

First Line Supervisors Give Us Exactly What We're Asking For—Every Time

Everyone rails against the first line supervisor. Why don't they do a better job of communicating? Why don't they lead more? Why don't they create a clear vision of what they expect of their teams and then enable those teams to succeed?

Because that would be contrary to the way we select, develop and reward first line supervisors.

Start with the selection process. Despite years of admitting that we don't do it right, many companies still put the best technician in charge of technicians. We appoint the best sales person the manager of sales. We put the best mechanic in charge of the maintenance function. We put the best reporter in charge of the news department.

Why not? The best sales person was great at prospecting potential customers, making sales presentations and closing the sale. So, surely she's also likely to be the best at formulating a strategic direction and vision for the sales department, building collaboration among its members and motivating individuals and the team to take the sales force to new heights. Right?

Of course not.

Our selection process is giving us exactly what we've designed it to give us. Technicians that step into their first line supervisor role on their first day handicapped by a flawed selection process that we designed.

Until we understand the damage that it's doing, then redesign the process, it will continue to spit out defects in the form of unprepared and ill-equipped first line supervisors.

So if you're looking for first line supervisors with superior communication and leadership skills, create a process that produces this outcome.

That's what we're doing with companies that want to fix their supervisor pipeline. It's working!