

# Describe functions of management

Business, Management



Management is the organization and coordination of the activities of a business in order to achieve defined objectives. Management is often included as a factor of production along with machines, materials, and money. According to the management guru Peter Drucker (1909-2005), the basic tasks of management include both marketing and innovation.

Practice of modern management originates from the 16th century study of low-efficiency and failures of certain enterprises, conducted by the English statesman Sir Thomas More (1478-1535). Management consists of the interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organizing, planning, controlling, and directing an organization's resources in order to achieve the objectives of that policy. According to Peter Drucker, management can be described as the organization and coordination of the activities of an enterprise in accordance with certain policies and in achievement of clearly defined objectives.

Management is often included as a factor of production along with machines, materials and money. Peter Drucker (1909-2005) "Management is a multi-purpose organ that manages business and manages managers and manages workers and work. Mary Parker Follet, simply states that "Management is the art of getting things done through people." Many scholars who have studied management have come up with different definitions of management and its functions and some like Luther Gullick have come up with a list of functions of management that include planning, organizing, directing, staffing, co-coordinating, reporting abbreviated (PODSCORB).

However, most scholars notably Koontz and O'Donnel agree that the most important functions of management can be trimmed to only five

namely planning, organizing staffing, directing and controlling. Planning involves mapping out exactly how to achieve a particular goal. It gives direction to the organization and enables managers to determine strategies to achieve organizational goals. Say, for example, that the organization's goal is to improve company sales. The manager first needs to decide which steps are necessary to accomplish that goal. These steps may include increasing advertising, inventory, and sales staff.

These necessary steps are developed into a plan. When the plan is in place, the manager can follow it to accomplish the goal of improving company sales. Planning can be short term or long term, and ensures proper utilization of human and non-human resources thus helps in minimizing confusion, risks, wastages and uncertainties. Planning is important in forecasting and catering for unforeseen adverse events by putting contingency measures in place. For example hospital managers may have an emergency plan in place to handle things like disease outbreaks or accidents.

Henri Fayol argues that to organize a business is to provide it with all the necessary resources for it to function fully. Organizing is the process of bringing together physical financial and human resources in order to achieve organizational goals. After a plan is in place, a manager needs to organize a team and materials according to the plan. Assigning work and granting authority are two important elements of organizing. The organization process involves identification of what is supposed to be done, classification of activities, assigning of duties, and delegation of responsibility and authority.

An example can be of a farm manager who is faced with a planting season with a group of workers and many fields and crops to plant. He has to

quantify the amount of work to be accomplished over a given period thus organizes his staff into small groups each with a foreman responsible for tillage, planting, irrigation etc. He should go on to come up with a time frame when he expects the tasks to be performed and ensure that all the resources required that include seed, fertilizers etc are in place for the task to be accomplished in time. Staffing is concerned with keeping adequate staff levels to keep the organization well manned all the time.

This involves having the right person for the right job and the main purpose is selecting the properly qualified person for the job. It might also involve staff development by organizing on job training or training and retraining of staff to meet the dynamic demands of the organization. After a manager discerns his area's needs, he may decide to beef up his staffing by recruiting, selecting, training, and developing employees. A manager in a large organization often works with the company's human resources department to accomplish this goal.

An organization might acquire new machinery and realize that they need new members of staff to operate the machine or an organization may soon realize that their enterprise is growing and need more staff to man its new branches. Directing deals mainly with setting in motion the action of people in an organization and is involved with supervising, motivating, leading, and communicating the goals of the organization to the workers. Directing involves supervising how work is done and ensuring staff is motivated enough to accomplish the organizational goals by offering incentives to ensure workers have a zeal for work.

Managers might discover that in order to accomplish a task in time there is need to work long hour and may find it fit to provide food on site and also introduce incentives for the workers prepared to work overtime. After the other elements are in place, a manager's job is not finished. He needs to continuously check results against goals and take any corrective actions necessary to make sure that his area's plans remain on track. Directing consists of a process or technique by which instruction can be issued and operations can be carried out and goals achieved as originally planned.

Controlling implies ensuring that everything is in conformity with set standards to achieve organizational goals. It involves measuring the accomplished against the set standards. According to Koontz and O'Donnell controlling is the measurement and correction of performance activities of subordinates in order to make sure that the enterprise objectives and plans are accomplished. The process is concerned with establishment of standard performance, measurement of actual performance, comparison of actual with the set standards and isolating deviations if any and finally corrective action.

The success of any organization big or small hinges on the quality of its managers and more often than not enterprises run by poorly equipped managers in terms of knowledge depth usually operate poorly and eventually collapse whilst those run by astute managers flourish and prosper.

## References

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