

Management role

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The manager and leaders are different notions; yet they are united in the fact that both fulfil a variety of roles in an organization. It is this variety of roles that makes their job so challenging and diverse. People entering these positions should prepare themselves to balance many tasks and issues at a time, trying to find a good balance between all of them. This week we will concentrate on the role of the manager as specified in the management roles and styles.

Professionals discussing this issue find a classification advanced by H. Mintzberg very helpful. This classification includes ten most common roles fulfilled by the manager: “ three interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader, and liaison), three informational roles (monitor, disseminator, and spokesman), and four decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator)” (Gottschalk, n. d.). Mintzberg notes that these roles are fulfilled by all managers irrespective of their position in an organization and corresponding functions. However, in his opinion, “ differences do exist in the importance and effort dedicated to each managerial role based on job content, different skill levels, and expertise” (Gottschalk, n. d.).

The consideration of managerial roles has important implications for an organization regardless of its sphere of activity. For example, the organization opting for the matrix management will introduce “ multiple lines of authority, reflecting the multiple functions expected of a flexible workforce” (Li et al., 2003, p. 192). This means that managers in such an organization should possess a variety of skills that make them better prepared to handle each specific situation.

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In my view, the most important role in Minzberg's matrix is that of a leader. As stated above, management and leadership are not equivalent. Kelly (n. d.) points out that "Managers maintain, oversee and follow policies set by others; leaders by example induce others to follow, they set goals and often are the catalysts for change". However, it seems that the conflict between management and leadership is overemphasized in literature. When a person leads, the managerial role offers support and framework for this activity.

On the other hand, if the manager is not a leader, there are relatively few ways to force people to do things. One is to demand obedience through discipline, but this is hardly a viable way to inspire people to great deeds. Leadership skills are multiple: here belong communicative skills, the gift to speak so as to impress the audience, a fine knowledge of psychology, and ability to set clear goals.

The manager should be a skilful resource allocator, as Minzberg mentions, since resources of the organization depend on good management. Effective distribution of resources is a great help to an organization in achieving its goals. A manager is expected to provide guidance on this procedure and handle the task on one's own. Doing this can require considerable hard skills, including knowledge of mathematically-based resource allocation models. Surely, the degree to which a manager is going to need these skills will vary proportionately to the manager's involvement in resource allocation. In many cases, a good working knowledge of the computer is essential since resource allocation can be done with the help of software such as MS Project.

One role that Minzberg does not cover explicitly but the one that is nevertheless very important is that of a mentor. A manager is there to help employees reach their full potential and is therefore obliged to pay attention to their skills and expertise. He or she should make bringing out inborn skills and developing weak areas a priority in one's work. To make this happen, the manager should develop in the first place communications skills. To be a mentor, one needs to establish good relations with the person and find out what this individual's interests are. Rapport with subordinates is essential for this role, and teaching skills are essential.

Another role that can be added to Minzberg's classification is that of a delegator. A manager should possess ability to delegate that forms the basis for effective work of a unit. It is in no case possible to do everything on one's own. Therefore, the manager needs to be able to find niches for certain people and find out in what way they can deliver value to an organization. This takes substantial knowledge of the nature of business, as well as the ability to assess adequately the abilities of a concrete person.

A manager should also be a good innovator. Since this role requires creativity, not everyone can fulfil it adequately. However, it is imperative that a manager be able to invent new solutions. In the course of managerial activities, novel and unusual situations are frequent. To these situations, a manager cannot always find trite solutions and therefore has to come up with something new.

Thus, a manager is expected to fulfil a variety of roles. The ability to find balance between all of them is perhaps the most important ability and role in

an organization. The manager should serve as a “ balancer” integrating all parts of the assignment or project into a coherent whole. This role is perhaps even more important than all the rest. However, its fulfilment requires adequate position in all the other roles.

The manager will inevitably succeed in some roles and struggle with others. Thus, someone who is a skilful spokesman can be a much worse resource allocator; another one who is a good entrepreneur is a poor disturbance handler. This is why it is necessary to keep reviewing one’s management style from time to time, identifying more and less successful roles and improving those that need strengthening.

References

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