Data Works Sheet:
Supervisor Do's and Don'ts
using survey data to launch reflection, discussion, and action in Minnesota theaters

We asked … What is the most important thing you wish a person supervising you at a theater **would do**? What is the most important thing you wish they **would NOT do**?

> Note that the question does not focus on a particular role (e.g., director, manager) but on supervising. We asked it that way on purpose, given that supervision happens throughout a theater organization and is important at every level.

People said … DON'T micromanage them and DO trust them to do the work. Communication was the second most common set of responses, often written about as a way to build and support trust. Here are the seven key themes in the responses and how they were described.

Most prevalent themes:

Trust	Do	Trust me to do the work
	Don't	Micromanage
Communication	Do	Be specific, clear, honest, timely, consistent
	Don't	Hide information, give too little too late, be unclear, be wishy-washy

Other themes:

Recognition/Support	Do	See me, recognize me, thank me, give constructive feedback, teach me, grow talent
	Don't	Hog credit, set people up for failure
Organization	Do	Respect my time, keep to a schedule, budget well, define roles and responsibilities
	Don't	Ignore safety issues
Power	Do	Share it, include people, respect different perspectives
	Don't	Ridicule, harass, hoard, play power games, treat people like cogs
Race/Ethnicity	Do	Think about it, discuss it openly, get training
	Don't	Use people of color as marketing tools
Interpersonal Skills	Do	Stay calm, deal with conflict, listen, care
	Don't	Gossip, incite panic

For more information, see the **Management** and **Workplace Culture** sections
in the PAHRTS Toolkit at http://www.pahrts.mntheateralliance.org

In particular, search for "**micromanag**e" for articles and handouts on that hot topic or
click on the **Legal** tag for legal articles, quick fact sheets, and other resources.

Thoughts and Questions …

… for Organizations

- Is your organization one in which people communicate well and are trusted to do their work? Looking at the themes raised by the survey respondents, where are your strengths as an organization? Where are improvements needed?
- What mechanisms do you have in place to support the type of communication people are looking for (specific, clear, timely, consistent), particularly on the topics that were seen as important (schedule, budget, roles, responsibilities, safety)?
- How do you support people who supervise to reflect on and improve on their skills and practices in this important work?
- When you bring someone new into your organization in a supervisory role, how do you share your cultural norms with them?
- Do you have systems in place to handle situations in which supervisors act in ways that are not just bad but illegal? Do all employees know how to access and use those systems?

… for Individuals

- Do you manage people? Reflecting on the themes raised by the survey respondents, what resonates for you as your strengths as a supervisor? In what areas could you improve?
- Do you think you "micromanage" too much? Or, do people sometimes say you do? Identify when you keep your hand in all the details rather than sharing them with others. What are the underlying fears motivating your need to do so? How can you address those fears in other ways?
- If you want to be supervised differently, identify specific things you and the supervisor each could do to make the relationship work better. Discuss your ideas with them, request specific help, and change any practices you can control.
- In the organization(s) where you work, do you know how to access and use reporting systems if you or others have a significant issue with a supervisor?

Leaders: How to Use this Data Works Sheet in Your Organization

1. Examine the data yourself and reflect on your responses to it.

2. Explain to staff the background of the data and its purpose – to help organizations improve management of their most important resource, the humans!

3. Ask staff to respond to the questions themselves. Let people keep their responses private.

4. Together, review the data presented in this Data Works Sheet. Given your organization's context, what is surprising? Obvious? Different? Affirming? Challenging?

   > NOTE: This is a sensitive topic to discuss in an organization. (Who wants to tell their supervisor they micromanage? Who wants to be told to communicate better?). To help launch the discussion, without getting into specifics of your own organization, see the following pages for a "script" of 100 responses from the survey. After going through it together to raise the issues, then turn your conversation to step 5.

5. What practices can you, as individuals and an organization, change to address the issues raised through these reflections?

What is the most important thing you wish a person supervising you at a theater **would do** or **would not do**?

To process this as a group, give everyone one a copy and stand or sit in a circle. Take turns reading the quotes, going around the circle as many times as needed to read all 100. Use this to launch discussion about what do's and don'ts resonate for people, and what can be done to better support each other in improving your work together.

1. Do trust me.

2. Please don't micromanage.

3. Do clearly let people know facts and figures with ample time to accomplish things.

4. Do not conceal information or play power games.

5. Do be clear about the work needed and set boundaries on roles. Roles do not need to be traditional. But they need to be agreed on.

6. I would like more recognition for my work.

7. Do take advantage of teachable moments.

8. Do plan early! And don't wait until the 11th hour to make decisions.

9. Do not sexually harass.

10. Do not make assumptions about me or my art.

11. Do not play the blame game when things don't go as planned.

12. Do not micro-manage the artistic process.

13. Do adhere to fiscal responsibility.

14. Do not be a hovercraft or a control freak.

15. Do not incite panic or extreme anxiety.

16. Be respectful of time and opinions.

17. Those in administration and business capacities need to know when to not become too meddling in the artistic choices, and artists should do the same with the business side.

18. Do listen, understand, and provide opportunities for development and self-care.

19. Do define my role and allow creative control within it.

20. Do not claim un-deserved or unproductive power.

21. Do respect employment laws.

22. Do not treat employees unfairly.

23. Do set people up for success.

24. Do not micro manage.

25. Do respond promptly to time-sensitive questions.

26. I wish that the entire artistic community was required to participate in some kind of racial/gender equity training. Everyone.

27. Do not treat over hires as interchangeable cogs - they are individual people.

28. Take my equipment upgrade recommendations as a mandate to replace decades old and dilapidated gear.

29. Do give me the latitude to try new things and take some chances.

30. Never micro-manage me. I feel insulted and not able to do my job that I've been hired to do when I have someone telling me how to do everything.

31. Do respect me as an artist and a professional.

32. Do be as flexible as possible in making allowances for other professional and personal obligations.

33. Do prioritize safety.

34. Stop hating people who actually do the work.

35. Do not distrust the people you hired.

36. Do communicate the outcome of a callback.

37. Do not micro-manage the art.

38. I wish you would recognize my worth. I wish you would recognize me period.

39. Transparency, understanding, and respect are the most important. Dishonest and gossipy behavior is the worst.

40. Do get to know the skill levels of those with whom you are working.

41. Do encourage my development and continue to grow my skills and deepen my knowledge.

42. I am usually the person in charge so I don't see much of a problem.

43. Do have open dialogue about what your concept for the show is, what you're hoping the audience will get from it, and the importance of the story you're telling.

44. Do not single out and ridicule or "ride" certain people all the time.

45. Give me breathing room.

46. Do not set people up for failure by setting unreasonable goals.

47. Do be visibly, consistently, supportive.

48. Do not make me work in unsafe conditions.

49. Do not throw me to the wolves when you can't meet deadlines.

50. I would kill for more groups who actually do math and budget their shows appropriately.

51. COMMUNICATE!!!!!!!!!!

52. Do let go of some of your control issues and think about creating new positions to manage the workloads better.

53. Personally and frequently acknowledge the work being done by individuals.

54. Do not use People of Color as marketing tools just to get a grant or be trendy. If you're serious about diversity, it can't just be a poster.

55. I don't deal well with ambiguity when it comes to schedule, pay and responsibility.

56. Do not try to be funny. Just because you're in authority doesn't mean you're cute.

57. Do not gossip, especially regarding co-workers.

58. Stop reading business books and start taking workshops to improve your interpersonal skills.

59. Do receive constructive feedback without hostility.

60. Be my advocate when necessary.

61. Set a good example for me.

62. Be more open-minded and less rigid with rules and tradition.

63. Do acknowledge my strengths and weaknesses better.

64. Do not belittle someone's viewpoint.

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65. Make the theater's mission, vision, goals and organizational structure clear. Then help me see how I can fit in.

66. I need mentorship. I feel so alone in my work so often … I need freedom to explore and learn, but I want some help processing those lessons.

67. Do trust me and give me the freedom to fail. Then trust me to make adjustments until I can succeed.

68. Do communicate praise and thank everyone often.

69. Do not talk too much about what will "sell."

70. Even if you can't pay me what I am worth, at the very least show gratitude for my donated time.

71. Do ask questions.

72. Do not make assumptions.

73. Do listen.

74. Do not make assumptions.

75. Do not micromanage.

76. Do not act like a jerk.

77. Care for us.

78. Treat me with respect and value my time.

79. Ask what I do, rather than assume you know.

80. Ask what I want and need to do my job better.

81. Support me as a fledgling artist.

82. Respond clearly and promptly to questions.

83. Have my back.

84. Do give regular, honest feedback (good and bad), delivered so frequently that it isn't a surprise and that it can become an opportunity to learn from.

85. Communicate and be consistent.

86. Be less political and more patron-centric.

87. Do not hoard information.

88. Do not lie or cheat.

89. Do not abuse your financial position.

90. Do not demand things suddenly, without proper warning

91. Do not make decisions that affect employees without getting their input or at least giving them a heads-up before making such decisions.

92. Support my decisions and fight for my time.

93. Recognize how hard I work and the positive change I create in the organization.

94. Promote the artistry and work of others.

95. Trust me.

96. Provide clear communication.

97. Supervise pleasantly with clarity and transparency in an organized way.

98. Empower me to work independently, providing support and guidance as needed.

99. Do not withhold information, micro-manage, or rule with fear.

100. Make it your priority to help me do the best possible work - and know when to get out of the way and let that happen.

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