attract high-potential leaders to serve, and in the process give prestige to the learning and development process. For example, one company utilizes a lead team to direct and deliver its educational efforts in

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the non-technical areas. This lead team consists of 13 high achievers selected by rigorous selection procedures for a two-year rotational assignment, with guarantees that their assignment after rotation will be equal to or better than that which they had prior to rotation.

Similarly, another company requires that sales managers take a two-year rotational assignment at its university as a prerequisite for promotion.

Supervisory Training as One Prerequisite to Promotion

Maintaining requirements for specific blocks of supervisory training, either prior to or within a specified probationary period after promotion, sends a message that training is important. To be effective, however, this type of policy must be enforced. If frequently ignored or bypassed, the message sent is that training is not important.

One company studied by the research team required 100 hours of supervisory training as one of the prerequisites for promotion from Foreman I to Foreman II. Fifty hours of additional training is one of the requirements for promotion from General Foreman I to General Foreman II.

Another company required that those interested in promotion to a supervisory position take pre-supervisory training on their own time, with the company offering the training at no expense to the employee. This approach allows the potential supervisor to preview the role of supervisor with the possibility of gaining enthusiasm and pursuing additional education and training, or possibly being discouraged and self-selecting out of consideration for supervisory roles.

Image of Supervisors Within the Organization

No degree of supervisory education or training can overcome problems associated with organizations that do not support their supervisors or, worse yet, undercut their supervisors. Supervisors must be properly compensated and their positions accorded respect in the organization before supervisory development efforts can be fully effective.

The research team uncovered a well-documented study of supervision at a California cannery. At the start of the study period, “supervisors appeared beaten.” Over a four-year period, changes were made that dramatically improved profits and substantially improved the image of supervisors. Custom-designed training (Step 5) based on a detailed supervisor job needs analysis (Step 2) was utilized, but perhaps more importantly:

- technical and administrative requirements were reorganized with major eliminations of positions.
- the authority of line supervisors was clearly established.
- an assessment center approach was developed (Step 3) to staff remaining supervisory positions (existing supervisors were not exempt).
- existing supervisors could opt out without loss of pay.

Supervisory Development on Hard Money Contracts

Supporting supervisory education and training only when the owner is willing to pay for programs sends a clear message — management does not believe that the payout from supervisory training is as great as from alternative investments. Requiring

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supervisory training on fixed-price contracts makes a strong statement that management is committed to supervisory development.

Annual Goals for Supervisory Development

Setting annual hourly or percent of payroll goals for supervisory education and training gives visibility to management commitment. The median target for hours of supervisory training per supervisor per year for the best practices companies studied by the research team was 40 hours per year. The annual overall training target for American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) Benchmarking Forum companies for 1991 was three percent of payroll.

Provide Secure Funding Mechanism

Continual funding of a supervisory development program over many years demonstrates management commitment. One company studied by the research team has a leadership development program that has been in operation for over 25 years, with periodic changes to keep material current.

Funding for education and training is often the first place for cuts during difficult economic times. Expenditures are current and obvious, whereas benefits are in the future and subtle. Providing a secure mechanism for funding, even during down cycles, clearly communicates management's commitment to supervisory development.

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One company studied assesses each project work-hour a small charge to fund its training programs. Charge rates are adjusted annually to reflect economic conditions, but are always adequate to maintain training at the corporate level. Training is free to projects. If projects choose to use the services, they must pay travel expenses and trainee salaries.

Step 2:

Identification of Critical Supervisory Competencies

Successful performance of the duties of supervisor or team leader requires the individual to demonstrate successful behaviors. These demonstrated behaviors have prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities. However, the knowledge, skills, and abilities themselves are not enough. Successful behavior implies that the knowledge, skills, and abilities are effectively and consistently applied. Personality traits, therefore, become important. Figure 2.1 shows the interrelationships through which knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality traits interact to produce successful behaviors.

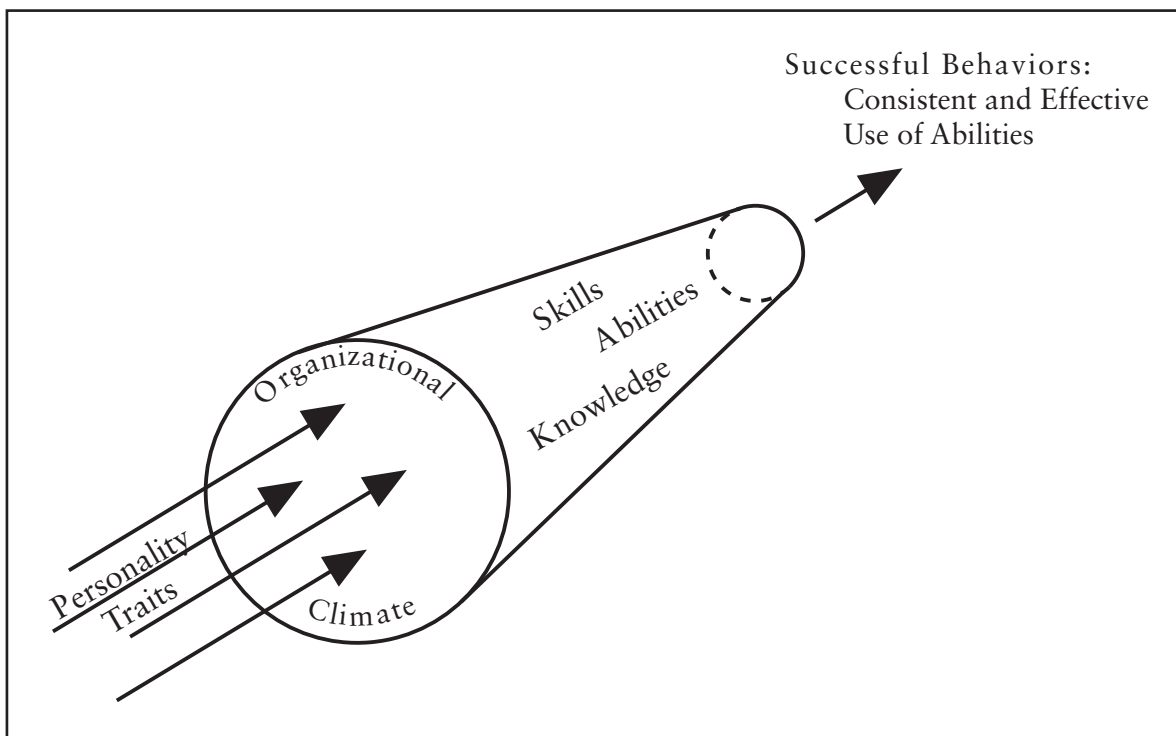


Figure 2.1. Interaction of knowledge, abilities, personality traits, and organizational climate to produce effective behavior.

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An example is provided for illustration. Knowledge of Critical Path Method (CPM) scheduling is prerequisite to the ability or skill to develop critical path schedules, which is necessary but not sufficient to demonstrate successful planning and scheduling behavior. The successful supervisor will actually use the knowledge and ability to plan and schedule the work effectively and consistently.

The ideal outcome of a supervisory development program would be that all supervisors exhibit successful behaviors all of the time. Consequently, the first step in developing company supervisors is to define the critical supervisory behaviors, and their prerequisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality traits. For simplicity, the combination of these traits will be called competencies.

Table 2.1 provides an example of a typical successful supervisory behavior and the competencies that lead to it. Once identified for an organization, these competencies serve as criteria for supervisor selection and for establishing a baseline for supervisory development.

Table 2.2 provides a ranked listing of supervisory competencies identified by a group of the best supervisors in the construction industry. These supervisors were assembled at the research team's expert supervisor workshop. The relative importance or rank of each competency is based on a survey of best supervisors participating in CII's study of a cross-section of construction industry supervisors. It should be noted that these supervisors gained their expertise during the 1970s and 1980s. The competencies that they identified may not be the best list for the 1990s and beyond.

Table 2.1. Example of a Successful Supervisory Behavior, and Prerequisite Knowledge, Abilities, and Personality Traits.

Successful Supervisory Behavior: Develops clear performance agreements with employees. Prerequisite Knowledge: • performance norms • employee capabilities Prerequisite Skills and Abilities: • goal-setting ability • negotiating skills • verbal communication skills • decision-making ability Desirable Personality Traits: • candid • motivational • dependable
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For comparative purposes, Table 2.3 provides a prioritized list of competencies for foremen based on a study of six Oregon manufacturing companies. There are many similarities between the two lists, but also some interesting differences. Communicating and motivating skills are very highly rated competencies in both studies. The construction industry supervisors rate “coaching” near the bottom of their list, whereas the manufacturing foremen rated “training employees” and “promoting teamwork and cooperation” numbers six and seven on their list. Promoting teamwork and cooperation did not emerge from the expert supervisor workshop as a critical competency.

Step 2: Identification of Critical Supervisory Competencies

Table 2.2. Competencies Identified by CII's Expert Supervisor Workshop

Rank	Competency	Mean Score
1	Ability to listen	4.8
2	Sustaining an environment of open communications	4.8
3	Ability to motivate	4.8
4	Knowing the current priorities	4.7
5	Ability to meet deadlines	4.6
6	Setting a good example	4.6
7	Having a strong value system, with strong ethical principles	4.6
8	Ability to explain tasks	4.6
9	Ability to anticipate and avoid problems	4.6
10	Assigning people tasks that match their skills and aspirations	4.6
11	Ability to properly use internal or external resources	4.6
12	Being consistent	4.6
13	Ability to recognize signals that should prompt action	4.5
14	Ability to properly solicit and use others' opinions and ideas	4.4
15	Ability to plan, conduct, and follow-up meetings	4.4
16	Ability to follow-through to completion of assignment tasks	4.4
17	Ability to handle emergencies and crises effectively	4.4
18	Ability to be flexible	4.3
19	Appropriately using authority and power	4.3
20	Fulfilling responsibilities assigned by your boss	4.3
21	Ability to give concise, complete, and accurate instructions	4.3
22	Giving accurate, timely feedback	4.3
23	Delegating to subordinates	4.3
24	Knowing how and why to take actions	4.2
25	Gaining the authority to accomplish the assigned tasks for your position	4.2
26	Having patience	4.1
27	Following company policies and procedures	4.1
28	Being able to complete your work in the correct flow or sequence	4.0
29	Coaching	3.9
30	Ability to be introspective and examine oneself	3.9
31	Answering grievances and complaints	3.8
32	Having empathy	3.8
33	Ability to defer gratification or find gratification outside of compensation	3.6

Note: 0 = least important; 5 = most important

Table 2.3. Competencies for First-line Supervisors from Six Oregon Manufacturing Industries (after Hammer, 1983)

Mean Rank	Competency	Mean Score
1	Displaying fairness/objectivity with employees	4.6
2	Communicating with employees	4.4
3	Maintaining quality of production	4.3
4	Preventing accidents	4.3
5	Making decisions	4.3
6	Training employees	4.3
7	Promoting teamwork and cooperation	4.2
8	Communicating with other managers	4.2
9	Exercising leadership qualities	4.2
10	Motivating employees	4.2
11	Maintaining consistency	4.1
12	Maintaining quantity of production	4.1
13	Improving work or production methods	4.0
14	Managing time (using scheduled hours efficiently)	4.0
15	Planning and scheduling production	4.0
16	Setting priorities	3.9
17	Delegating responsibilities	3.9
18	Keeping costs within budget	3.8
19	Maintaining an adequate work force	3.7
20	Handling minor complaints and employee grievances	3.6
21	Managing absence and lateness	3.5
22	Keeping records	3.5
23	Maintaining good housekeeping on the job	3.5
24	Inspecting and caring for tools and equipment	3.5
25	Inspecting and caring for tools and equipment	3.5
26	Conducting performance appraisals	3.4
27	Settling differences among workers	3.4
28	Hiring/terminating procedures	3.3
29	Supporting affirmative action/EEO	3.2
30	Checking/posting employees' time records	3.1
31	Maintaining good community relations	3.1
32	Writing and submitting reports	3.1
33	Conducting meetings	2.8
34	Functioning in the organization (politicking)	2.5
35	Counseling employees in personal matters	2.5

Note: 5 = "extremely important"; 4 = "very important"; 3 = "important"; 2 = "slightly important"; and 1 = "least important."

Identification for Current Organization

Examples of how companies have identified critical competencies for their employees are now provided. Examples include competencies for non-supervisory as well as supervisory personnel.

The education policy board of one company created employee focus groups for different aspects of the business. One result was the identification of employee success factors, demonstrated successful behaviors common to all successful employees. These employee success factors were then validated by a company-wide survey. Two examples of employee success factors in the managing for results area are:

- Organizes people and assigns tasks and responsibilities in order to achieve their highest productivity, and
- Coaches employees to meet their performance agreements.

One company studied by the team hired a consultant to determine personality traits of successful employees in general and successful supervisors in particular. The consultant then developed structured interviews to be used in selection of new employees and supervisors and to track development.

To determine job-specific critical competencies one company uses the DACUM process of The Center for Vocational and Technical Education at Ohio State University to conduct two-day focus groups with masters of a job description. The result is identification of duties and tasks for the job. The result is validated by survey of the general population of those working in the job description.

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Figure 2.2 gives an example of a Competency Profile of Construction Manager, developed by Ohio State University for a community college that planned to offer educational programs for construction managers. As may be seen from Figure 2.2, the DACUM process addresses not only the duties and tasks of the job, but also the general knowledge and skills, worker traits and attitudes, and the required tools, equipment, supplies, and materials.

Simpler and less comprehensive processes for identifying job-specific competencies also have been used. One owner's construction organization developed a listing of functioning capabilities for construction engineering and management personnel. This listing was developed by a subcommittee of the continuous improvement team for construction. The team defined its vision of what they wanted their people to look like. The subcommittee developed a strawman list of functioning capabilities to support it. The strawman was distributed to the general construction staff, who ranked capabilities.

Identification for Desired Future Organization

The competencies required of supervisors in the organization of the past or present may not be the same in the future. For example, autocratic supervisors who have been successful in traditional management structures may be found to be inadequate in an environment of self-directed work teams. Senior management needs to determine the desired organizational structure and culture and define the supervisor's role accordingly. At this time, input from visionary supervisors and managers will be required to determine the competencies required for such an organization. Any of the methods discussed above may be used to develop such a list.

Construction Manager

Duties		Tasks											
A	Plan Building Process	A-1 Study & interpret building contracts & subcontracts, plans, & specifications	A-2 Study & interpret relevant laws & regulations	A-3 Develop overall project plan	A-4 Analyze work-force resources	A-5 Analyze material resources	A-6 Analyze equipment resources	A-7 Analyze money resources	A-8 Develop flow-chart of project activities	A-9 Identify critical path schedule	A-10 Develop material schedule	A-11 Develop work-force schedule	A-12 Develop equipment schedule
		A-13 Develop cash in-flow/out-flow schedule	A-14 Develop subcontractor schedule	A-15 Develop inspection schedules									
B	Manage Personnel	B-1 Assess personnel needs	B-2 Develop personnel organizational chart	B-3 Recruit personnel	B-4 Select & hire personnel	B-5 Orient personnel	B-6 Train personnel	B-7 Evaluate personnel performance	B-8 Counsel/coach workers to improve efficiency of tasks	B-9 Assist employees to develop self-discipline	B-10 Assign & reassign personnel	B-11 Explain reasons for decisions or actions as appropriate	B-12 Deal fairly with all personnel
		B-13 Reward good performance	B-14 Motivate workers to accomplish task	B-15 Delegate responsibility with appropriate authority	B-16 Encourage career advancement	B-17 Conduct effective employee meetings	B-18 Establish realistic work goals for self & others						
C	Make Job Site Preparations	C-1 Arrange for temporary utility services	C-2 Establish job-site office	C-3 Establish ingress & egress routes	C-4 Make security provisions	C-5 Make sanitation arrangements	C-6 Establish storage areas	C-7 Arrange for property survey	C-8 Establish building location(s)				
D	Implement Construction Activities	D-1 Clarify contractual obligations	D-2 Initiate construction activities	D-3 Manage job-site personnel	D-4 Coordinate subcontractor schedules	D-5 Coordinate material procurement & delivery	D-6 Coordinate equipment utilization	D-7 Coordinate inspection activities	D-8 Verify & process shop drawings & change orders				
E	Monitor Work Process	E-1 Verify compliance with contracts & subcontracts, plans, & specifications	E-2 Verify quantity & quality of materials received	E-3 Assure quality control of workmanship & materials	E-4 Reevaluate critical path schedule based on current information	E-5 Adjust work activities as necessary	E-6 Maintain time schedules	E-7 Maintain cost control					
F	Implement & Maintain Safety & Security Program	F-1 Implement company safety policy	F-2 Appoint or assign safety personnel or responsibility	F-3 Conduct weekly safety meetings	F-4 Enforce good housekeeping practices	F-5 Report safety violations to appropriate subcontractors	F-6 Prepare accident reports	F-7 Implement company security policy	F-8 Notify public safety authorities of building project	F-9 Monitor equipment identification & inventory	F-10 Monitor supplies & materials inventory	F-11 Notify authorities of theft or vandalism	
G	Assure Compliance with Laws & Regulations	G-1 Comply with local building codes	G-2 Verify & comply with building ordinances	G-3 Verify & comply with easements & rights of way	G-4 Comply with deed & subdivision restrictions	G-5 Comply with fire department & traffic regulations	G-6 Comply with federal & state labor laws	G-7 Comply with EEO laws	G-8 Comply with OSHA laws	G-9 Comply with FHA & VA regulations	G-10 Comply with EPA regulations	G-11 Comply with HUD regulations	
H	Maintain Job Site Records & Submit Reports	H-1 Prepare daily log	H-2 Prepare progress report(s)	H-3 Prepare payroll report	H-4 Maintain appropriate personnel records	H-5 Maintain equipment maintenance records	H-6 Maintain equipment inventory records	H-7 Maintain supplies & materials inventory records	H-8 Prepare & submit requests for payment of subcontractors	H-9 Approve & code invoices for payment	H-10 Submit cost analysis report (data)	H-11 Maintain & submit records as required by government agencies	H-12 Maintain file of inspections/ reports
		H-13 Maintain correspondence file											
I	Maintain Good Public Relations	I-1 Maintain a clean, presentable job site	I-2 Identify affected publics	I-3 Maintain contact with owner or owner representative	I-4 Maintain contact with subcontractor(s)	I-5 Maintain good relationships with community	I-6 Maintain good rapport with inspector(s)	I-7 Maintain healthy relations with employees	I-8 Maintain good relationships with employer	I-9 Maintain good relationships with supplier	I-10 Maintain positive relationships with media representatives	I-11 Discipline personnel	I-12 Recommend wage adjustments
		I-13 Promote & demote personnel	I-14 Lay off personnel as required	I-15 Dismiss personnel									
J	Communicate	J-1 Give clear instructions	J-2 Utilize telephone effectively	J-3 Write effective memos, letters	J-4 Select appropriate communication style for situation	J-5 Obtain feedback from workers	J-6 Utilize appropriate trade(s) terminology	J-7 Follow-up on agreements & instructions	J-8 Explain the relationship of the task(s) to the total project				

Figure 2.2. Competency Profile of Construction Manager

(by the Center for Vocational and Technical Education, Ohio State University)

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Worker Traits and Attitudes

Diplomatic	Self-disciplined
Honest	Seeks self-improvement
Self-controlled	Understands self
Confident	Positive/optimistic
Decisive	Good listener
Empathic	Energetic

General Knowledge and Skills

Building contracts	Federal and state labor laws
Interpret specifications	OSHA laws
Scheduling	FHA and VA laws
Building codes	EPA and HUD regulations
Zoning ordinances	Personnel management
Fire and traffic regulations	Purchasing procedures
Public relations skills	Quality control procedures
Record keeping	Planning skills

Tools, Equipment, Supplies, and Materials

Safety equipment	Telephone
Basic hand tools	Contracts and subcontracts
Zoning reference	Plans and specifications
Building code references	Vehicle
Beeper	Organizational chart
Walkie-talkie	Schedules (various)
Two-way radio	Work orders

Figure 2.2. (continued) Competency Profile of Construction Manager
(by the Center for Vocational and Technical Education,
Ohio State University)