



## What the Best Directors Do

**What do the best directors do when they are actually supervising their people? Their teachers know the answer. After all, who sees the boss more clearly than her teachers? In this article, I'll tell you what the best directors do and what they are expected to do by the people they supervise and by the people who supervise them. As you read this article, keep the following question in mind: *Would your teachers, peers, and bosses elect you to your present position?***

**They follow rules.** Good directors do what they are told, willingly and to the best of their ability. They pursue the goals and objectives of the school. In all schools, we must follow standard policies, procedures, and traditions to get the job done in an orderly fashion. We are all employees to someone, and good directors understand that.

**They recognize good work.** The best director recognizes good work as quickly as they recognize poor work. It is important for them to provide positive reinforcement and constructive feedback to their teachers. They also recognize the contribution that every member of the team makes to the success of the school. People want approval from the director as well as from their peers. So take the time to recognize their accomplishments and abilities.

**They create team spirit.** Good directors get others to join the team, to get on board, and work toward a common goal for their school. Teachers want to be part of something larger than themselves, and with the proper motivation, they will join up because they want to. The best director's enthusiasm for her own work will carry over to the other members of the team, who will soon have the same enthusiasm for their work. Teachers should ultimately look at a project and say, "Our school did this and I contributed."

**They encourage cooperation.** Good directors encourage cooperation among and between teachers, bosses, and various other members of the school. In general, all of the classrooms are seeking the same final goal. However, that long-range, final goal is often clouded in territorialism, petty bickering, jealousies, and ego gratification. Good directors encourage all of their teachers to get along and work together. As a result, a good director can make a real difference in getting tasks and objectives accomplished with little conflict.



**They expect high quality.** Good directors get the high quality of work necessary for the success of the school. And that can be difficult at times. In general, all teachers want to know what is expected of them, and a good director makes it very clear as to what they want. They also firmly make it clear that reasonable standards are the minimum standards expected, and that less will not be tolerated. However, human nature being what it is, some will try to get by with doing a little less than others. Good directors do not tolerate substandard performance by their employees. It is not fair to the others who are working up to acceptable standards.

**They get people involved.** Good directors make their people feel that it is not just a job - it is their job! They ask their people for their opinions, get their perspectives, listen to their ideas, and let them be innovative. Help them get excited and get involved. They'll be happier and so will you.

**They don't coddle poor performers.** Occasionally, despite their best motivational skills, supervisors will find teachers who just won't perform as they are expected to. Good directors will then try to get those teachers involved, using every method they can think of, but they don't carry underperformers forever. The best directors either get underperformers to follow the rules and perform up to standards, or they make other arrangements for them. Other arrangements might include reassignment to another classroom, disciplinary action, or dismissal. One poor performer, if allowed to continue in the poor performance mode, can destroy morale and undermine an entire school.

**They manage conflict.** At times, reasonable people will disagree, but conflict within a school can tear it apart. A good director steps in and resolves the conflict before it has a chance to adversely affect a whole school. Naturally the conflict must always be handled with a fair and equitable solution for all concerned. The best director resolves the conflict, leaving both sides as winners when the conflict ends.

**They care about their teachers.** Teachers are people, not machines. The best directors get to know and understand their teachers. They treat them with dignity and respect. They protect them from abuse and help them with problems. The best directors are understanding and accessible to their teachers. Teachers want to work in a safe and healthy environment where they are appreciated for their skills and efforts. The best directors know that their school's greatest assets are their people, and they treat them accordingly.

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