

Enhancing Managerial Performance and Career

Introduction

Continuous improvement in performance and coping up with competition for career enhancement, executive stress, pressure from subordinates, peers and superiors and employer are challenges for managers at all levels and all the time. An understanding of manager's role in professional ethics and responsibility, humility, commitment to learn time management, team work, and focus on organizational achievement are important factors which will contribute to better performance and career enhancement.

Management skills can be acquired by learning and training. Schools of management offer both UG (BBM) and PG (PG Diploma/MBA) courses in management. Many organizations provide formal training in management through Executive training & Management-training programmes for graduate recruits as part of their induction programme. These provide some foundations in developing one's

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management skills and prepare one to learn more as one pursues the management career in an organization. Graduates starting a management career have excellent opportunities for growth, if they continue to learn and enhance their managerial performance. Managers must remember that learning is a continuous process. Managers learn from experience as they progress in their career by managing people, environment and performing their tasks and solving problems. One also learns from experience of others such as colleagues, subordinates and seniors. Continuous learning on the job and by reading and exposures to new concepts and technologies in one's own field and related fields together with development of right attitudes for interpersonal relations, team work and leadership will help managers become excellent managers, and climb the ladder of success to top executive positions.

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Management Career

Management/Executive trainees start their career in an organization in the first level of management with designations such as supervisors/officers/executives etc. Their work will have considerable technical content based on the domain of activity and their own specialization for eg: Supervising of manufacturing, production engineering, inspection, purchase and stores, sales and marketing, accounts, finance, personal and IR etc. The Supervisor-managers will be in charge of small groups of persons forming subdivisions /cells of a department. At this stage the manager-supervisor uses one's knowledge and skills acquired in the domain specialization, during the academic career and training period and continues to learn on the job to be an effective performer. Managers should be good observers and must learn from experienced and gifted sub-ordinates, colleagues and supervisors. They must

familiarize with the Rules and Procedures, Standing orders, Code of conduct, etc. of the organizations in which they work and identify and act in accordance with the Vision and Values of the organization. While they focus on their tasks and coordinate, supervise their team's efforts to complete the tasks assigned, they must master the job & technology and learn the emerging fields in the area of their assignments and related fields, innovate and improve.

As they climb the ladder in the *Managerial Hierarchy* (see Fig.1) to senior executives such as Heads of Department and senior positions in General Management they will have to become multidisciplinary with knowledge in more and more domains and also enhance their conceptual skills, as well as systems and HR skills. Managers with technical background and placed in technical departments such as design; production, inspection etc. must develop the knowledge

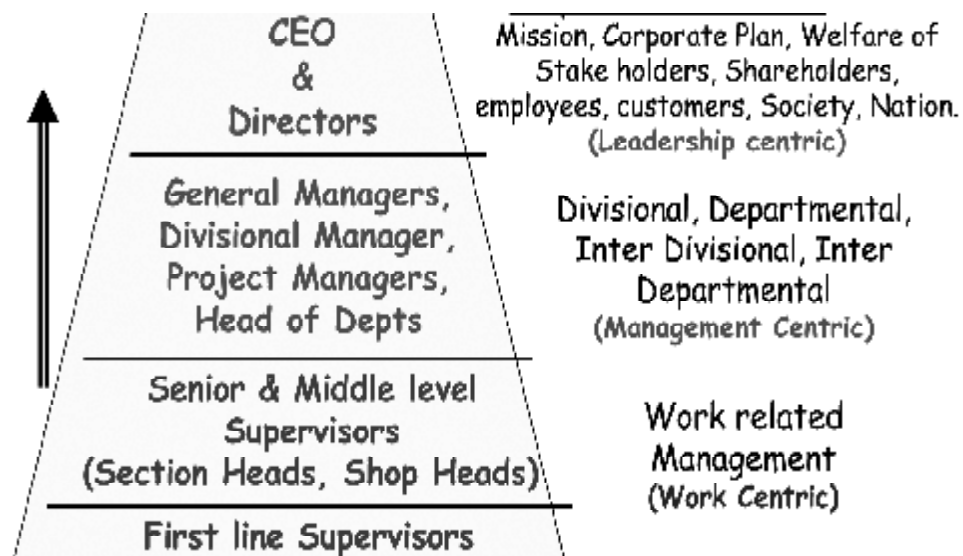


Fig.1 - Management Hierarchy

and abilities in other fields such as marketing, personnel and finance as well as project management. Their jobs in these levels will still have a large technical content in their respective fields. Like wise managers in other fields must acquire knowledge on products, manufacturing, operations, new concepts and tools in quality and production etc. Intradepartmental and multidepartmental awareness and capability should be built up. As one reaches the top management hierarchy

corporate plan for growth and corporate governance for maximizing the benefits to the shareholders, employees and achieving customer delight and service to society, nation and concern for environment and sustainability. At the supervisory level the activities are more focused on completing the task, doing the assigned jobs and can be termed as *work centric*. At the senior management levels HOD's, Divisional Managers, General Managers etc the activities are focused not only



Fig.2 - Domain Skills & Management at various levels of Management

namely CEO and the Directors on the Board, the Management role changes to one of leading the Organizations at Corporate level. While quality of products and service, cost and timely delivery etc and optimum utilization of resources to maximize the output, maintaining excellent interpersonal relationship etc are vital issues for managers at all levels, the corporate management decides what is to be done and what are the right things to be done. It is focused on corporate vision, mission and

on meeting the departmental/divisional tasks in physical/financial and other term, but also on systems, concepts, projects, HRD, Industrial relations etc and is *management centric*. At corporate level management is concerned with leading the organization. Thus the Management moves up from *Work centric* to *Management centric* to *Leadership centric*. Fig.2 illustrates the changing needs of domain and management skills at the various levels.

The Role Of Management

A clear understanding of the role of management is essential for managerial performance. Many have a wrong notion regarding the role of Manager/management as they see it as a position of power and prestige with a number of subordinates and other resources at their command. My advice to all is that the management should be accepted not as a position of power and prestige but as a position of responsibility to the capital providers, customers, employees, society,

environment and nation. Managers must realize that the Management role is that of a humble servant in the service of these above mentioned stakeholders to ensure effective utilization of resources and maximize the benefit to the share holders, enhancing service to the customers, and welfare of the employees, adding value to the society and contributing to the nation and at the same time reverence to the ecosystem and preservation of environment.

Irrespective of the position one occupies in the managerial hierarchy the role in a sense is the same, whether it is at the supervisory level or at the corporate level. For example, take the case of the first line supervisor in charge of a small section of purchase department. In that small domain of activity the supervisor-manager must take decisions and act in the interest of giving the best service to the customer (quality, price, delivery) and at the same time enhance the contribution to the share holder by reducing costs, and contributing to surplus generation. One must sincerely look after the welfare of one's team members both at work place and outside, recognize and reward their good work. Vendors must be considered as partners in business helping the organizations serve the customers well. Similarly if we take another example, say the case of a shop floor supervisor, he/she must ensure high productivity, quality and reduce wastage and thus contribute to customers and shareholders and at the same time look after the welfare of the employees. He/she must ensure adherence to the safety norms and pollution control measures, not only within the shop but also outside.

Know Your Task

First and essential step in enhancing managerial performance is knowing one's task and performing it well. There is a duality of manager's task. In other words, for every task there are two tasks. First is to manage the task on hand and complete it satisfactorily with optimum utilization of resources and maximizing the output. Secondly it is to innovate and improve. What we understand and consider as optimum or maximum is not necessarily optimum or maximum. There is always room for innovation and improvement. As a manager performs the task on hand along with team members there is also learning which will facilitate with some efforts in creative thinking, innovation and improvement. It is said that "an organization whose maturity consists simply of doing things in the established routine is headed for the graveyard; it can grow only through continuous innovation and improvement." This is true of individual managers also.

Job Knowledge are of three types:

- i. Knowledge in the assigned work, which relates to the depth of knowledge in the field.
- ii. Knowledge in related work. This is a yardstick to measure the breadth of one's knowledge in the related fields.
- iii. Knowledge in current developments. This refers to the latest development in the field and related fields. This is a function of curiosity in the manager and interest in learning and determines one's potential for growth.

- iv. Excellent managers are not 'Jack of all tricks master of none' type but master of one or more and Jacks of many.

Self-management

Self-management is the key in enhancing managerial performance efficiently. Self-management is all about organizing oneself and one's work place. Firstly, one should focus on one's own physical and mental health and external appearance and follow appropriate dress code, in conformity with the guidelines of the organization. If one works in an office meticulous attention should be given to the upkeep of office and organization of files and deskwork. Good house keeping with systematic filing of correspondence and follow through will be helpful in enhancing your performance. Do not rely on memory, carry a diary and enter all tasks in the 'to do lists' when you are given the tasks by your HOD or other officers and colleagues. One should learn to prioritize work, organize work and keep deadlines.

Time management is an integral part of self-management. Procrastination is a sin to be totally avoided. One should never postpone today's work to tomorrow. If possible one should do tomorrow's work today. Most managers talk of not having enough time. But time is the only resource available to all in equal quantity, 24 hours a day; nobody has more and nobody has less. Manager's performance depends on how one organizes one's time and work related and other activities. A successful person will organize one's work in such a way that adequate time is left for one's family and social life, rest and

recreation etc. An awareness of "time wasters" at work place and taking care of these is important. Major time wasters at work place are telephone interruptions, drop in casual visitors, poor delegation, lengthy meetings, crisis management; procrastination, indecision, and inability to say no effectively. Negative feelings such as anger, hatred, envy, jealousy, vindictiveness, laziness, and fear can also waste a lot of time and energy.

ABC analysis of task is a useful tool for time management. Analyze the tasks and rank these as:

- (A) essential to be done first and by self
- (B) Important to be done partly by self and partly by delegation to others.
- (C) Routine to be delegated.

Perfectionism can waste a lot of time, as one would continue to procrastinate waiting for perfection. A manager should learn to decide and act in time with the best use of all available information and resources, instead of waiting for perfection. 'Next to Best is better than the Best' as it allows a speedier decision and saves time and cost. Meetings should be minimum and need based and call only essential persons. Discussions should be focused on specific issues and brief to arrive at decisions quickly. Effective managers prepare task register and 'things to do list' with prioritization. Portable handheld small tape recorders are used during journey by many time conscious managers. Note pads and pens are their permanent companions at all times.

Understanding and identifying with the vision, mission and core values of the organization

and following one's own moral and ethical values, listening to one's 'inner voice' and conscious effort to develop leadership qualities are all part of self management.

Good self management and time management will enhance managerial performance and productivity and avoid building up stress and depression and provide more time for building up relations, team work, innovation, strategic planning and better quality of life.

Managerial Effectiveness

Managerial Effectiveness at each level of management is decided by:

- a. whether the manager and his/her team has completed the assigned task, i.e. delivered the products /services, in time
- b. whether the task has been performed with minimum expenditure and resources and thus contributed to surplus generation
- c. whether the deliverable (products and services) have been accepted by the customers with satisfaction.

Managers do not work alone and are dependent on the team for effectiveness. Managerial effectiveness depends upon how well the managers organize the team. Managers' performance is in fact the team's performance. One must plan and organize the task as monthly, weekly, and daily plans and assign to one's subordinates. Communication must be clear and progress of task should be monitored based on the plan. Delegation of work to subordinates does not complete the manager's responsibility. Delegation and guidance to complete the tasks and developing skilled and knowledgeable subordinates are

part of manager's responsibility and is the means for achieving managerial effectiveness. There are 'non delegator managers' whose subordinates will have no work and will grow idle and troublesome later. The non-delegator will eventually get crushed under the pressure of work. Good delegation guidance, positive communication and special tasks to provide opportunities to discover talents and allow growth and co-operative teamwork will enhance managerial performance.

Means of Motivation

A Manager has to constantly motivate his team members to perform. There are several means of motivation. These in the ascending order of sustainability are:

- a. *Fear* (of punishment including loss of job)
- b. *Monitory incentive*: salary and perks, bonus, incentive, stock option, profit sharing etc.
- c. *Rewards and Recognition* (promotions, merit, certificates, additional responsibility and possessional powers etc.)
- d. *Expertise*: (manager respected for his/her knowledge, wisdom and expertise)
- e. *Emotional* (emotional attachment to the organization and its leadership, pride in one's job and the organization, team spirit, sense of belonging, sense of achievement.)

Manager must choose wisely and use appropriately from among these. Particular attention, should be given by managers to develop their knowledge and expertise to become respected leaders and to use the most

powerful means of motivation, namely 'emotional power' by creating team spirit and a sense of belonging, pride in one's job, and organization. The organisation's vision, mission and values must be shared by all to achieve this.

Leadership and Management

Good Managers are Good Leaders: Managers set the targets and direct the right ways of achieving the targets. The means are as important as the ends. Excellent managers are leaders and not bosses.

"The Boss drives his men; The Leader inspires them. The Boss depends on authority; The Leader depends on goodwill. The Boss evokes fear; The Leader radiates love. The Boss says 'I'; The Leader says 'We'. The Boss shows who is wrong; The Leader shows what is wrong. The Boss knows how it is done; The Leader knows how to do it. The Boss demands respect; The Leader commands respect."

Managers must lead and motivate others to achieve targets without incurring resentment. They should have faith in positive ideas and growth for common good. They must be good listeners; they must try and understand others, before attempting to be understood. They must build capability to organize people into teams to achieve the goal, but not for the performance of building an empire for oneself. They must be modest and cultivate humility as strength of character. They should be dedicated to principles of value and willing to forgo personal credit. They must be willing teachers, delegator guides and mentors. They must be creative minded and willing to try the unusual. They must be proactive as opposed to being

reactive, responding to the conditions/demands.

Courage, Integrity, Compassion, Commitments and Wisdom are other leadership virtues for an excellent manager. Courage is that quality which enables one to face difficult situation with firmness and without fear, doing what one believes is right based on the deep-rooted ethical values. Courage shines with integrity knowing what is right and doing the same. Managers must take decisions and act in accordance with the vision, mission and values adhering to a strict moral/ethical code of conduct with transparency, fair practice in all dealings with honesty and with the ultimate objective of service to society, customers, employees and shareholders. Excellent managers are compassionate to their sub-ordinates and colleagues. Failures are accepted without rebuke, each failure being treated as an addition to one's experience and wisdom to be analyzed learnt and used for success. The emphasis will be on what went wrong, how it went wrong and how to correct rather than who did it, and how to punish? Co-operative teamwork requires tolerance and compassion.

The Quality of Management depends not only on the management systems and procedures, skills and knowledge but also on the quality of mind. Skills, knowledge, management systems and procedures are based on technology and these are essential for achieving managerial excellence. Quality of mind is a product of ethics and values. Excellence in Quality of management results by synergy between the management concepts, skills and procedures etc. on the one hand and quality of mind on the other hand.