

MANAGERIAL LEVELS AND SKILLS

Level of Managers in an Organization:

Top Managers

Middle Managers

First-Line Managers

Non-managerial Employees

First-line managers (or **first-line supervisors**) are those managers having the least authority and are at the lowest level in the hierarchy of the organization. First-line managers are at the lowest level of management and manage the work of non-managerial individuals who are involved with the production or creation of the organization's products. They're often called supervisors but may also be called line managers, office managers, or even foremen. They are directly responsible for the work of operating (non-managerial) employees.

- a. Titles often include the term, "supervisor."
- b. Factors changing the jobs of first-line managers include emphasis upon worker participation and teamwork and the use of computers to regulate many activities formerly regulated by first-line managers.
- c. The jobs of first-line managers are likely to change toward a greater emphasis on dealing with internal human relations.

Middle-level managers are those managers beneath the top-levels of the hierarchy and directly supervise other managers below them. It includes all levels of management between the first-line level and the top level of the organization. These managers manage the work of first-line managers and may have titles such as department head, project leader, plant managers, or division manager.

- a. Typical titles include "manager," "director of," "chief," department head," and "division head."
- b. Middle managers are mainly responsible for implementing overall organizational plans so that organizational goals are achieved as expected.
- c. They plan, allocate resources to meet objectives and coordinate and link groups, departments, and divisions within a company.
- d. They monitor and manage the performance of the subunits and individual managers who report to them.
- e. Implement changes or strategies generated by top managers.
- f. The modern trend of adding layers of middle management is reversing as companies reduce the number of levels in the managerial hierarchy.
- g. Reducing the number of levels of managers' results in greater power and responsibility for those managers who remain.
- h. It is predicted that there will be increasingly less emphasis on hierarchical levels in organization.

Top managers are those managers at the very top levels of the hierarchy who have the most authority and who are ultimately responsible for the entire organization. They are those who are responsible for making organization-wide decisions and establishing the plans and goals that affect the entire organization. These individuals typically have titles such as executive vice president, president, managing director, chief operating officer, chief executive officer, or chairman of the board.

- a. Other titles include "chief executive officer (CEO)," "president," "executive vice president," "executive director," "senior vice president," and sometimes, "vice president."
- b. They oversee overall planning for the organization, work with middle managers in implementing and planning, and maintain overall control over the progress of the organization.
- c. In those public corporation that sell their stock to the public, top managers' report to the board of directors whose function is to represent the interests

of the stockholders.

- d. They are responsible for the overall direction of the organization and for creating the context for change.
- e. They develop in employees the attitudes of commitment to and ownership in the company's performance and create a positive organizational culture through language and action.
- f. The board of directors appoints the CEO (who sometimes also serves as the Chairman or Chairwoman of the Board). The CEO then appoints the other top managers subject to board approval.

Difference in Functions of Management within the Hierarchy:

A number of aspects of the management process differ within the hierarchy. The importance of each of the **functions of management** differs from one managerial level to another.

- a. **Planning** tends to be more important for top-level managers.
- b. **Organizing** tends to be more important for both top and middle-level managers.
- c. **Leading** is more important for first-line managers.
- d. **Controlling** is important among all levels of the hierarchy.

Management Skills, Knowledge and Performance

A. Managers need a **knowledge base**. This knowledge base provides a context for the manager's activities. It can include information about an industry and its technology, company policies and practices, company goals and plans, company culture, the personalities of key organization members, and important suppliers and customers.

B. Managers need three types of **key skills** to perform the duties and activities associated with being a manager.

1. **Technical skills** are skills that reflect both an understanding of and a proficiency in a specialized field. Technical skills include knowledge of and proficiency in a certain specialized field, such as engineering, computers, accounting, or manufacturing. These skills are more important at lower levels of management since these managers are dealing directly with employees doing the organization's work.

2. **Human skills** are associated with a manager's ability to work well with others both as a member of a group and as a leader who gets things done through others. Because managers deal directly with people, this skill is crucial! Managers with good human skills are able to get the best out of their people. They know how to communicate, motivate, lead, and inspire enthusiasm and trust. These skills are equally important at all levels of management.

3. **Conceptual skills** are skills related to the ability to visualize the organization as a whole, discern interrelationships among organizational parts, and understand how the organization fit into the wider context of the industry, community, and world. Conceptual skills are the skills managers must have to think and to conceptualize about abstract and complex situations. Using these skills, managers must be able to see the organization as a whole, understand the relationships among various submits, and visualize how the organization fits into its broader environment.

C The concept of **organizational performance** was analyzed by Peter Drucker.

- 1.** **Effectiveness** is the ability to choose appropriate goals and to achieve those goals.
- 2.** **Efficiency** is the ability to make the best use of available resources in the process of achieving goals. Efficiency is the ration of inputs used to achieve some level of outputs

Managing in the 21st century:

A. The world of business has changed dramatically in the past generation or so. Technology has shrunk distances; made communications possible in real-time all around the globe. **E** made possible computers with incredibly large memories and super fast speeds; made us more aware of different places, peoples and cultures; and provided businesses with the opportunity to compete in nearly any market in the world.

B. **Four trends** are likely to impact managerial work in the future.

1. Successful managers in the twenty-first century will have to be able to guide their companies through shifts in economic conditions, modifications in customer preferences, rapidly changing technology, and other **changes**. Increasingly, successful companies will rely on **innovation** to successfully meet these changes
2. The work force is becoming increasingly **diverse**. Managers will need to be able to effectively utilize a much broader selection of personnel in the immediate future. **Managing diversity** is the planning and implementing of organizational systems and practices that maximize the potential of employees to contribute to organizational goals and develop their capabilities unhindered by group identities such as race, gender, age, or ethnic group. In the coming millennium, managers themselves will reflect the emerging diversity and, at the same time, will need to be able to effectively utilize and increasingly diverse work force.
3. Businesses increasingly face global competition; therefore, managers need to have greater knowledge of international business and to develop a **global perspective**. Businesses are also more likely to be operating in more than one country.
4. Quality management programs have become increasingly important and **total quality management** program aimed at **continuous improvement** have been implemented in many business. Global competition has created an emphasis for better quality.