

The ways in which managerial role has changed in the 21st century

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CENTURY Globalization and advances in technology has brought changes to the business environment and the world as we know it today. Consequently, the nature of work has changed and it has brought on new challenges for managers (French et al, 2008). There is therefore the need to examine the ways the role of managers has evolved as a result of these changes. The role of managers is primarily to guide organisations towards the accomplishment of its goals. Certo and Certo (2009) identified four major activities that managers use in achieving organisational goals.

These are planning, organising, influencing and controlling. The way managerial role has changed will be assessed based on these four activities. Planning refers to objectives and goal setting. Traditionally, planning has been concentrated at the top with employees being told what the next strategy is. The changing nature of work implies that managers and employees plan and execute decisions together (Bouchikhi and Kimberly, 2000 cited in Mullins, 2011). Employees' views are now being taken into consideration in taking operational decisions.

Managers have to plan in an uncertain world as such they have to be proactive and know how to manage risks. Organising involves creating structures and the division of labour. Managers would have to constantly restructure their organisations in line with changes in the business environment and their strategy. There is the need for proper delegation of authority. Advances in technology have brought about the trend towards 'virtuality' which removes some aspect of the borders and design of the

traditional organisation by carrying business operations with the use of information technology (Certo and Certo, 2009).

Managers have to be able to organise work and find efficient ways of communicating within this virtual environment. Influencing has to do with creating enthusiasm in people and inspiring employees to perform better. Changes in work environment mean that the organisational values need to be based on teamwork and trust because people are now seen as an important resource (Mullins, 2011). There is a greater emphasis on getting employees involved in the organisation and giving them the liberty to take initiative (Certo and Certo, 2009). It is essential that managers are able to attract and retain effective workforce overtime (French et al, 2008).

Due to globalisation, the workforce is more diverse than ever. As a result, managers have to firstly recognize the differences in culture and modify their actions to deal with differing cultural norms (Molinsky et al, 2012). Controlling involves measuring performance and taking corrective actions. Advances in information technology impacts management control systems. The workplace is more interconnected with a speedy diffusion of information to more people (Mullins, 2011). Consequently, it is then necessary to manage information systems. In controlling people, managers need to be able to exude the right level of power over their subordinates.

Bouchikhi and Kimberly (2000) claim that power is no longer concentrated at the top but is now shared. The 21st century marks the era called the information age which has seen themes such as globalisation, diversification and virtual organisations becoming at the heart of business operations. This has tremendous impact on the way a manager plans, organises, influences
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and controls his team. In order to be effective, a manger needs to be able to work in a virtual world where his team has as much input in the way plans are designed and decisions are made. The managers must also be open to the different cultures.