

# Skills management and conceptual skills

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



Introduction Research by Robert L. Katz found that managers need three basic and important skills: technical, human and conceptual. What is more, these three skills are relatively essential to managers who are at different levels that include first-line, middle, top management positions. There will be a discussion about the importance of conceptual skills that are needed by all managers at all levels, especially by top level of managers. The purpose of this essay is to identify and discuss the importance of conceptual skills that top managers are required to demonstrate.

The essay will state why conceptual skills are not so important as much as lower managers through some supporting evidences, why conceptual skills become more important in top management positions than in other positions, and how top managers use conceptual skills in reality. At the end of essay, a conclusion the major findings will be provided. 1 Conceptual skills mean the ability to think and to conceptualize about abstract and complex situations (Katz, R. L, 1974). It is different from technical skills and human skills.

Technical skills tend to be more essential for lower-level managers because they should have the job specific knowledge and techniques to manage the work of non-managerial people (Katz, R. L, 1974). For example, accounts payable managers should know accounting rules and standardized forms very well so that they can solve problems which relevant to accounting fields. Whereas, human skills are important for managers at all levels, because every manager should have ability to work well with other people individually and in a group, all of managers deal directly with people.

They should build cooperative spirit and motivate other workers. For example, first-line managers of a food servicing company should communicate with producers to know how everything is going and where they should improve, so effective talking is very necessary to the whole company for any level of managers (Robbins, S. P, 2011). Even though conceptual skills are not so important as much as lower managers, it does not mean lower managers do not use conceptual skills. In some situations, some of their works are related to conceptual abilities.

It is little for mid-level managers, and it is not very required for first-level managers. While these lower-level managers should also make decisions to solve problems in some complex problems in their managerial fields. Whereas Katz thought that lower-level managers normally spend relative more time dealing with observable objects and processes, but upper-level managers often deal with abstract and complex ideas. So top managers' responsibility matches conceptual skills, because top managers should make organization-wide decisions and establish the goals and plans that affect the entire organization (Robbins, S. P, 2011). That is why top managers are supposed not to only pay attention to small things, they should be leaders and have conceptual skills to lead the whole company to get more profits and access to success. Turn to lower-level managers, first-line managers are the lowest level of management, they coordinate the work of people who are non-managerial employees, such as producers. While middle managers manage the work of first-line managers (Robbins, S. P, 2011).

Therefore, first-line managers should have special skills like technical skills, so that they can know how to supervise those producers to produce goods. 2 Conversely, conceptual skills are probably some of the most important management skills, which are very important to top managers especially. Katz proposed that these skills become more essential in top management positions. The reason for this is that top managers often deal with abstract ideas, and they are responsible for making organization-wide decisions and establishing the goals and plans that affect the entire organization.

While conceptual skills can be described the ability to conceptualize about abstract time, they must see the organization as a whole and clear about the complicated relationships between various subunits. Then these abilities are essential to effective decision-making. So from the definition of conceptual skills, top managers should have many necessary skills, first is problem solving, they need to combine the whole organization together and use professional skills in practice to find how a party will be and what it will be like.

The second key probably is study as a whole, so it is related to conceptualize about things. So they will not treat an organization as a part of the industry, looking the organization as a whole can help managers make decision or do something effectively. Conceptual skills also include creative thinking, which needs managers should have creative ideas, no matter for human management or the whole part management. In another word, conceptual skill is the ability to think in terms of models, frameworks and broad relationship such as long-range plans.

While technical skill has different characteristics of job performance, it does not matter at the operating and professional levels, but as employees are supposed to develop leadership responsibilities, their technical skills become proportionately less important, they increasingly depend on technical skills of their subordinates; in many cases they have never practiced some of the technical skills that they supervise. Conceptual skill deals with ideas, whereas human skill concerns people and technical skill involves things.

So conceptual skills conclude knowing how to formulate ideas, so managers who have strong conceptual skills are supposed to have cognitive abilities to solve problems creatively and effectively. Therefore they can create new products, then they can examine a complicated issue or formulate a distinct and specific action. So when top managers make wide-decisions, conceptual skills are necessary, it will help them to do managing work easily and effectively (Glaser, R. , & Resnick, L. B, 1989).

Mintzberg concluded ten different roles but those roles are highly interrelated. Interpersonal role should be symbolic, which is essential for top managers, because top managers are leaders, their ability is to lead, supervise and motivate workers. So during this time, conceptual skills will be used because of many complex situations with employees and employers. Informational roles need managers to have the ability to receive, collect and disseminate information. Decisional roles are typically important to top managers.

In usual time, they should do wide-making decisions, they will face many complex and abstract situations, but as a leader, they should solve these problems using their managerial skills. So they will use conceptual skills to

make decisions due to solving all of abstract situations (Robbins, S. P, 2011). Otherwise, strategic planning is necessary for top managers in reality. Planning implementation is especially important, which needs managers to implement strategic planning effectively through formalizing and discipline.

Managerial innovation includes total quality management. The generation of innovation results in an outcome – a product, service, technology, or practice that is at least new to an organizational population. Decision skills and strategic planning skills are fundamental factors of conceptual skills. For example, Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg planned to offer a search feature like Google, he combined social and search together, people can do many things at the same place, even finding a good restaurant or learning about a good job.

Facing the biggest competitor Google, Mark needs strategic planning skills to make latest strategies to deal with intense competitions this kind of complex situations. Therefore decision skills and strategic planning skills are related to conceptual skills. How do chief executive officers (CEOs) use conceptual skills? They set the tone for the organization via the vision they express, decisions they make, policies they implement, and what they pay attention to, measure, and reward (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009).

Those abstract situations they should face are very normal to a company. How will the members perform, how will set a correct direction, or how to coordinate relationships with stakeholders are complex actions they are supposed to do (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Ireland & Hitt, 1999). CEO Alan Joyce is leading change at Qantas to deal with the challenges in the airline industry's fast-moving and competitive environment.

Why would Qantas be successful? Because there are many effective strategies Qantas has conducted.

Firstly, they split the operations into separate business in order to make each of the business units more accountable. They have also been forced to look at how it can reduce its costs. Secondly, under Joyce's leadership, the company has a significantly lower cost base than its full service parent, customers are very satisfied with discount airline. Thirdly, an area where cost savings have been seen as necessary is in staffing. And the last point is to surge fuel prices. There are many competitors to Qantas, they all take effective actions at any time.

So Alan Joyce has had to deal with as he maps a road that will make Qantas to continue to operate as a successful and profitable airline around the world (Robbins, S. P, 2011). Conclusion In summarize, conceptual skills are needed by all managers at all levels, but these skills are more important in top management positions. In current business, top managers should have these skills to make wide decisions and establish the goals to lead companies to be successful. Conceptual skills represent collaborative processes at the organizational and strategic levels. The degree of leader success will depend largely on the leader's ability to maximize the full potential of these collaborative networks.

## Reference

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