

## Managing People – Overview of the Key Skills – Handout

### Overview

The purpose of this handout is to outline the key skills that a manager is likely to require to be an effective people manager. It looks at the broad role of the manager and the significance of people management to the success of the organisation. It will be useful for individuals who are new to management or who are looking for a brief refresher. It requires reading and reflection only. Allow approx. 15 minutes for completion.

### Summary

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Purpose             | This tool will be useful for individuals who are new to management or who are looking for a brief refresher on people management.  |
| Output / Benefit    | This tool will outline the key skills that the manager is likely to require in order to be an effective people manager and puts these in context within the broader management role. |
| Keywords            | People Skills, Managing People, Managers Role, Resource Management, Self Management, Handout   |
| Type of Tool        | Handout  |
| Time for Completion | 15 minutes approx  |

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## **Introduction**

In broad terms, management is about using resources and working with people as effectively as possible to provide products and/or services to fulfil the organisation's goals.

This handout looks at the role and purpose of the manager and identifies and focuses on the importance of people management skills.

## **The Role of the Manager**

### **Purpose**

The overall purpose of a manager's role is to get results that help achieve the organisational goals and deliver it's business plans for shareholders, customers, and staff.

Managers' roles will vary in specific detail according to the nature of the organisation. However, all managers are likely to have three key aspects to their role and their goals are likely to revolve around these:

- Managing Resources
- Managing and Leading People
- Managing Themselves

### **Varying needs**

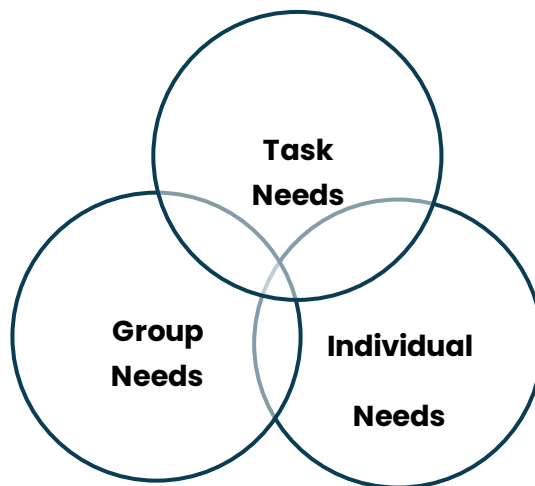
The manager's role is very often a juggling act; the aim of which is to meet varying needs to get things done. Managers have to find the right balance and focus on three aspects:

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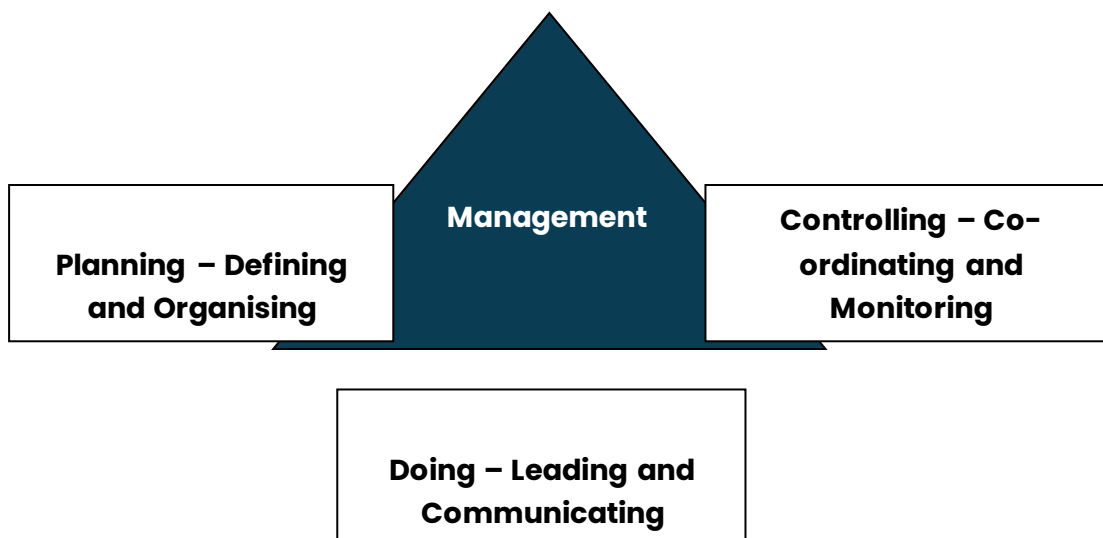


### Elements of the Role

To get results a manager will need to focus on four core areas

- Define the results required
- Plan how to achieve them
- Create the right atmosphere
- Monitor and control progress

The manager's role will therefore incorporate planning, controlling and doing.



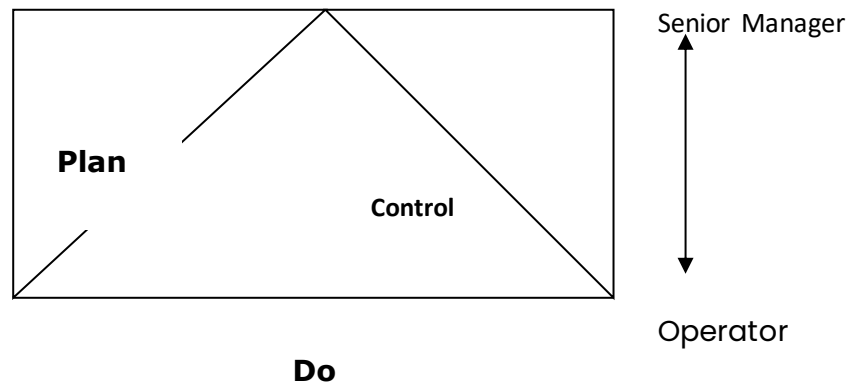
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The model below shows how the amount of each varies according to the level of seniority in an organisation; different levels of management role will require more or less of each aspect.



Getting results will include various tasks and activities such as corporate planning, budgeting, project planning and work allocation, recruitment and staff planning, target setting, appraisal, staff training and development as well as looking after resources such as buildings and equipment.

## Process and Skills

All the aspects of a manager's role combine the need for the effective use of processes along with the effective and appropriate use of skills and knowledge. This is a fine balance, and many managers may have strengths in one but not in the other. An effective manager will recognise his or her strengths and limitations and work hard to develop in both areas.

It is this effective combination of being able to develop and utilise relevant processes or systems, (e.g. performance review, recruitment, and selection procedures, disciplinary or grievance processes) to assist in the completion of tasks as well as being able to deploy a range of skills that will enable the manager to truly achieve success.

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## Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes Required

The table below outlines in broad terms the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for success in each of the key elements of the manager's role:

|                  | <b>Resource Management</b>  | <b>People Management</b>  | <b>Self Management</b>   |
|------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organisational systems and policies</li> <li>○ External services/suppliers</li> <li>○ Resourcing and operational needs</li> <li>○ Understanding of tasks and procedures</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understanding of motivation and peoples' psyche in general</li> <li>○ Information about the individuals in the team</li> <li>○ Laws, Procedures and policies relating to people</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awareness of own strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>○ Understanding of own goals and self imposed constraints</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Skills</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Forecasting and planning</li> <li>○ Judgement and evaluation</li> <li>○ Organisational ability</li> <li>○ Problem solving</li> <li>○ Analysing and assessing priorities</li> <li>○ Control and monitoring skills</li> <li>○</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communication skills</li> <li>○ Rapport building and interpersonal skills</li> <li>○ Motivation</li> <li>○ Training and development</li> <li>○ Staff selection</li> <li>○ Team building</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ability to assess priorities</li> <li>○ Assertiveness – able to say 'no'</li> <li>○ Ability to plan own work and time</li> <li>○ Ability to take decisions and stick with them</li> <li>○ Ability to deal with more than one issue at one time</li> </ul> |
| <b>Attitudes</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commitment to goals</li> <li>○ Balanced between task and people</li> <li>○ Questioning/constructive challenging</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commitment to staff and organization</li> <li>○ Flexibility/adaptability</li> <li>○ Approachability</li> <li>○ Credibility/ authority</li> <li>○ Empathy</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self discipline</li> <li>○ Wanting to get things done</li> <li>○ Drive/enthusiasm</li> <li>○ Control over own emotions/</li> <li>○ diplomacy</li> </ul>   |

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## **Importance of People Management Skills**

All the elements are important to the success of the manager and he or she should identify the areas in which he or she has natural aptitudes and those in which he or she may need to develop to be able to manage effectively across all aspects.

One key purpose of management is to work through people to get results; therefore, the manager's ability to manage people is vitally important. If he or she is unable to connect or apply appropriate skills at the right time with the people in his or her team, then he or she is likely to have problems.

## **The Crucial People Skills – in overview**

The following section looks at some of the key people skills; it is intended to give a flavour of the area and many of the skills are covered in more detail in other coaching tools.

### **Leading and Directing**

This is concerned with a combination of skills and attributes. Success is achieved when a manager is able to provide a vision and help people to see how that vision can become a reality. The skillful manager will use a range of skills to help people understand and clarify the vision and the part they can play in accomplishing it. Leadership is about both strategy and tactics.

### **Organising and Planning**

This is concerned with the manager's ability to establish the structure of the team or department, and to design and implement systems that help the team achieve their goals and complete tasks. It is also about setting clear targets and measures to enable both manager and individual to see how they are doing.

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## Communication

This falls into two categories:

1. The skills of the manager
2. The framework he or she establishes for communication

Communication skills are critical to the success of manager and the performance of individuals. They enable the sharing of information, attitudes and feelings to create an atmosphere in which individuals want to work, can be focused, committed and have job satisfaction.

### **The key skills required in this group of important abilities are:**

- Listening and interpreting what has been said
- Briefing and presenting information clearly, concisely and in a way that is interesting
- Questioning skills – ability to use a wide range of techniques to clarify meaning and understanding, explore issues and resolve problems
- Assertiveness – ability to recognize different styles of behaviour in self and others and respond in an ‘adult’ and objective way that will help prevent misunderstanding and unhelpful emotions.
- Non-verbal communication – the ability to understand the signals that each person gives out when communicating and that prevail over verbal communication. Non-verbal communication will often provide the manager with important clues about how an individual is feeling as opposed to what their words are indicating.

A communication framework is about the channels and structure that a manager puts in place to facilitate communication, sharing of information generation of ideas and review of activities. Good communication skills alone will not ensure effective communications; a manager must develop and implement an appropriate infrastructure and make sure it is used effectively.

The cause of many problems within organisations can be traced back to basic communication and lack of understanding on the part of individuals.

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### **Building Team Effectiveness**

One of the key aspects of people management is the manager's ability to establish and develop a team. The manager will be responsible for establishing a common goal and creating an environment in which the team can recognize its value and identity and work together to achieve its tasks and goals.

Teamwork and team spirit does not just happen - it requires significant leadership, direction and the application of a range of controlling and developmental skills to build an effective team.

### **Developing Personal Style and Credibility**

The manager who neglects his or her own development and personal profile is likely to encounter issues when managing a team of people. He or she needs to be highly aware of the impact of his or her own approach, style and preferences on the reactions of the team and individuals.

### **Motivation and Delegation**

These two aspects go hand in hand and a manager needs to have an understanding of the theories of motivation and the process and skills of delegating if he or she is to be effective as a people manager. The challenge for managers is that no two people are the same in terms of what they want from their work or in terms of their ability and willingness to take on work.

Understanding these differences can be the key to unlocking barriers to productivity and performance.

### **Developing Others**

The manager has a crucial role in inducting, training and developing staff. He or she ought to be aiming to get the most out people and through ensuring that they are initially equipped with the knowledge and skills to be able to do the job will achieve the first step. Once a person is competent then the role of the manager is to ensure that the individual can develop and progress through ongoing training, coaching and opportunities for growth.

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An effective manager will understand the many different forms of development ranging from training through to secondments or attachments and will apply a variety of these to meet the varying needs of individuals and teams.

## Summary

- The purpose of management is largely to get results by using resources effectively and working through people.
- The manager has to balance the needs of the task, group and individual and his or her role will involve planning, controlling and doing.
- There are many facets to the manager's role and most require a combination of appropriate application of process and skill.

Three key elements of the manager's role are:

- Managing Resources
- Managing People
- Managing Self

People skills are of particular importance as a key part of the manager's role is to get the most out of the people in his or her team in order to maximize results and achieve the organisation's goals.

Some of the key people management skills are:

- Leading and directing
- Organising and Planning
- Communication skills
- Building effective teams
- Developing personal profile
- Developing others

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