

BASIC MANAGEMENT SKILLS

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Introduction

Management is a topic that is as vast as the sky. When it comes to the skills that are required to become a good manager, the list may be endless.

In everyday life, we observe many people considering management as - whatever that needs to be done in order to keep a company afloat - but in reality, it is far more complicated than the common belief.

So let us get down to the most basic skills that need to be acquired, if one is to become a successful manager.

The ABC's of Management

You will understand that management involves managing people and thereby, managing the output garnered in favor of the company. According to Dr. Ken Blanchard, in his famous book "Putting the One minute Manager to Work", the ABC's of management world are as below:

- **Activators** - The type of strategy followed by a manager before his workforce sets on with performance.
- **Behaviors** - How the workforce performs or behaves within the activity or situation as a result of activators or consequences.
- **Consequences** - How the manager handles the workforce after the performance.

Research shows that although we may be inclined to think that an activator's role brings about the most efficient behavior in a workforce, in effect; it is how managers handle the workforce after a particular behavior that influences future behavior or performance up to a great extent.

To quantify, activators' base behavior contribution is calculated to make up for 15 to 25 percent of behavior, while 75-85 percent of the behavior is known to be influenced by consequences.

Therefore, it is crucial that we understand and develop the basic management skills that will help bring out expected outcomes from a workforce.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

This is where most managers either get stamped in to good or bad books. However, the type of decisions you make should not ideally make you a good or bad manager; rather how you make such decisions is what need to be the deciding factor.

You will need to know the basic ethics of problem solving and this should be thoroughly practiced in every occasion, even if the problem concerns you personally.

Unless otherwise, a manager becomes impartial and entirely professional, he/she may find it difficult to build a working relationship with co-workers in an organization.

Planning and Time Management

The last thing you would want your co-workers to think is that you get by your working hours, cuddled up in an office chair, enjoying light music while doing nothing! Planning and Time management is essential for any manager; however, it is even more important for them to realize why these two aspects are important.

Although you may be entitled to certain privileges as a manager, that does not necessarily mean you could slay time as you please.

Assuming responsibility to manage the time is important so that you could become the first to roll the die which will soon become a chain reaction within the organization.

Having said that, when you conduct yourself with efficiency, you will also end up portraying yourself as a role model for co-workers which may add a lot of value as you move along with management duties in the company.

Planning ahead of time for events and activities that you foresee in your radar and taking the necessary initiatives as well as precautions as you move along are undoubtedly, some of the main expectations from managers.

If you could adapt a methodical style at your workplace and adapt effective techniques to carry out your duties with the least hindrance, you will soon build the sacred skills of planning and time management.

Delegation

Having planned everything that lies ahead and having come up with a plan for time management, you may feel that you have got more than you could chew on your plate. This is where delegation should come into play.

Becoming a good manager does not mean carrying out every task by him/herself. Rather, it is about being able to delegate work effectively in order to complete the task on time.

Many managers mishandle delegation either because they do not have enough confidence in their co-workers and subordinates or because they do not master the techniques of delegation.

Therefore, the key for delegation would be to identify the individuals that are capable of carrying out the task, delegating the work with accurate instructions and providing enough moral support. Once the task is complete, you will get an opportunity to evaluate their performance and provide constructive feedback.

Communication Skills

Nothing could be ever accomplished in the world of a manager without him or her being able to accurately, precisely and positively communicate their instructions, suggestions or feedback to others.

Therefore, you should be extremely careful in picking out your words. A 'Can-Do' attitude is something that can be easily portrayed through your words.

When your communication bears a positive note, it will run across your audience almost contagiously.

Managing Yourself & Leading Others

No matter how much charisma you may have in your personality or how good your positive communication skills may be, a manager never fails to be the one to communicate all things whether good or bad.

In your managerial position, you are exposed to both the executive layer and the working layer of an organization which makes you the ham in the sandwich.

Therefore, you may find yourself squashing and thriving in between when it comes to many decisions.

The number one rule in managing yourself is to realize that you are a professional, who is being paid for the designation that you bear in the company. If you remember this fact, you will always remember never to take any issue personally.

Always draw a line between your managerial persona and your actual persona. It is good to bond with co-workers at a personal level while maintaining a distance in your profession. Therefore, you will also be required to draw a line somewhere.

And most importantly, you will become the sponge that absorbs heat from the higher strata of the company and delivers the minimum heat and pressure to the lower strata. Therefore, you will need to practice a fair share of diplomacy in your role.

Conclusion

Managing people and processes is a style in itself that requires dedication and experience-blended practice. The skills needed are as vast and deep as the ocean.

The basic management skills presented herein is only a doorway for you to get started on the management path that lies ahead.