

Fifth Edition

**THE
FOREMAN/
SUPERVISOR'S
HANDBOOK**

Edited by
Carl Heyel
H.W. Nance

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Carl Heyel, P.E.

Management Counsel

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PREFACE

The Foreman/Supervisor's Handbook is offered as a comprehensive and authoritative text which presents the kind of *practical information* the foreman or supervisor needs in order to be effective on the job. It completely revises and updates *The Foreman's Handbook*, a work which, through four previous editions, has become the standard text in its field. The term "foreman/supervisor" in the title of the new edition was decided upon by the editors despite a reluctance to tamper with a well established name, in recognition of a change in usage which has come about over the years. "Supervisor" is now more generally used in industry for the first level of management and is especially appropriate since the emerging role of women in supervisory (and higher) positions has rendered the earlier, gender-specific term less properly descriptive. Moreover, although the orientation of the book is to manufacturing operations, the principles and techniques discussed have wide application in office operations, where the term "supervisor" is the designation universally used. To retain continuity with the previous editions, the compromise term "foreman/supervisor" was adopted.

As in previous editions, each chapter is written by an authority in the subject covered. Each, moreover, stands on its own feet, i.e., it can be read as a separate article, independent of preceding or succeeding chapters. Although the book thus serves as a ready reference on any one of the many special areas with which the foreman/supervisor is concerned, its consistency in style and logical sequence and emphasis of content are nevertheless those of a book designed properly to be read straight through first, before becoming part of a reference library.

One departure from the usual textbook style is that the general

information which usually takes up the early chapters in management texts is here offered for what it really is—background information. This by no means deprecates its importance. It is treated with thoroughness but reserved for the closing instead of the opening chapters. Such an arrangement should satisfy two kinds of readers: The foreman/supervisor who wants to read the book consecutively will find that he or she gets into the practical “meaty” chapters immediately and that all chapters follow in logical order. The foreman/supervisor who wants to refer to the book on specific subjects can expect comprehensive coverage, conveniently segregated. It was deemed logical to put the chapter on work simplification at the end of the text, since it was conceived as a special philosophy to be presented to readers thoroughly grounded in the fundamentals of their job as presented in the preceding sections. Again, it will be observed that this presentation also “stands on its own feet.”

As stated, this fifth edition has been completely revised and updated, with all chapters either reviewed by the original authors or by other recognized authorities in the subjects covered. New chapters in this edition cover the art of communicating, women managers, antidiscrimination legislation, automation and robotics, supervisory performance assessment, and management by objectives.

In organizing the material and working over it with the contributors, the editors strove to preserve the distinction among matters of direct supervisory responsibility, matters on which the foreman/supervisor must cooperate with functional departments which themselves assume primary responsibility, and information of a more general educational nature.

The list of contributors bespeaks, by their standing in their fields, the authority with which the subjects in this handbook are treated. All of these authors have written and/or lectured extensively in other management media, but it is the editors' privilege, in the case of some, to introduce them here to the foreman/supervisor audience. The chapter on leadership, by A. L. Kress, has become a classic and is here retained as originally written. Similarly, the chapter on work simplification, by the late Clem Zinck, who devoted his working life to the subject, has been re-

tained as-is, after thorough review by co-editor Harold Nance, whose firm is active in industrial engineering and related management work.

The editors were gratified to note, in working over the material in the previous edition, how basic the presentation was. As the original editor was bold enough to hope in the preface to the first edition four decades ago, the handbook has stood the test of time. And the additional material presented in this edition should make it of even more practical, everyday usefulness.

CARL HEYEL
H. W. NANCE

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Section One

THE SCOPE OF THE FOREMAN/SUPERVISOR'S JOB

Chapter 1

THE FOREMAN/SUPERVISOR'S TOTAL JOB

CARL HEYEL

The president of a large and successful company is fond of repeating that a job is more than a square marked off on an organization chart—and more than a job description definition. He claims that almost any job will expand or contract with the individual holding it.

To prove his point, he tells the story of a certain controller in his company—but the “moral” applies to any executive and supervisory position in plant or office. The controller was given the duties of chief accounting officer. After a few months, the president who had hired him noticed that many little matters which had taken his time before were no longer coming to his attention. He began to receive penciled notes saying, “We had a little meeting on such and such a matter, and decided so and so. If agreeable to you, we’ll go ahead,” signed with the controller’s initials. Larger and larger questions were handled, to the increasing relief and satisfaction of the president.

Soon the president made official what superior ability had already made a fact. He changed the controller’s title to assistant general manager. The man had already made himself that, while the organization chart had shown him to be a controller, and the

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personnel department's position classification described his duties as those of a chief accounting officer.

A new man was given the title of controller. Month by month the job shrank—the president could almost see the shrinkage taking place. Others were making the decisions that the controller should have made. Finally, it was necessary to get a new controller.

The new man slowly and carefully expanded the shrunken job step by step, and soon assumed a respected place in the councils of the company.

The president sums up the experience in this way: If I had insisted on rigid adherence to an organization chart at any of the three major stages of the change, I should have (1) never discovered an excellent top executive who would definitely, some day, be a candidate for the position of general manager; (2) suffered a serious partial breakdown in my accounting division; and (3) prevented the final development of a capable accounting officer."

The above anecdote shows how much the scope of a job depends on the initiative and capabilities of the person holding it. That is why company organization charts must always be checked against actual operating conditions, to guard against their becoming mere historical blueprints with no close relationship to facts.

Accordingly, it is not an easy matter to give a general definition of a foreman/supervisor's job, beyond perhaps saying that the job is what he or she makes of it. However, it is possible to discuss what any foreman or supervisor must know and do in order to make the job grow. This opening chapter outlines what is involved. Later chapters, as indicated, discuss in detail the important points touched upon here.

Obviously, if we consider the foreman's job as something that should be growing at all times, a breakdown of that job will include more than the immediate things he or she must know and do in connection with day-by-day duties. It will have to include the kind of background information the foreman must acquire and the kind of attitude, or "mental attack," he or she must develop to prepare for larger responsibilities.