

RUTGERS

Edward J. Bloustein School
of Planning and Public Policy



Fundamentals of Transit Supervision

Participant Workbook



NATIONAL TRANSIT INSTITUTE
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
120 Albany Street
Tower Two, Suite 250
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Telephone: (848) 932-1700
Fax: (732) 932-1707
www.NTIONLINE.com

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Biography

James J. McLary

Education

- Purdue University, BSCE 1967
- Northeastern University Transit Management School, 1972
- George Mason School of Entrepreneurial Services

Experience

James McLary is responsible for the development and implementation of all McLary Management (MM) transportation related consulting efforts. In addition to MM he is President of a separate operating company that specialized in managing and operating paratransit and small urban fixed-route services for public and private clients. He is also a sales representative for a computerized and scheduling company. He teaches many transit and paratransit courses throughout the United States, including a new course he developed for NTI called Coordinated Mobility. He is also frequent presenter at CTAA, TLPA, and APTA.

Some of his most recent assignments are:

- Region II and VII FTA Ambassador for United We Ride
- Developing a mobility management coordination program in South Carolina
- Helped TARC (Louisville, Kentucky) procure ADA complementary services
- Wrote proposal for ADA services for a private operator in Kansas City, MO
- Under contract with the Secretary of Transportation; provided Baltimore MTA with advisory and mentoring services

McLary was on the Board of Directors of the Taxicab, Limousine, and Paratransit Association (TLPA) from 1995 to 2006, with the exception of one-year that is required by the TLPA by-laws. He is also on the steering committee for Project Action, Easter Seals. McLary is Past-President of the Washington Private Operators Council and past-chairman of the Washington DC Council of Governments Private Providers Task Force, which is charged with implementing the FTA Private Sector guidelines.

McLary performed most of his private professional work for urban fixed route and paratransit systems and has also done work in small and rural transit systems. He is keenly aware of the needs of demand response and paratransit systems, and he is capable of finding and implementing innovative solutions.

McLary worked extensively in small urban areas and conducted numerous Studies and Management Performance Reviews (MPR) throughout the US. He has performed work in 35 states, Moscow, Russia, Adelaide, South Australia, Puerto Rico, and has advised a large taxi company in Singapore on accessibility issues.

For a list of publications and awards, contact James McLary directly.

Introduction

As transit employees, we have a responsibility to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient means of transportation to the public. As transit supervisors, we accomplish this mission through the people that work for and with us. How we supervise has a direct link to how our employees perform and whether or not we accomplish our goals.

This course will examine both sides of a supervisor's job. First, we will take a look at characteristics and behaviors of supervisors where performance excels. This will create a check list that will assist us in becoming a better boss. Second, our focus will turn to basic skills required of a supervisor. These include planning, delegation, motivation, feedback, training, coaching, communication, and handling conflict and criticism.

Course Goal

The goal of this course is to strengthen the performance and productivity of transit supervisors through the examination of workplace behaviors and sound supervisory skills and practices.

Course Objectives

This course is designed for supervisors who work in the transit industry. After attending this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of a good supervisor
- Understand their role as a supervisor
- Explain a supervisor's role and impact on work groups in achieving workplace goals
- Highlight skills in effective planning and delegation, team development, communication, and handling conflict
- Discuss strategies for implementing new skills

Course Outline

The following five modules will be covered in this course:

- 1) Characteristics of a Good Supervisor
- 2) Planning and Delegating
- 3) Developing the Team
 - a. Motivation and Feedback
 - b. Coaching and Training
- 4) Communication
- 5) Handling Criticism and Conflict

Ground Rules

A few ground rules for the class:

- Treat others with respect.
- When discussing personal situations, do not use names.
- Participate, participate, participate!
- What is said here, stays here.

Supervisor's Challenge

- Record your greatest challenge as a supervisor.
- Let's see if we can solve some of these by the end of the day based on the information learned.

Defining Characteristics of a Good Supervisor

It is often said people leave bosses, not organizations. It is also said the number one reason why people thrive at work is their boss.

Activity

Take five minutes and record your answers to the following statement. Be prepared to share your responses with the group.

In order to make me more successful, I wish my manager would:

Becoming a Better Boss Check List

- ✓ **Share information**
 - Keep people informed and let them know what is expected.
- ✓ **Get people involved**
 - Actively encourage participation and feedback.
- ✓ **Listen to peoples' concerns**
 - Actively listen to employees' problems and requests.
- ✓ **Take action to show you care**
 - Respond to requests and show you care about people and their work environment.
- ✓ **Give positive feedback**
 - Focus more on what employees are doing right, rather than what they are doing wrong.
- ✓ **Focus on solutions, not problems**
 - Spend more time working with people on solutions, rather than dwelling on problems.
 - Be hard on details so you can be soft with employees.
- ✓ **Deal with issues in private**
 - Don't embarrass employees in front of their coworkers.
- ✓ **Use mistakes to help people**
 - Mistakes are opportunities to fix problems.
 - People will make mistakes, so the key point is what you do when mistakes are made – not “if” they are made.

Fundamental Skills for Transit Supervisors

Delegation

As supervisors, we often times fail to delegate because we feel we do not have the time or we are afraid it will not be done correctly. There is a lot riding on our decisions, and all eyes are on us if something goes wrong. Yet as supervisors, we can not do it all ourselves, and we have an obligation and responsibility to develop our staff.

What is Delegation?

- Passing responsibility to someone else
- A great tool to develop your staff/team
- Allowing you to do *your* job
- Saving time
- Increases motivation
- Delegation is not abdicating responsibility

How to Delegate

- Define the task
 - Should this be delegated?
- Select the individual or team
 - Who has the right skills? Will they develop new skills? Is this an opportunity to develop skills?
- Explain your reasons
 - Why is this being delegated? What is important and relevant?
- State required results
 - What must be achieved? By when? What is expected?
- Let go
 - Don't keep looking over shoulders.
- Support and communicate
 - Talk it through and clarify; *don't* do the work.
- Feedback on results
 - Be honest and specific; say what was done right; point out areas to improve product (not style).

Developing the Team

Additional responsibilities of a supervisor are to motivate staff by providing positive feedback. Another is to coach and train by taking the opportunity to help employees grow.

Activity

Work in small groups of three people. First, take 5-6 minutes on your own to make two lists (both of which will be shared with the other members of your group).

1. List five things that motivate you strongly (e.g., money, time off, recognition, more challenging work assignments). Rank the items on your list from least motivating (5) to most motivating (1).
2. List five things that de-motivate you. Rank the items on your list from least de-motivating (5) to most de-motivating (1).
3. Pass your list to one of the other people in your group. Review the list you receive and place a checkmark next to any items on the list that also appear on your list. Pass the list to the third person; repeat the review and checkmark process. Pass the list one final time to receive your own list back with checkmarks.
4. Take five minutes to discuss what you noticed within the group.
 - a. Do the same kinds of things tend to motivate all of you?
 - b. Do the same kinds of things seem to de-motivate all of you?

Motivate:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

De-motivate:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Key Points on Motivation

- Recognition is motivating
- 1 minute plus a few words has a high impact
- Specific feedback is especially meaningful
- Comments, tone, and simple action have strong influences
- Demeaning comments are de-moralizing
- Positive feedback says “you’re on the right track”

Coaching and Training

Activity

The following is based on the video clips. There are three groups. Each group needs to identify what went wrong or right during the clips assigned. Group assignments are as follows:

Group One – clip 1b:

Identify three or four benefits of one-on-one coaching and explain them to the class.

Group Two – clip 4:

Write three guidelines for “checking in” with learners.

Group Three – clips 7a and 7b:

Make a list and explain how the supervisor’s listening skills and attitude impact the success of the employee’s development.

Key Points on Coaching and Training

- Demonstrate support and encouragement by body language, attitude, reactions, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions to make sure the employee understands.
- “Check in” periodically to see how things are going. Do not do the work for the employee.
- Be aware of the employee’s needs and prior experiences.
- Listen, listen, listen (After that, listen).

Communication

One of the most important skills for any organization is the ability to communicate; this is especially true for supervisors. How we communicate with upper management, our peers, and our staff will, in large part, determine our success in the agency. Communication is the successful transfer of an idea from the speaker to the listener. Many things can get in the way and distort that transfer; we will explore some of these distractions. Then we will take a look at the principles of good communication.

Barriers to Communication

- Inarticulateness
- Hidden agendas
- Status
- Hostility
- Differences in style
- Organizational norms
- Perception
- Inference (making assumptions)
- Misreading nonverbal cues

Communication Process: 2-way

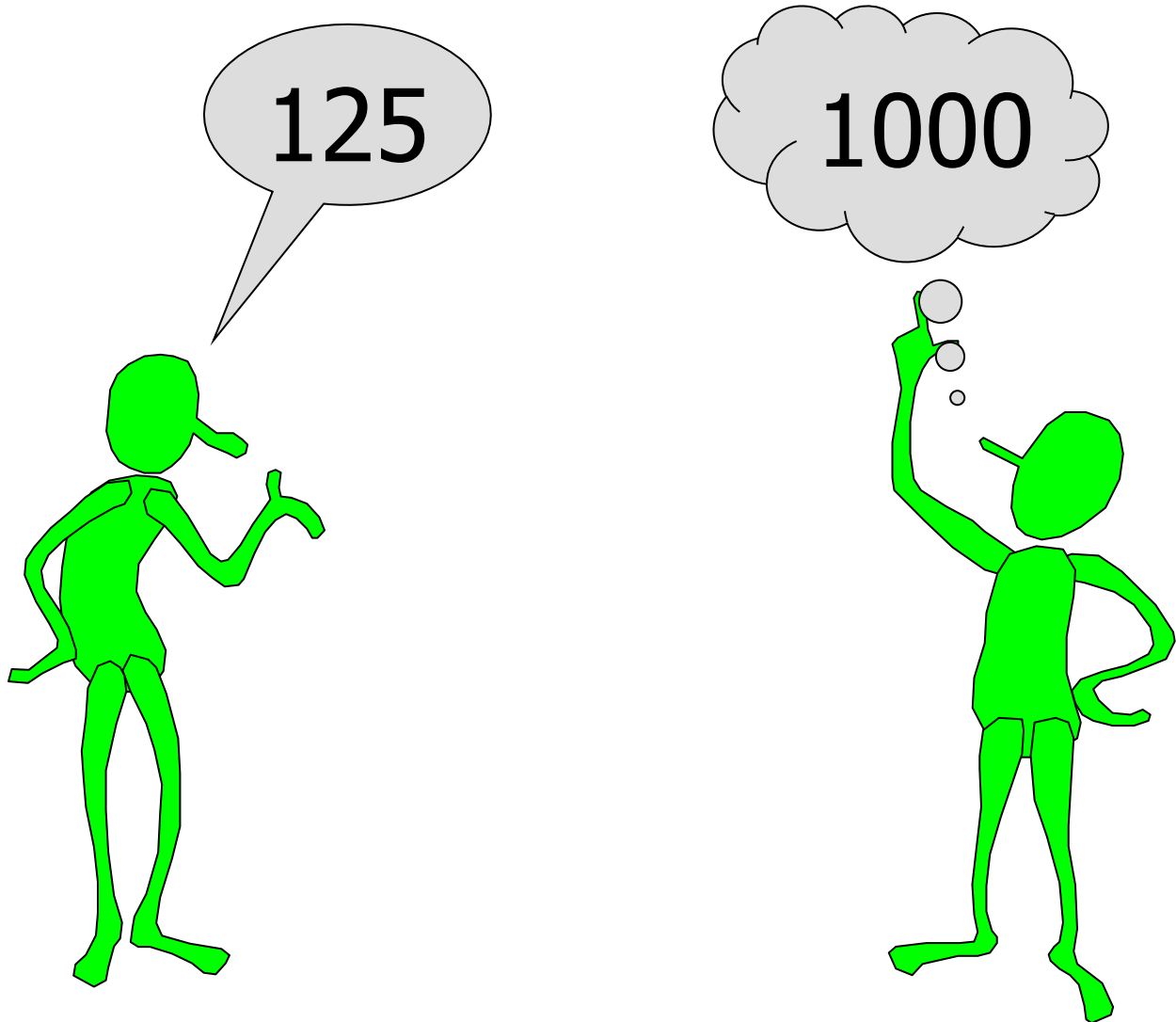
Principles of Effective Communication

- Think ahead
 - What do you want to communicate?
- Know the audience
 - State of mind
 - Words and terms familiar to them
 - Information that is relevant
- Know your message
- Listen and analyze
- Be flexible and do not react defensively
- Credibility is critical

Information is Necessary

- What is the issue?
- What is the context?
- What are the choices?
- What is the impact?

Nonverbal Communication



Nonverbal communication is the additional part of the spoken message.

- Body language
- Facial expression
- Use of hands
- Tone of voice

- Rate of speech (fast/slow)
- Volume of voice (low/high)

Activity

What Would You Say Five Cards

Handling Criticism and Conflict

Chances are you will run up against situations where people *do not* do what you want them to or what is expected of them. This could be employees or bosses. This segment will examine what to do and what not to do when receiving criticism.

The Do Not's When Receiving Criticism

- Do not deny the criticism
- Do not argue
- Do not defend yourself
- Do not run away from the situation
- Do not justify yourself
- Do not say “Yes, but...”

What to Do

- Listen and establish communication
- State problem in terms of behavior, not personality
- Focus on facts, not opinions or personalities
- Be assertive, instead of aggressive or passive.
- Ask for a solution or state the action you want taken

Supervisor's Challenge: The Return

- Address issues raised this morning
- Action plan

What is Supervising All About?

- Open and honest communication
- Relationships built on trust
- Working together to achieve shared goals

Personal Notes Page