

Status of Apparel manufacturing SMES in the NCR Region- Surveys conducted by Methods Apparel Consultancy – Managers & Supervisors

“No business in the world has ever made more money with poorer management.”
-Bill Terry (One of the greatest baseball players of all times)

The quote above very appropriately states the purpose of investigation of the management in the garment industry. State of the art machinery, efficient labour force and standard operating system cannot do wonders without effective management.

Evaluating the managerial workforce of the garment industry was one of our primary objectives during the survey. This article illustrates our findings on the general status of managers and supervisors across the industry.

The analysis is based upon the survey conducted by the Methods Apparel Consultancy. Ten factories were rated and 300 people were assessed during the surveys in November-December, 2007 commissioned by the Garment Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in association with Okhla Garment and Textile Cluster (OGTC) to analyze current systems and advise ways to improve overall productivity. The survey was done in two parts, the first analyzing the factory and the second evaluating the personnel.



A comprehensive checklist was developed which covered various parameters of managerial and supervisory characteristics and each point on the checklist was awarded a value of 1 to 5 points. The people were evaluated by their immediate superiors in complete confidentiality and a score for the average level of the industry was calculated.

Evaluation Criteria

1. **Communication** skills were found to be grossly lacking among both managers and supervisors. Many of them still believe that the louder you shout the more you produce. Effective communication skills if not inborn can be acquired by professional training and can be a major tool for the managers.
2. The discipline to manage a **to-do list** can be a vital asset in organizing one's work.
3. **Leadership Techniques** must be mastered by the managers/supervisors to get productive results from their employees. Only a good leader can steer its team and motivate them.
4. Effective and logical **decision making** (57.8%) is another important requirement which was lacking in a large percentage of the people.

5. **Planning and organization** scored 56%. The managers/supervisors should be trained in effective planning strategies by utilizing the data available through various management/ supervision techniques. The most talented people of the organization are mostly busy with fire fighting and shipment delivery.
6. To further increase the level of **technical expertise**, the managers/supervisors should be encouraged to continuously upgrade themselves by training and attending seminars on various new products and procedures. It was surprising to note that many managers/supervisors had no knowledge of the innovative techniques which can be used to simplify their work
7. **Work Study** has come up as one of the most important areas for training requirements.
8. **Quality and Productivity** - The repair and rejection rate is at times as high as 70% and many times it goes unrecorded. The efficiency rating of the industry is also at a level of 33% only.
9. **SOPs** were not present in many factories and in most cases wherever present were only for decorative purposes for the buyers.
10. **Computer Knowledge**. A refresher course in basic usage of computers can help managers.
11. **General industry knowledge** This cannot be taught but has to be inculcated by the mangers themselves.

Managers

Experience is valuable but the knowledge of innovative and efficient management techniques is equally important. Properly constructed professionally run Training courses are essential for developing management skills. Although many of the managers have considerable work experience this is not enough to move the industry where it needs to go, companies must review their management structures and the people they have in place. Management techniques are changing constantly, **are your managers fit to cope with the demands that are now being expected?** If you cannot say yes, then you must embark on a serious move to change this.

It was astounding to note that the manner in which managers overrated their colleagues indicating that they do not have sufficient performance expectations from their staff.



The training requirements are as follows:

Suggested course	Statistical Analysis	Urgency
Communication for Managers How to get the best out of your staff Conflict management Team building	61 managers were evaluated 96% were unable to achieve the required level of communication skills	\$\$\$\$\$\$
General Management techniques Work Study Garment engineering	92% need knowledge of the techniques required in today's demanding and competitive production scenario.	\$\$\$\$\$\$
Computer knowledge	Only basic computer knowledge is present with some of the managers.	\$\$\$

***The "\$" represents the level of urgency for training. The higher the number of "\$"s the more urgent is the training requirement.*

Supervisors

None of the supervisors have professional education in garment manufacturing; their knowledge is based on their work experience only. Most of the supervisors had no idea about the basics of supervision. In most cases good machinists were put on the job of a supervisor without any prior training or education.

It is extremely important to teach them a more professional approach to supervision.



The requirement list above is covered by the following courses

Suggested course	Statistical Analysis	Urgency
<u>Supervisor's Course</u> Includes communication, planning, team work, workstudy, garment engineering, quality and productivity.	Out of 204 total supervisors 65% need extensive training.	\$\$\$\$
<u>Work Study/Garment Engineering</u> These are specialized courses focusing on the vital needs of the industry	51% out of a total of 204 supervisors need specialized training on work study and garment engineering	\$\$\$\$\$
<u>Cutting Room</u> Specialized training course for cutting room supervisors.	Out of 38 cutting room supervisors evaluated 74% need further training	\$\$\$
<u>Quality</u> This includes invaluable inputs on quality and repair monitoring and measuring techniques	42% out of a total of 129 quality supervisors need specialized training	\$\$\$\$

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The industry needs to spend money on the people: Caring and training are the main factors to improve factory performance, a new level of expectation is required, it is known that the companies understand the need to improve their performance levels but this will not happen unless management broadens their view of the people. We must accept that people are not "born with knowledge" they have to learn, unlearn and relearn again and need to be treated with respect and understanding.

