



Managerial Skills

What are managerial skills?

Simply, managerial skills are the **knowledge and ability** of the individuals in a managerial position to fulfill some specific **management activities or tasks**. This knowledge and ability can be learned and practiced. However, they also can be acquired through practical implementation of required activities and tasks. Therefore, you can develop each skill through **learning and practical experience as a manager**.

Business owners are entrepreneurs until they **become managers**. When they become managers, they will feel frustrated because they will need to deal with new problems like **managerial problems**. And management is not a simple task. It needs knowledge and experience.

Because of that, there is the existence of hierarchy, organizational structure and possibilities for each organizational member with adequate knowledge, experience and skills to **move from the bottom to the middle and top level of the managerial pyramid**.

When we talk about managerial skills, we talk about the skills of a manager to maintain high efficiency in the way his or her employees complete their everyday working tasks. Because of that, managers will need skills that will help them to **manage people** and **technology** to ensure an effective and efficient realization of their working duties.

Types of managerial skills

Robert Katz identified three types of skills that are essential for a **successful management process**:

- Technical skills
- Conceptual skills
- Human or interpersonal management skills

A particular manager may need a number of specific skills. Key managerial skills are commonly described as technical skills, interpersonal skills and conceptual skills. Diagnostic skills and analytic skills are also prerequisites to managerial success.



Technical skills

Technical skills are the skills necessary to accomplish specialized activities. Project engineers, physicians, and accountants all have the technical skills necessary for their respective professions. Most managers, especially at the middle and lower levels, need technical skills for effective tasks performance. Managers acquire various skills through some combination of education and experience. The project engineer, Physician, and accountant must all complete recognized programs of study at colleges and universities.

Similarly, the top marketing executive of any large firm probably started as a sales representative or sales manager, whereas the production vice president was probably a plant manager at one time. Technical skills are especially important for first line managers. These managers spend much of their time training subordinates and answering questions about work-related problems. They must know how to perform the tasks assigned to those they supervise if they are to be effective managers who enjoy the rest of their subordinates.

Technical skills are not related only for machines, production tools or other equipment, but also they are skills that will be required to increase sales, design different types of products and services, market the products and services, etc.

Technical skills are most **important for first-level managers**. When it comes to the top managers, these skills are not something with a high significance level. As we go through a hierarchy from the bottom to higher levels, the technical skills lose their importance.

Conceptual skills

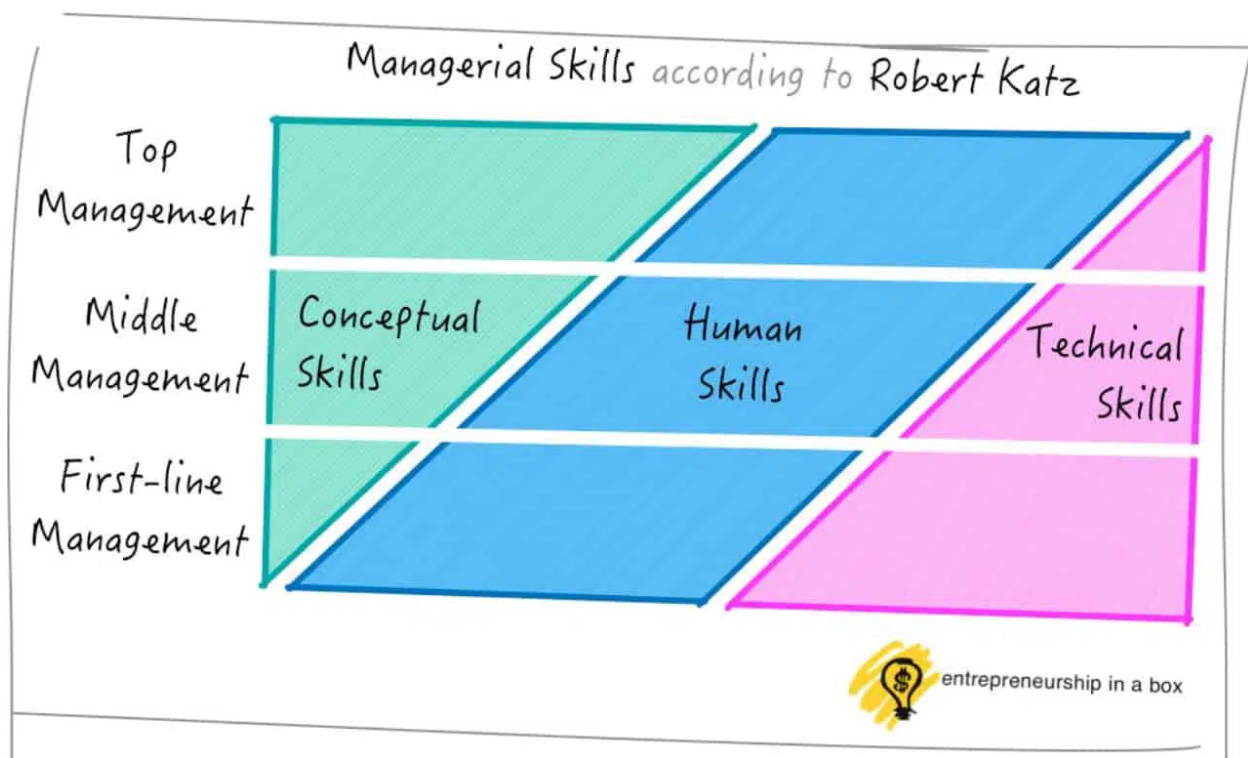
Conceptual skills present **knowledge or ability of a manager for more abstract thinking**. That means he can easily see the whole through analysis and diagnosis of different states. In such a way they can predict the future of the business or department as a whole.

Conceptual skills are **vital for top managers**, less critical for mid-level managers and not required for first-level managers. As we go from the bottom of the managerial hierarchy to the top, the importance of these skills will rise.

Human or interpersonal managerial skills

Human or interpersonal management skills present a manager's **knowledge and ability to work with people**. One of the most critical management tasks is to work with people. Without people, there will not be a need for the existence of management and managers.

These skills enable managers to become leaders and motivate employees for better accomplishments. Additionally, they help them to make more effective use of human potential in the company. Simply, they are **essential skills for all hierarchical levels** in the company.



Management and managers defined

"Knowing exactly what you want men to do, and then seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way."

Management is actually a very complex process- much more complex than this definition would lead us to believe.



“Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling an organization’s human, financial, physical, and information resources to achieve organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner.”

Management involves taking the various resources an organization has at its disposal and combining them in such a way that the organization’s goals are attained.

A manager is someone whose primary activities are a part of the management process. In particular, a manager is someone who plans, organizes, leads, and controls human, financial, physical, and information resources.

Interpersonal Skills

Managers spend considerable time interacting with people both inside and outside the organization. Recall Mintzberg’s description of how top managers spend their time: 59 percent in meetings, 6 percent on the phone, and 3 percent on tours. All these activities involve other people. For obvious reasons, the manager needs interpersonal skills: the ability to communicate with, understand, and motivate both individuals and groups. A manager who has good interpersonal skills is likely to be more successful than a manager with poor interpersonal skills.

Conceptual Skills

Conceptual skills depend on the manager’s ability to think the abstract. Managers need the mental capacity to understand various cause and effect relationships in the organization, to grasp all the parts of the organization fit together, and to view the organization in a holistic manner.

Consider, for example, a pure production perspective versus a pure marketing perspective within an organization. A production manager might argue for a limited product line to minimize production costs and for a limited inventory to minimize warehouse costs. The focus is on minimizing costs. A marketing manager in the same organization might argue for an expanded product line to appeal to more customers and for a large inventory to guarantee prompt delivery. The objective here is sales maximization.

A manager with conceptual skills, however, would see the problems that would arise from both extremes. Decreased product lines would cut costs but would also cut sales; expanded lines would increase both. Taking a larger view, production and marketing should be



seen as complementary rather than antagonistic processes. Conceptual skills enable the manager to understand that the objective should not be simply to minimize costs or to maximize sales; a better objective would be to maximize profit as a result of optimizing costs and sales.

Diagnostic Skills

Successful managers also possess diagnostic skills. A physician diagnoses a patient's illness by analyzing a number of symptoms and determining their probable cause. Similarly, a manager can diagnose a problem in the organization by studying its symptoms. For example, a particular unit may be suffering from high turnover. The manager who can diagnose the situation may discover that the unit's supervisor has poor interpersonal skills. The problem might then be solved by training or transferring the supervisor to a post that demands less interaction.

Diagnostic skills are favorable situations. The company may find that its sales are increasing at a much higher rate than anticipated. Possible causes might include low price, greater demand than predicted, high prices charged by a competitor, and other factors. Diagnostic skills would enable the manager to determine what was causing the sales explosion and how best to take advantage of it.

Analytical Skills

In a sense, analytical skills are similar to decision making skills and they complement diagnostic skills. By analytical skills we mean the manager's ability to identify the key variables in the situation, see how they are interrelated, and decide which ones should receive the most attention.

Analytical skills are similar to decision-making skills, but analysis may not involve an actual decision. When selecting a site new plant, for example, a manager may analyze the advantages and disadvantages of several sites and make a recommendation to a site-selection committee. The committee then makes the decision, but the manager clearly enlisted analytical skills to arrive at the recommendation.



Sources of Management Skills

1. Education as sources of management skills

The primary advantage of education as a source of management skill is that a student can follow a well-developed program of study, becoming familiar with current research and thinking on management. And many college students can devote full-time energy and attention to learning. On the negative side, management education may be so general, in order to meet the needs of a wide variety of students, that specific know-how is hard to obtain. Further, many aspects of the manager job can be discussed in a book but cannot really be appreciated and understood until they are experienced.

2. Experience as a source of management skills

Management skills must also be learned through experience. Most managers advanced to their present position from their jobs. By experiencing the day to day pressures a manager is subject to and by meeting a variety of managerial challenges, the individual develops insights that cannot be learned from a book. Most effective managers learn their skills through a combination of education and experience.

Exercise / Assignment

Which kinds of managerial skills do you think you are strongest in now? Which ones are you weakest in?

Sources

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