

Working Effectively with your Supervisor – Transcript

Table of Contents

Working Effectively with your Supervisor	3
Navigating the module.....	3
Working effectively with your supervisor.....	3
What you'll get from this module	3
Working Effectively with your Supervisor module content	4
Supervisor styles	4
Supervisory styles and you	4
Supervisory style and impact	6
Reflection	7
Work Place Goals.....	7
Knowledge check	7
Examples of workplace goals	8
Benefits of knowing workplace goals.....	8
How would you choose to support the goal?.....	9
Summary – Workplace goals.....	9
Assertive Communication	9
Building Assertiveness in the Workplace.....	10
Summary — Building assertiveness.....	11
Being assertive with your supervisor	11
Tip: Think about your supervisor as your client	12
Tip: Deliver information in a way that works for your supervisor.....	12
Tip: Handle delegation skillfully	12
Assertiveness with your supervisor	13
Harassment in the workplace	13
Types of Harassment	13
Harassment can happen in workplace	14
Tips - How to respond to harassment.....	15

Know your legal rights 16
Summary 16
Summary 17
Final thoughts..... 17
You are almost finished 17
Your key points to remember 18
You have now completed Working Effectively with you Supervisor..... 18
Additional information and explanations 19
Resources for Working with your Supervisor module20
Harassment Resources:.....21

Working Effectively with your Supervisor

Turn sound on.

Turn closed captioning on.

Career Centre University of Toronto Mississauga.

Navigating the module

Module content: Shown in tab to the left under the heading Module content & Transcripts. Cannot be used for navigation.

Video Transcript: Located to the left under the heading Module content & Transcripts. You will see the complete transcript while the video is playing.

Resources: To download additional documents and an annotated bibliography, go to the resources tab on the top left of your screen under the module title.

Print: Print tab, above on the right to print or save everything that appears on the screen.

Exit: Use Exit tab to close the module. Exit tab is located above to the right of Print tab. You may exit the module at anytime. When you return to the module you may be prompted to resume the module. The resume prompt depends on whether you cleared your browser history. Clearing the browser history will restart the module from the beginning.

Keyboard user: Press the tab key to move to the selection and press the space bar.

Working effectively with your supervisor

Video transcript:

Depending on your experience you may have been a supervisor or worked with a number of different supervisors either in part-time, summer or volunteer jobs. Or you may have had a supervisor for your research project or thesis work. The professional relationship you build with your supervisor is important to achieving workplace goals and your own career goals. Building a rapport includes knowing how to communicate effectively and how to be assertive in the workplace. This module will focus on strategies you can use to work effectively with your supervisor.

What you'll get from this module

Learning to work effectively with your supervisor is knowledge that will help you throughout your career. Select each topic to learn more by clicking on the topic or press tab key to move to the topic and press spacebar.

At the end of each topic you will be returned to this page to make another selection. When you have completed all the topics for this module you will be taken to a summary page.

Working Effectively with your Supervisor module content

- Supervisor styles: 4 most mentioned supervisory styles.
- Workplace goals: Why knowing the goals are beneficial to you.
- Assertive communication: Tips for being assertive in the workplace.
- Being assertive: Tips for being assertive with your supervisor.
- Harassment: Bullying, Non sexual, Sexual.

Supervisor styles

Most of you will have a supervisor in your first job after graduation. Your experience working with past supervisors will take you a long way in building your relationship with your new supervisor. You'll be asked to think about previous supervisors as you work through this topic.

Supervisory stylesⁱ and you

1. Review the styles below. (instructions if using transcript with electronic version) Click the style for a description or tab to style and press spacebar.
2. Think about the best supervisor and most challenging supervisor you have had in the past. Compare their style to the descriptions.
3. Then respond to the statements at the end of the descriptions.

Autocratic:

Autocratic leaders usually make decisions without consulting their team members.

This style is effective when swift decisions need to be made or when team agreement isn't necessary for a successful outcome. However, this practice can feel demoralizing or even upsetting for team members who may feel left out from decisions that could ultimately affect their work.

Consequences of this leadership practice can include high levels of absenteeism and staff turnover.

Bureaucratic:

Bureaucratic leaders follow rules strictly, and ensure that their staff follow procedures exactly.

This leadership style is suited to work involving high safety risks (such as working with machinery, with toxic substances, or at dangerous heights), or with large amounts of money such as a bank.

This style is less suited to teams and organizations that rely on flexibility, creativity, or innovation (such as with a marketing team or product research and development).

Charismatic:

Charismatic leaders rely on the use of their charisma to charm and persuade teams into carrying out work activities that serve their own ambitions.

These leaders may not want to change anything for the organization or staff and in fact prioritize their own agenda.

This can lead to questionable work practices, divided loyalties and conflicting feelings among workers.

Democratic:

Democratic leaders make the final decisions and include team members in the decision-making process.

They encourage creativity, and people are often highly involved in projects and decisions, resulting in high job satisfaction and high productivity.

This is one of the more effective styles, however, it is not always the best for every situation. Industries where change is rapid does not always give time for everyone's input and for the leader to make the final decision. In some cases, this creates an uncertain environment with respect to which decisions are made democratically.

Laissez-faire:

Laissez-faire leaders give their team members a lot of freedom in how they do their work, and how they set their deadlines.

They provide support with resources and advice if needed, but otherwise they don't get involved. This liberal approach can lead to high job satisfaction.

It can be problematic if team members do not manage their time well, or if they don't have the knowledge, skills, or self-motivation to do their work well.

Transformational

Transformational leaders communicate well and inspire teams with a shared vision of the future. These leaders expect the best from everyone and they hold themselves responsible for their actions.

They usually are organized and set clear goals, as well as possessing effective conflict-resolution skills.

High productivity and engagement in the workplace are trademarks of this leadership style. We're Awesome. Go team!

(Transcript format instructions) Please respond to the following statements based on the descriptions above.

The style of your best supervisor is

The style of your most challenging supervisor is

Supervisory style and impact

Situation:

You find out through a colleague that your supervisor is working on a proposal for a massive business opportunity, which if successfully executed, could generate very interesting long-term work for yourself and your entire department.

How might the autocratic and democratic supervisory styles (Hint: re-read autocratic or democratic descriptions) differ in how they inform and involve their teams in preparing for this opportunity?

Keeping the described situation in mind, briefly describe how might you react if you were not consulted about the proposal, from your supervisor?

Consider your most challenging style of supervisor -

describe how you would approach them about becoming involved in the project. (Hint: re-read supervisory style)

Reflection

Below is your response to how you would approach your supervisor whose style is

When you consider their style, do you think your approach will result in building an effective relationship with this supervisor?

Work Place Goals

Work place goals represent the objectives of the organization, or what it sets out to achieve.

These goals form part of the company's overall vision, which is sometimes referred to as the "strategic vision", and drive the business performance.

Knowing the workplace goals will influence your own workplace targets.

Knowledge check

It is important to know the difference between workplace goals and personal goals.

Below are examples of goals. Select all the workplace goals (in order to proceed to the next page).

Increase efficiency

Increase my network

Provide better customer service

Reduce carbon emissions

Participate in professional development activities

Capture a bigger market share

Examples of workplace goals

- Increase efficiency,
- Capture a bigger market share,
- Provide better customer service,
- Reduce carbon emissions.

Note: Goals like ‘increase my network’ and ‘participate in professional development activities’ are personal goals. They don’t focus on driving the organization’s performance.

Now that you are clear about workplace goals, where would you look to find out about your organization’s workplace goals? Briefly list some places.

Compare your response to the list of places listed below.

Common places for discovering organization goals include:

- company website: look for links to - our company’s mission, our vision and values;
- company policy manual;
- ask your HR department;
- ask your co-workers;
- ask your supervisor / team lead.

Benefits of knowing workplace goals

Video Transcript

Studies show, that workers who see a connection between their own job goals and the business’ overall goals, are more focused and productive because they realize the influence their work has on the company’s performance.

Employees who are engaged in their work clearly understand their individual goals and how they relate to those of their company. Once employees see how they can make a direct contribution to their company's success, they begin to

focus on finding ways to work smarter and more efficiently, boosting the company's performance.

Most employers welcome suggestions and ideas from employees on strategies to increase productivity and reducing inefficiencies such as unnecessary photocopying or finding less costly suppliers. You may find a company suggestion box or be encouraged to participate in brainstorming sessions. You could also pitch your ideas to your supervisor, or direct ideas to your human resources representative.

Depending on your workplace, you may benefit from the reward systems in place such as a bonus, salary increase, or other form of recognition for your performance. In organizations where the company and individual goals are aligned, there are typically higher rates of attendance, satisfaction and productivity.

How would you choose to support the goal?

The company's goal is to provide better customer service.

- I would reduce my customer inquiry response rate to one business day.
- I would make special exceptions for dissatisfied long-standing customers to regain customer loyalty.
- I would provide a service discount or send some free products to long-standing customers.

(If you selected the first one) Great idea, should check to see if company policy or practice regarding this is not already in place.

(If you select either the second or third) Great idea, before carrying out this action, it is best to check with your supervisor.

Summary – Workplace goals

Knowing where to find the organizations goals and how those goals can impact on your own work targets will be very beneficial to you and your progression in the company.

Assertive Communication

Take a moment to review the statements about assertive communicationⁱⁱ.

What it is – Assertive communication is about clear messaging. It is about being able to express our hopes, opinions and ideas in a way that is transparent and respectful.

What it is not – Assertive communication is not about being dominating, controlling or self-serving. This is aggressive behaviour.

It is not about allowing others to dominate or control us. This is passive behaviour.

Building Assertiveness in the Workplace

Now that you have a definition of assertiveness in the workplace, we'll take a look at actions you can take to build your assertiveness.

- Start by being respectful.
- Think about your goal or objective.
- Watch your body language.

Start by being respectful

What that means is —

- you are prepared to voice and stand behind your interests;
- you listen to others' interests in a non-competitive or non-threatening way;
- you show a willingness to work together with the other person / party.

Example:

"I have some concerns about not telling our client the truth about the errors on the report we prepared for her. She's using our financial advice to help with her business decisions and I feel that not being honest with her is unethical. What does this say about our business practices? What effect could this have on our company's image and business relations? I'm interested in hearing your views on this."

Think about your goal or objective

What that means is —

- thinking about what you hope to achieve as a result of your interaction with the other person or group
- thinking about how to structure your message in a way that will set you up to achieve the goal or objective

Examples:

Do you wish to share your views or perspective?

Do you intend to offer a co-worker feedback about their work?

Watch your body language

What that means is —

- adjust your posture so that you are sitting up in your chair or standing straight;
- place both feet on the floor to ground yourself;
- make eye contact with the other person or party;
- breathe!

Tip: You need to sound and look assertive. It may feel uncomfortable for you, but you can project assertiveness through your body language.

Practice in front of a mirror or with a friend. The more you practice the easier it will be to project assertiveness.

Summary — Building assertiveness

Assertive communication is difficult.

- Don't aim to be perfect.
- Focus on one or two areas of development at a time. Keep these actions in mind:
 - Be respectful.
 - Think about goals and objective.
 - Watch your body language.

Expect a few bumps along the way and welcome them as part of your learning curve.

Being assertive with your supervisor

Video transcript:

For most of us, our relationship with our supervisor is the most important relationship we have at work. That relationship can influence your job performance evaluations, pay raises, bonuses and even opportunities and recommendations for career advancement. This working relationship contributes to your overall impressions about your work and the workplace. Your supervisor may significantly impact your future, so it makes sense to invest time and energy into building your relationship with them now.

Being assertive when interacting with your supervisor can effectively manage workplace challenges before they turn into big problems. Problems that can impact your work performance and your attitude. Being assertive means being proactive, having a plan and not responding emotionally to situations that feel disagreeable or unfair to you. Your best action is to check it out and get clarification about the situation from your supervisor.

Now that you know the importance of building a professional relationship with your supervisor, let's look at some tips for working with them.

Tip: Think about your supervisor as your client

Your supervisor has a problem that needs to be solved, and has hired you to solve it.

- Learn what your supervisor's problems are, and what their expectations are for the end result.
- When do they want it resolved? How?
- Find out what you can about the situation that requires your involvement before jumping in to address them.

Tip: Deliver information in a way that works for your supervisor

When providing your supervisor with updates about your work, be mindful of when and how they prefer to be informed.

Determine their preference.

For example, do they prefer face-to-face discussions? Presentations?
Written updates only?

Some supervisors only want to be flagged when there are potential problems, while others prefer regular and detailed updates.

Figure out your boss' preference for the way in which they want to be kept up-to-date (i.e. ask them), as well as the frequency.

Tip: Handle delegation skillfully

Delegation conversations can be tricky at times. Here are some pointers to help get it right:

- **Clarify:** when you are in doubt about an assignment, ask questions to inform your next steps.
- **Prioritize:** determine the importance of tasks relative to others you've been assigned. This way you can focus your attention on the work that requires your immediate attention.

If you think you can't fit in all of the work, ask your boss to assist you on how to best manage your time, in order to get the important tasks done.

Situation: Your supervisor assigns you an important project, on top of several other assignments you've been recently assigned.

Suggested questions to help you handle the delegation effectively:

- Please help me to understand where this assignment fits in relative to the others.
 - Is it alright if I delay some of the other tasks to prioritize this one?
- If the answer is yes, then ask which ones.

More delegation pointers.

- **Record:** Write down your supervisor's instructions as they speak, and read them back to check for accuracy.
- **Schedule:** find out about firm or final deadlines. Check for flexibility around dates so that you have a buffer to work within.

Assertiveness with your supervisor

Becoming assertive with your supervisor is a skill. Which of the following tips was a new idea to you?

- Treat your supervisor like a client.
- Deliver information in a way that works for your supervisor.
- Handle delegation skillfully.

(e-module instructions) Download additional information about being assertive with your supervisor.

Transcript: Additional information available at the end of the document.

Harassment in the workplace

Many types of harassment can occur on the job. Workplace harassment, whether verbal or physical, based on sex, religion, or race, is unlawful and a form of discrimination.

Most common types of harassment include:

- sexual harassment;
- non-sexual harassment;
- bullying.

Types of Harassment

Sexual harassment in the workplace includes any uninvited comments, conduct, or behavior regarding sex, gender, or sexual orientation. It also qualifies as a form of discrimination

Sexual harassment does not have to occur between co-workers of the opposite sex.

It's also not limited to touching or spoken words. Obscene images and videos, emails and even staring in a suggestive manner can be deemed offensive.

Non-sexual harassment in the workplace can also consist of other actions regarding religion, race, age, gender, or skin color, for example.

Actions involving these subject matter areas qualify as harassment if they interfere with an employee's success or create a hostile work environment.

Non-sexual harassment can include offensive language regarding a person's physical or mental disabilities or differences as well.

Creating a hostile work environment is considered harassment.

Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well.

Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a person or group of people.

It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

Harassment can happen in the workplace

Here are some questions you could ask yourself about a situation that made you feel uncomfortable.

- What was the context in which the incident(s) took place?
- Was the behaviour directed at me?
- How did I react to the incident:
 - was I offended by the behaviour?
 - did I feel uncomfortable?
- How would this behaviour be perceived by other work colleagues? (the behaviour in question is not only assessed by the impact or effect on yourself, but is also measured against a reasonably objective standard).

Harassment - questions continued

- Have I spoken to the individual and tried to clarify the situation? (Not everyone is comfortable doing this.)
- Have I informed him/her of the impact the situation has had on me?

- Have I asked him/her to stop the behaviour?
- Has the other person expressed regrets and stopped or has the behaviour continued?

Next you'll be given some strategies or tips on how to respond to harassment.

Tips - How to respond to harassment

Keep a written record

- when,
- where you were harassed,
- what was said or done,
- who said or did it,
- names of any witnesses.

Keep copies of what you have received from the person

- letters,
- memos,
- e-mails,
- texts

The earlier the problem is addressed and discussed, the better the chance of it being resolved and the inappropriate behaviour stopped.

Seek advice/support from any of the following:

- a contact in your Human Resources department;
- tell your union representative if you are in a union;
- a Harassment Prevention advisor / Labour Relations advisor;
- the Employee Assistance Program, or other departmental resource person;
- provincial or territorial human rights office.

Speak directly to the other person if you feel comfortable and feel safe doing so.

Report the harassment to the person identified in your workplace policy, your supervisor, or a delegated manager. If your concerns are minimized, proceed to the next level of management.

Most Important — Do Not Retaliate! You may end up looking like the perpetrator and will most certainly cause confusion for those responsible for evaluating and responding to the situation.

Know your legal rights

In Canada it is best to check the Provincial or Territorial documents for what applies. (E-module instructions Select Canada or Ontario for what applies and to whom.)

Canada

The Canadian Human Rights Act applies when they are employed by or receive services from the federal government, First Nations governments or private companies that are regulated by the federal government such as banks, trucking companies, broadcasters and telecommunications companies.

Ontario

The Ontario Human Rights System is made up of three separate agencies: The Ontario Human Rights Commission works to promote, protect and advance human rights through research, education, targeted legal action and policy development.

To access information and help with your human rights questions -

- for legal support –The Human Rights Legal Support Centre.
- file a claim – The Human Rights Tribunal.
- for an overview - Human Rights 101.

(instructions in e-module - Links* to the agency sites are found under the Resource tab.) In this document, links to sites are located under heading Harassment Resources at the end of this document

*Occasionally website links fail, try searching for the website using the agency name.

Summary

Ontario recognizes 3 types of harassment

- bullying
- non sexual
- sexual

If you encounter a situation where you feel harassed, consider

- speaking with person who is harassing you
- speaking with your supervisor, if appropriate
- contacting the Human Resource department for assistance in dealing with harassment
- becoming informed about your legal rights with respect to harassment and bullying

Resources for your legal rights are available on the Resources tab above on the left under the module title. In this pdf, these resources are located at the end of this document.

Summary

Final thoughts

Getting along well with your supervisor requires attention and effort. Good intentions are not enough.

Keep in mind the strategies you learned to support you in working well with your supervisor. Your actions will make a positive difference at work if you approach them with thought and care.

Interested in reading more about working effectively with your supervisor?

(instructions if reading this in conjunction with the e-module) Download the annotated bibliography for this module. Transcript format, the resource sheet is at the end of this document.

Your key points to remember

Your most challenging style of supervisor is

You indicated that workplace goals can be found:

For assertive communication, you identified the following as new ideas for working with your supervisor.

Treat your supervisor like a client

Handle delegation skillfully

Deliver information in a way that works for your supervisor

You have now completed Working Effectively with you Supervisor.

If you are interested, check out the other modules available in this Experiential Learning series.

- Working in Teams
- ✓ Working Effectively with your Supervisor
- Disabilities in the Workplace
- Networking in the Workplace
- Diversity and Inclusion

Additional information and explanations

Find out what your supervisor means

Listen to your boss's words, and watch their behaviour over time to determine what the words mean. If you're uncertain what your supervisor means by something, it's okay to check with them.

Example: Supervisor: "Your presentation went well,"

It could mean a number of different things. It could suggest that they think your presentation

- was fabulous,
- it just did the job it was supposed to do,
- there were no problems with your presentation significant enough to discuss them directly with you.

Asking clarifying questions helps you gain a better understanding of your supervisor's words which you can take into consideration when doing your work.

Example: You: "Thank you for your feedback. What stood out for you the most about the presentation? What areas could be strengthened?"

Handle delegation skillfully

Record: Write down your supervisor's instructions as they speak, and read them back to check for accuracy.

When instructions are repeated it may be noticed that an important piece of information is missing, as well as the degree of commitment to getting the work done.

Schedule: find out about firm or final deadlines. Check for flexibility around dates so that you have a buffer to work within.

In order to meet deadlines, input or information from your supervisor might be required. Let them know what you will need and when you need to have them.

Resources for Working with your Supervisor module

Need more information and ideas about working with your supervisor? The following are resources the Career Centre looked at to support the information presented in this module.

5 Strategies for Improving your Relationship with your Boss

Achieve Centre for Leadership and Workplace Performance Highlights: strategies to create good working relationships

<https://ca.achievecentre.com/blog/5-strategies-improving-relationship-boss/>

8 Assertive Communication Tips

Achieve Centre for Leadership and Workplace Performance

Highlights: why effective communication is important in the workplace

<https://ca.achievecentre.com/blog/8-assertive-communication-tips/>

About Human Rights – What is Harassment

Canadian human rights commission

Highlights: description and examples of harassment

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/what-harassment-1>

Being Harassed at Work? Information for workers

Ontario Ministry of Labour

Highlights: description of harassment, what to do, where to go for help.

https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/fs_wvh_atwork.php

Is it Harassment? A tool to Guide Employees

Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/healthy-workplace/prevention-resolution-harassment/harassment-tool-employees.html#c4> (link may not work, suggest copy and paste into URL field)

Leadership Styles Choosing the Right Approach for the Situation

Mind Tools Content Team

Highlights: descriptions of a number of different leadership styles

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm

OSH Answers Fact Sheets – Bullying in the Workplace

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Highlights: description of bullying, examples and the affects of bullying

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/bullying.html>

The Incredible Power of Company-wide Goal Alignment and Organizational Business Goals

By Success Factors

Highlights: benefits of goal alignment and the importance of employees understanding the organizations goals and strategies

https://www.successfactors.com/en_us/lp/articles/corporate-goal-alignment.html

Harassment Resources:

- Information about Ontario human rights [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)
- Contact the [Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#).
- Human Rights Applications – Ontario: [Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario \(HRTO\)](#).
- The Law Society of Upper Canada: [Law Society of Upper Canada referral service](#)
- Law Society of Ontario Referral Service [crisis line](#)
- Ontario Labour Relations Board [Ontario Labour Relations Board \(OLRB\)](#).
- Assaulted Women’s Helpline The [Assaulted Women’s Helpline](#)

ⁱ Supervisory Styles, parts adapted from
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_84.htm

ⁱⁱ ca.achievecentre.com/blog/8-assertive-communication-tips