

# CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MANAGERS

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What makes an effective manager? Unfortunately, there is no one definitive answer to the question. The answer seems to be evolving throughout history, and varies according to organizational context, level of manager, and management theory in use. Yet it is vitally important to understand the characteristics of effective managers, as the success of organizations depends on finding them. Before any assessment, selection, or development can occur, the organization must understand the kinds of characteristics that predict performance in their managers. Without a thorough understanding what is being assessed, selection and development programs are like a house being built on a cracked foundation: no matter how strong the house is, it will ultimately fall apart.

We must realize that the understanding the context of the organization is extremely vital to determining the characteristics of a successful manager, and thus consider every angle when defining these characteristics. The literature surrounding the topic of characteristics of effective managers is prolific. This paper will briefly review bits and pieces of the literature that seem essential. Since there is no universal definition of *the* effective manager, characteristics must be matched to the context and situation to be effective. For example, strong, authoritarian manager characteristics would not be considered successful in a participative organizational environment, but might be suitable for an authoritarian organization. The foundations of understanding the characteristics of effective managers to be discussed here include management and organization theory, organizational forms, level of management (front-line, middle, executive), and aspects to consider in the assessment of management characteristics.

## Management and Organizational Theories

Management theories are commonly placed in four evolutionary time periods: pre-scientific, classical, neoclassical, and modern (Bowditch & Buono, 1994). Figure 1 is a timeline of the evolution of management and organizational theory. It emphasizes the point that different manager characteristics are necessary for different contexts. By context, I refer to the categories on the timeline: nature of society, locus of work, nature of work, key resources, management and organization theory, assumptions about human nature, focus of managerial control, and role of management. Please refer to Figure 1 throughout the next few sections of discussion.

A detailed review of the first three time periods of management theories is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is important to note that the role of management has gradually shifted. In the prescientific time before 1880, workers were seen as tied to their jobs due to the accepted

belief that one's station in life was preordained. Classical management theory originated with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 1880's. This theory viewed the worker as merely an extension of machinery. Managers were trained to treat them as such, using principles such as reward and punishment to control employee behavior. Around 1930, amid criticism of the mechanistic treatment of workers, neoclassical management theories were developed emphasizing the human aspects of workers. Accordingly, managers were trained to maintain employee social systems rather than control employee behavior (Bowditch & Buono, 1994).

Finally, modern management theories began to be developed around 1960, emphasizing facilitation of employee development. The underlying theme of these theories is that organizations are "systems composed of mutually interrelated and independent variables" (Bowditch & Buono, 1994, p. 19). In other words, changing one part of an organization will change other parts, and those effecting change must consider this. Not only is the organization a system of internal systems, but it is also part of a system linked with the external environment.

Developments in the last few decades include extremely fast rates of change in terms of technology, global competition, and a trend towards flatter organizations. Additionally, the quality movement, discontent and cynicism in the workplace, and sociodemographic diversity have increased the complexity of the managerial job. Managers are expected to do more with less as today's organizations have fewer people to do more work.

With these trends towards complexity comes a move towards more complicated models of human nature, and the resultant implications of how to manage people. Some of the assumptions about human nature underlying modern management theory include the ideas that needs vary according to life situation and stage of development, different outcomes (e.g., money) can fulfill different needs for different people, and people are capable of learning new motives. Additional assumptions include that individuals may display different needs in different groups, and that organizational members respond to different kinds of managerial strategies, dependent on their own motives and abilities, and the nature of the task (Bowditch & Buono, 1994). While the focus has changed due to this shift in assumptions about people, the tasks of modern managers remain the same. Managers are required to ensure that people "are capable of joint performance through common goals and values" (Bowditch & Buono, 1994, p. 21), set structures to facilitate interactions, and provide training and development to ensure performance.

Modern management theory is marked by three major developments: management science, systems theory, and contingency theory. Management science applies quantitative techniques to management and organizational problems, and merges the strategic concern for planning and forecasting with the administrative concern for organizational objectives and goal accomplishment. Some of the focuses of management science include the application of computers to operational problems, just-in-time (JIT) production, and total quality management (TQM). Systems theory focuses on the organization as a set of subsystems that are mutually dependent. Systems theory breaks organizations into at least four basic components: task subsystem (the actual work to be done), administrative/structural subsystem (formal organization), subsystem of individuals (the people, their nature and characteristics), and emergent subsystem (informal organization). Finally, contingency theory espouses the idea that there are no universal principles of management that can be applied uncritically in all situations;

rather, organization and management approaches depend on unique environmental conditions and internal factors. This situational approach implies that leadership style should vary across different situations, suggesting that an effective manager is able to assess the situation and apply the appropriate style.

Overall, the shift in management and organization theory has shifted to require managers to be increasingly complex in order to be successful. Along with traditional ideas of planning and organizing, managers must be able to develop individuals, meet organizational goals, and meet the objectives of JIT and TQM, while simultaneously striving to apply the right leadership style to each situation. With all of these objectives, managers must be extremely good at multitasking and juggling tasks as well. No wonder it is difficult to find truly exceptional managers!

Over time, the context of the workplace has increased in complexity dramatically. Theories of management have struggled to tap into that complexity. Yet understanding these theories provides one of several foundations necessary for understanding how to define the characteristics of effective managers. These changes in the context of the workplace have instigated the need for new organizational forms, some of which were developed to move management functions down to the workers.

### Organizational Forms and Managerial Characteristics

A second foundation for understanding the characteristics of effective managers is an overview of organizational forms. Evolution of organizational structures has always driven the ingredients and paths of managerial careers. A trend line of future career characteristics can be drawn using three key ideas about organization structure: organization structure dictates core managerial competencies, different organization structures require a different mix of managerial competencies, and organization structure dictates how careers are managed (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996). This implies that the type of effective manager characteristics must match the organizational structure. The following sections highlight a few organizational forms, including the cellular structure that seems to be the future of cutting edge organizations, and discuss the effective managerial characteristics for each type. Figure 2 (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996) outlines, with the exception of team-based organizations, the organizational structures and resultant key managerial competencies. Please refer to the figure throughout the next few sections.

#### Traditional Organization Structures and Management Characteristics

Functional. One of the earliest organizational structures is the functional organization, where individuals in the organization specialize in a specific discipline, without much knowledge of other disciplines. Managers take care of all decisions in the functional organization, doling out work to individuals who simply act as extensions of the machinery. Individual needs are not considered as important. In this type of organization, individuals “climb the ladder” within their function and some eventually reach the levels of management. As a result of living their entire lives within one technical specialty, managers in functional organizations have the key competency of technical skill, and typically do not learn management skills until reaching the management level (Allred et al., 1996).

Divisional. Unlike the functional structure, the divisional form organizes a company into largely independent divisions, each with a full complement of functional resources. Since each division is effectively its own company, there is more opportunity for managers to obtain cross-disciplinary experiences and apply their knowledge in general management positions. Accordingly, key managerial competencies in the divisional form include both technical and commercial skills (Allred et al., 1996).

Matrix. The matrix organization incorporates elements from both the functional and divisional structures. Individuals develop their technical competencies in home functional departments, while developing skills in commercial matters when assigned to cross-functional project or program groups. Managers may be responsible for employees both at the functional and cross-functional levels; therefore, employees may be reporting to more than one boss. Key competencies for managers in the matrix organization are the same as for divisional -- technical and commercial. The difference is that commercial competencies are even more vital, since the matrix manager must be skilled in working with many different parts of the organization rather than just in his/her respective functional department (Allred et al., 1996).

### Modern Organization Structures and Management Characteristics

Modern organization structures to be reviewed here include the network organization, and a specialized form of the network organization, the team based organization. Both will be discussed in the following sections.

Network organization. The network organization was developed in the 1970s in response for the need for increased speed and flexibility. While traditional structures facilitated the growth of organizations earlier in the twentieth century, they simply were too slow and unmovable to meet the faster pace of the world in the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, many organizations downsized and delayed during the 1980s to become more competitive. Similar to a computer network, network organizations link “independent firms to provide the critical expertise needed for specific projects or products” (Allred et al., 1996, p. 20). For example, Nike outsourced the manufacturing of its shoes to outside firms, extending itself via another organization.

In addition to technical and commercial skills, collaborative knowledge and abilities are managerial characteristics required by a network organization. Collaboration involves three types of relationships and skills: referral skills, partnering skills, and relationship management. Referral skills include the ability to analyze a problem and prescribe a solution within the network firm and across its partners. Like Nike did, it is important in a network organization to learn to do only what you do best, then pass the rest on to someone who does that best. Many organizations call the things they do best their “core competencies,” and use these as the focus of their business. Partnering skills include the capacity to conceptualize, negotiate, and implement mutually beneficial outcomes. Finally, relationship management means giving high priority to the needs and preferences of key customers and partners (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996).

Teams/Team-based organizations. The use of teams or team-based organizations can be seen as a specialized form of the network organization. The popularity of using teams in organizations exploded in the early 1990s. In this organizational form, individuals are grouped into teams that guide the work of a short-term or long-term project, with functional or cross-functional membership. Teams are made of interdependent members working on the same task. As teams become more self-managed, they become more responsible for planning and scheduling their work, making decisions about how the work is to be done, and setting their own goals and rewards. Teams are often developed in organizations in response to flattening of organizations. With fewer levels of management to coordinate the work of individuals, teams take some of these management functions on themselves, almost like a substitute for management.

Although effective teams may be able to reduce the managerial workload by taking on some managerial tasks, managers are still crucial to the success or failure of a team. In effective teams, a manager needs to be prepared to serve as an internal consultant, visionary, experimenter, coach and educator. As an internal consultant, the manager helps identify problems through asking the team about obstacles. As visionary, the manager is the conduit for information from the outside world, such as top management's vision, the overall business plan, and the needs of customers (internal or external). As experimenter, the team leader helps the team design work-process to improvement performance. As coach, the leader acts as a trainer and observer, providing constructive feedback, as well as ensuring timely, meaningful rewards for desired team behaviors and combined performance. Finally, as educator, the team leader facilitates the discussion and implementation of lessons learned from the completion of projects which can strengthen the teams' abilities for future work (Antonioni, 1994).

What differentiates good from bad teams is how teams are structured and supported (Hackman, 1998). Explicit action must be taken to establish and affirm the team's boundaries, to define the task for which members are collectively responsible, and to give the team the autonomy members need to manage both their own team processes and their relations with external entities (Hackman, 1998). Groups with appropriate structures tend to develop healthy internal processes, whereas those with insufficient or inappropriate structures tend to be plagued with process problems. Often managers make the mistake of specifying challenging team objectives, but then skimp on organizational supports to facilitate meeting the objectives. Some key supports include a reward system that recognizes team performance, an educational system that gets team members what they need, an information system that provides necessary data, and the mundane material resources that the work requires (Hackman, 1998).

Effective design and coaching of teams are vital components to leading successful teams. Leaders and managers need to provide coaching to individuals in honing their teams skills and to the team as a whole in developing good group performance practices (Hackman, 1998). However, new research (Wageman, 1997) suggests that the design of teams is even more crucial to team effectiveness than is coaching. This finding is especially interesting given the common myth that most team problems can be solved via good coaching. It appears that even high-quality coaching can not compensate for poor quality team design. The implication for leaders of teams is that they must learn first how to design teams effectively, and then focus on coaching aspects. Some factors in team design include a clear, engaging direction, task interdependence, authority

to manage the work, performance goals, skill and demographic diversity of team members, and team size.

Management's role as the organization's representatives is to relay messages in an effort to cultivate shared understanding and to respect teams' decisions when they are aligned with company efforts. Included in the changing role of the manager in a team-based organization is the new responsibility of understanding not only the organization's philosophical objectives, but those of individual groups as well. In doing so, they are able to manage and direct teams so that they may accomplish their objectives, while at the same time moving the organization toward its goals in the process (Mohrman, Cohen & Mohrman, 1995). It is a difficult transition to let go of the decision-making authority of the past, and let teams not only make their own decisions, but then act on them.

If a management team is utilized, it must model systematic decision-making processes for other teams to follow (Mohrman et al., 1995). Teams tend to follow the lead of managers, but “walking the walk” is much more powerful than just “talking the talk.” Unfortunately, in reality, management teams often do not use these processes, and the talk falls upon deaf ears when it is incongruent with the walk. Therefore, in organizations using management teams, the ability to be a team player would be a characteristic of effective managers.

Overall, effective managerial characteristics in organizations using teams need to be tied more to the work which managers and supervisors have to do and therefore needs to be both team-based and task-based. Margerison and McCann (1995) represent what they believe are eight key team activities for a successful team or organization on their “Teamwork Wheel” (see Figure 3). Advising is the gathering and reporting of information; innovating is creating and experimenting with ideas; promoting is exploring and presenting opportunities; and developing is assessing and planning applications. Organizing is obtaining and organizing staff and resources; producing is concluding and delivering outputs; inspecting is controlling and auditing contracts and procedures; and maintaining is upholding and safeguarding standards and values. Managers should have these abilities, as well as be able to develop them in their teams.

The first priority of managers working with teams should be to get in place the basic conditions that foster team effectiveness. This implies that a basic knowledge of teams is a fundamental effective managerial characteristic in organizations using team. After basic conditions are in place, leaders should be able to “manage at the margins,” making small adjustments and corrections as needed to smooth a group’s progress toward its objectives. Until we begin to accept the risks of revolution and break out of our traditional ways of constructing and leading social systems, will continue to see teams fail (Hackman, 1998).

### Twenty-First Century Organizations

Careers in the 21st century may not involve managerial hierarchies at all. Instead, new forms of organizational structure may replace, or substitute for, management functions, much like teams and network organizations have taken over some traditional manager characteristics. However, in these new forms, all employees must take on managerial characteristics, so it is still important to consider what the characteristics of effective managers would be. Additionally, it is hard to

imagine any kind of organization without a few people in managerial roles, though these roles may be few and far between. To be discussed here include the cellular organization, and the ideas of communities of practice, which seems to be theoretical support for the cellular form.

Cellular organization. “The cellular metaphor suggests a living, adaptive organization” (Miles, Snow, Mathews, & Miles, 1997, p. 10), one that can act as a single cell, or combine with other cells to perform more complex functions. In the cellular organization, each cell (e.g., team, business unit, firm.) has a responsibility to the organization, and the organization is fluid enough to continually reorganize to meet organizational needs. The customer of a particular cell can be outside clients or other cells, and cells can combine together to work on projects, if necessary.

Just as in the past, a characteristic of an effective manager in the cellular form will be a knowledge-based technical specialty. But, unlike the past, many future careers will not evolve into management of permanent workforce. People will be responsible for managing themselves while collaborating with others.

Some abilities that managers in these environments will need include much stronger computer literacy, the ability to turn information into sound advice and practical utility, and an ability to manage projects well. Cross-functional and international experience, and basic understanding of other functions are necessary as well (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996).

Cellular organizations will depend even more than the network organization on collaborative abilities, as project teams become the primary organizing unit. The ability of an individual to quickly integrate into a team environment, either as a leader or member, will be critical to team success. Self-management skills, such as a willingness to act ethically, and the ability to forego short-run opportunities than may damage the long-run collective good will be important. More than ever, continuous learning will be necessary, as the global environment in the future will become more and more competitive, and only the best will survive. Some personal traits of effective managers (and employees) include flexibility, integrity, and trustworthiness. (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996).

Communities of practice. The knowledge era requires new ways for looking at learning and innovating in organizations. One way is through using the ideas of communities of practice, which are naturally occurring groups of people that share similar goals and interests, and, in pursuit of these goals and interests, apply common practices, use the same tools and express themselves in a common language. Understanding communities of practice is important because many believe that the acquisition of expertise is not the obtainment of declarative and procedural knowledge (traditional view), but more broadly the social process of enculturation.

Supporting communities of practice can be done by developing architecture to preserve and enhance the healthy autonomy of communities, while building an interconnectedness through which to disseminate the results of separate communities’ experiments, via stories and narratives (Brown & Duguid, 1991). The cellular form seems like it would be an appropriate structure for supporting communities of practice. For managers, it is important to legitimize and support the myriad enacting activities perpetuated by its individual members, without being intrusive.

Leadership in the community of practice is different from traditional command and control leadership models. In the community of practice frame, leadership is seen as a social meaning-making process that occurs in groups of people who are engaged in some activity together. Leadership is the process through which people put tools (authority, norms, values, work systems) to work to create meaning (Drath & Palus, 1994). Instead of a generic force that the “leader” can apply, leadership is part of a context, a process that arises in various forms and with various effects whenever people attempt to work together. Anyone in the community of practice can be part of the leadership process, not just the recognized leader or manager. Leadership becomes a process rather than a function given a manager.

There are several important questions to be asked in the framework of this more participative and facilitative leadership style. How can the contribution of each person in the community of practice be made increasingly important and increasingly appreciated for its importance? What is the most effective way for this community engaged in this particular practice to make sense of our situation? It is a shift in perspective from “I need to make things happen” to “we need to make things happen and I need to figure out how to best participate in the process of us making things happen” (Drath & Palus, 1994). Mastering this shift will be crucial for the manager of the future.

Since an important characteristic of communities of practice is that they are emergent, managers should not try to gain control, they should surrender it (Brown & Gray, 1995). Instead of directing the community of practice, the manager should support it. Additionally, since the communities of practice viewpoint assumes people are naturally in motion (Kelly, as cited by Drath & Palus, 1994), they need, rather than motivation to act, frameworks within which their actions make sense. Instead of a directive leader, the manager is simply a player in the leadership process, providing a framework for others.

### Management Level

One aspect of defining managerial characteristics that has not been mentioned thus far is the level of the manager in the organization. Managers at different levels in the organization are expected to perform different tasks. Hunt (as cited by Bowditch and Buono, 1994) attempts to provide a framework to capture the differences and similarities of managers at the generic levels of front-line supervisor, middle manager, and executive (see Figure 4). In this model, executives are responsible for systems leadership, planning for 10-20 year time frames. Systems leadership reflects a more strategic type of manager than the other levels. Organizational leadership is often taken by middle managers, who are responsible for integrating the goal of systems (executive) leadership with the operation of production. Direct leadership refers to the front-line manager responsible for face-to-face interaction with workers at the production/services level. As leadership moves from supervision (direct production) to middle management (organizational) to executives (systems), time frame focus increases, reflecting the need to become focused on broader goals, and the complexity that managers must deal with also increases. As this complexity increases, the kind of individual capability necessary to deal with the complexity changes as well. The lesson learned is that you must look at the level of manager before defining effective characteristics. A good front-line supervisor may be excellent at supervising others, but may not be able to handle a more systems focus required by the executive, and vice versa.

### Aspects to Consider in Assessment

Aspects to consider in the assessment of managers is the fourth foundation necessary to understanding effective managers to be considered in this paper. This section covers effective managerial characteristics of personality and managerial intelligence. In addition, some competency models of effective manager are reviewed.

#### Personality

Considering personality characteristics of employees has become a popular trend in the last decade. In a meta-analysis study using the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ), Kinder and Robertson (1994) found that criterion areas “creative/innovative” and “analysis and judgment” were most important for managers. The best scale for “creative/innovative” was “innovative,” suggesting that managers rated high in creativity are people who are able to generate ideas and have a flair for ingenuity. The OPQ scale “conceptual” was highly related to “creative/innovative,” suggesting that creative managers are intellectually curious and enjoy dealing with complex and abstract matters. While being good with data and enjoying measuring things proved to be important to managerial success, analyzing the data proved to be more important in being good at solving problems. They also found that the test accounted for variance other than that related to ability, indicating that personality is something separate from ability.

Holland (1998) used another personality measure, the Hogan Descriptive Adjective Inventory (HDAI), to try to discriminate between ideal and poor managers. While this is still preliminary work, results show that ideal managers scored higher than poor managers on every scale (see Figures 5 and 6). Ideal managers scored highest on Continuous Learning and Sociability, and lowest on Even Tempered and Eager to Please. In contrast, poor managers scored highest on Even Tempered, Ambition, and Conforming and lowest on Continuous Learning and Inquisitive. These results suggest that effective managerial characteristics are continuous learning and sociability, and that personality assessment tests may be effective in uncovering these traits.

#### Managerial Intelligence

Many believe that scores on traditional intelligence tests are the best consistent cognitive predictors of performance across a wide variety of jobs (Ree & Earles; Schmidt & Hunter; as cited by Sternberg, 1997). Sternberg (1997) suggests that the traditional view is limited, and, therefore, has limited use in the prediction of managerial performance. Instead, he proposes a triarchic theory of managerial intelligence, consisting of analytical, practical and creative intelligence. Analytical intelligence is similar to the traditional view of intelligence, and it consists of metacomponents (used to plan, monitor, and evaluate one’s problem solving), performance components (used to execute the plan created in metacomponents), and knowledge-acquisition components (used to learn how to solve the problem in the first place).

Practical intelligence, or common sense, involves not only adapting to environments, but shaping the environment. Of special importance is tacit knowledge, which is action-oriented knowledge acquired without direct help from others. Tacit knowledge appears to be especially important in the real world, especially for managers. Measures of tacit knowledge for managers have been

created (see Wagner & Sternberg, 1991, as cited by Sternberg, 1997), though they are not widely available. An example of an item from this scale is included in Table 1. Research suggests that tacit knowledge is necessary for many different aspects of work, and that tacit knowledge scales measure something above and behind traditional measures of cognitive abilities (IQ tests). Additionally, tacit knowledge measures seem to avoid the cultural and racial biases shown in traditional IQ tests. When compared to measures of IQ, tacit knowledge was better able to predict managerial success (Sternberg, 1997). Clearly, tacit knowledge is something that should be researched further, as it is becoming increasingly accepted that the informal aspects of learning are crucial to job performance.

Finally, creativity is the third aspect of intelligence. Because of the rapid change in business environments, the need for creativity seems particularly important for managers. According to the investment theory of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, as cited by Sternberg, 1997), creativity requires six distinct resources: intellectual ability, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation, and environment. The intellectual ability aspect, particularly important for managers, requires the ability to see problems in new ways and to think “outside the box.” Creativity is another aspect of intelligence that clearly needs more study and attention by those working with managers.

The most successful managers will be able to blend and utilize all three forms of intelligence. Since no one is good at everything, managers must be able to figure out their strengths and weaknesses, capitalize on strengths, and compensate for their weaknesses. Additionally, managers must be able to be flexible in their approach to work, realizing there is no “one best way” (Sternberg, 1997).

### Management Competency Models

Emphasizing the point of view of the quality movement, McNary (1997) points to the establishment of a new managerial leadership profile. Based on TQM founder Deming’s “system of profound knowledge,” the profile of an effective manager is highly complex, with the main responsibility being the optimization of the systems within an organization. The effective manager must be able to foster employees’ intrinsic motivation through informal feedback and coaching, use statistical or analytical thinking in making decisions, focus on a systems view with emphasis on improvement and innovation, manage with an emphasis on customer-supplier relationships, and manage for the long-term by expanding the market for all. The main goal for a manager is to optimize the system of interdependent components through co-operation to foster organizational success (McNary, 1997); in other words, to serve as an integration point in the organization.

A survey of managers of several leading-edge companies, as well as members of the International Association of Corporate & Professional Resources (a group of HR Executives and executive recruiters) was done recently to explore the idea of the managerial career in the next century. This survey suggests that future managerial careers will be based on a knowledge-based technical specialty, cross-functional and international experience, competency in collaborative leadership, self-management skills, and personal traits of flexibility, integrity, and trustworthiness (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996).

Personnel Decisions, Inc. (1989) outlines what they believe to be the eight major factors of performance that are important for success in nearly all managerial positions (see Figure 7). The eight factors are administrative skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, communications skills, personal adaptability, personal motivation, occupational/technical knowledge, and cognitive skills. Administrative skills are the structuring of activities and coordinating of resources, and include subfactors of planning, organizing, and personal organization and time management. Leadership skills include leadership style and influence, motivating others, group skills, delegating and controlling, and staffing, coaching, and developing people. Interpersonal skills include human relations skills and conflict management and negotiating. Communications skills include informing, oral communications, listening, and written communications. Personal adaptability refers to responding appropriately to challenges when confronted with change and ambiguity. Personal motivation refers to demonstrated commitment to the organization, setting high performance standards, and working hard to achieve those standards. Occupational/technical knowledge refers to apply the knowledge and skills needed to do the job, such as technical competence in a given field (e.g., engineering, etc.). Finally, cognitive skills are comprised of problem analysis and decisions making, financial and quantitative skills, innovation and resourcefulness, and handling detail. PDI has developed assessment methodology to assess and develop these critical managerial factors (Davis, Hellervik, & Sheard, 1989).

### Conclusion

This has been a “quick and dirty” review of many different lines of research in the area of effective managerial characteristics. The breadth reflects the complexity required of managers today. Given the tremendous amount of material presented in this paper, what might an effective manager look like? The answer depends on the organizational context in terms of the structure of the organization, the theory that the organization as a whole practices, the culture of the organization, and the level of manager that we are talking about. All of these must be considered in fitting effective managerial characteristics to the organization. However, given the current trends in organizations, it can be concluded that some general effective managerial characteristics of the future include flexibility, ability to collaborate, communication, creativity, ability to use and develop tacit knowledge, a willingness to develop their coworkers and to use the collective energy in groups, among many other things.

One characteristic that has not, and can not be mentioned enough is the idea of continuous learning. As society, organizations, and work increase in complexity, it is more and more imperative to continually learn in order to be able to adapt to these changes. Not only must individuals learn, but organizations must learn as well, in order to survive in the complex world. So, effective managers must be learn individually, and create and support organizational learning.

In these times of tremendous change and complexity, it seems that managers must almost walk on water to be effective! No wonder there is such a vast amount of material devoted to management assessment, development, and selection. The creation of new organizational forms such as teams and cellular organization should serve to bring some managerial functions to each employee in the organization, thereby “substituting” structure for management. However, while these structures can minimize the need for formalized managers, it is unlikely that managers will ever

be completely deleted from organizations. Instead, the role of the manager should become more complex as the simpler tasks are pushed down in the organization and there are fewer managerial roles available. Hence, the need for management assessment material will persist to exist, but will continue to evolve as the organizational context and our understanding of organizations unfold.

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Table 1  
An Example of an Item Measuring Tacit Knowledge for Management

**Table 1.** An Example of an Item Measuring Tacit Knowledge for Management

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It is your second year as a mid-level manager in a company in the communications industry. You head a department of about thirty people. The evaluation of your first year on the job has been generally favorable. Performance ratings for your department are at least as good as they were before you took over, and perhaps even a little better. You have two assistants. One is quite capable. The other just seems to go through the motions but to be of little help.

You believe that although you are well liked, there is little that would distinguish you in the eyes of your superiors from the nine other managers at a comparable level in the company.

Your goal is rapid promotion to the top of the company. The following is a list of things you are considering doing in the next two months. You obviously cannot do them all. Rate the importance of each by its priority as a means of reaching your goal.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Find a way to get rid of the "dead wood" (e.g., the less helpful assistant and three or four others)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ b. Participate in a series of panel discussions to be shown on the local public television station
  - \_\_\_\_\_ c. Find ways to make sure your superiors are aware of your important accomplishments.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ d. Make an effort to better match the work to be done with the strengths and weaknesses of individual employees.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ e. Write an article on productivity for the company newsletter.
- 

*Notes:* Items were scored by computing a measure of distance of the profile of responses for each test-taker to the mean profile of an expert group. The value of the distance measure for each respondent was the respondent's score.

Note: From "Managerial intelligence: Why IQ isn't enough," by R. J. Sternberg, 1997, Journal of Management, 23(3), p. 484.

Period	Pre-1800s	1800s	1880 - 1930	1930 - 1960	1960s	1970 - 1990s
Nature of society	<u>Agrarian</u>		<u>Industrial</u>			<u>Post-industrial</u>
Locus of work	Farm/home		Factory			Office
Nature of work	Physical: agriculture/crafts		Physical: manufacturing		Social: services	Abstract: computer mediated
Key resource	Land		Machinery			Knowledge
Management and organization theory	<u>Prescientific</u>		<u>Classical Administrative Theory</u> Scientific Management Structuralists	<u>Neoclassical Human Relations</u> Behavioral	<u>Modern Management Science</u> Systems Theory Contingency Theory	Organizational Behavior
Assumptions about human nature		Economic person		Social person	Self actualizing person	Complex person
Focus of managerial control		Patterns of physical movement and precise ways of performing work		Patterns of social interaction		Patterns of attention
Role of management		Control employee behavior		Maintain employee social systems		Facilitate employee development

Figure 1. Historical Perspective of the Evolution of Management and Organization.

Note. From A Primer on Organizational Behavior, by J. L. Bowditch and A. F. Buono, 1994, New York: John Wiley & Sons, p. 8.

<b>Organization Structure</b>	<b>Career Path</b>	<b>Key Competencies</b>	<b>Responsibility for Career Planning</b>
Functional	Single firm, within function	Technical	Functional department
Divisional	Single firm, across divisions	Technical, commercial	Division, firm
Matrix	Single firm, across projects	Technical, commercial	Department, project, firm
Network	Within and across firms	Technical, commercial, and collaborative	Firm and individual
Cellular	Independent professional	Technical, commercial, collaborative, and self-governance	Individual

**Figure 2.** Organizations and Key Management Competencies.

**Note.** Modified from “Characteristics of Managerial Careers in the 21st Century” by B. B. Allred, C. C. Snow, and R. E. Miles, 1996, *Academy of Management Executive*, 10(4), pp. 18 and 21.

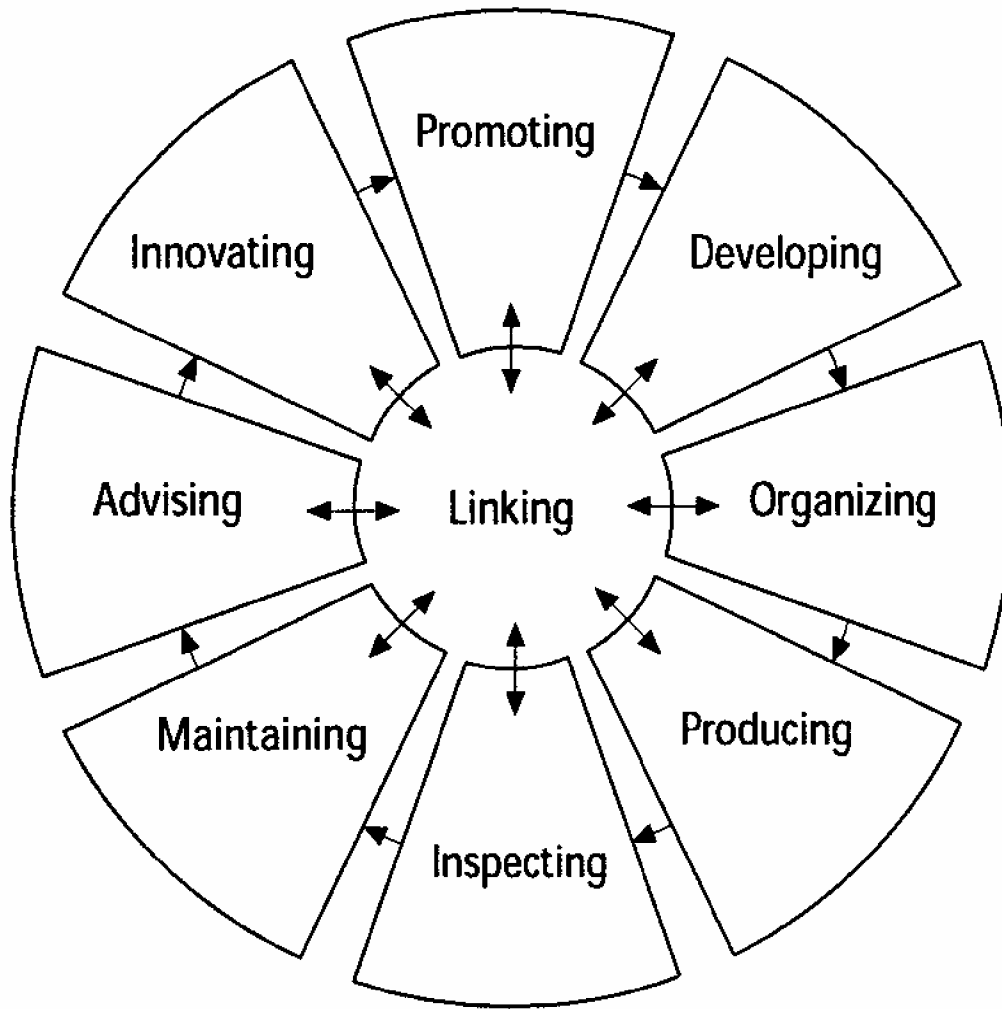
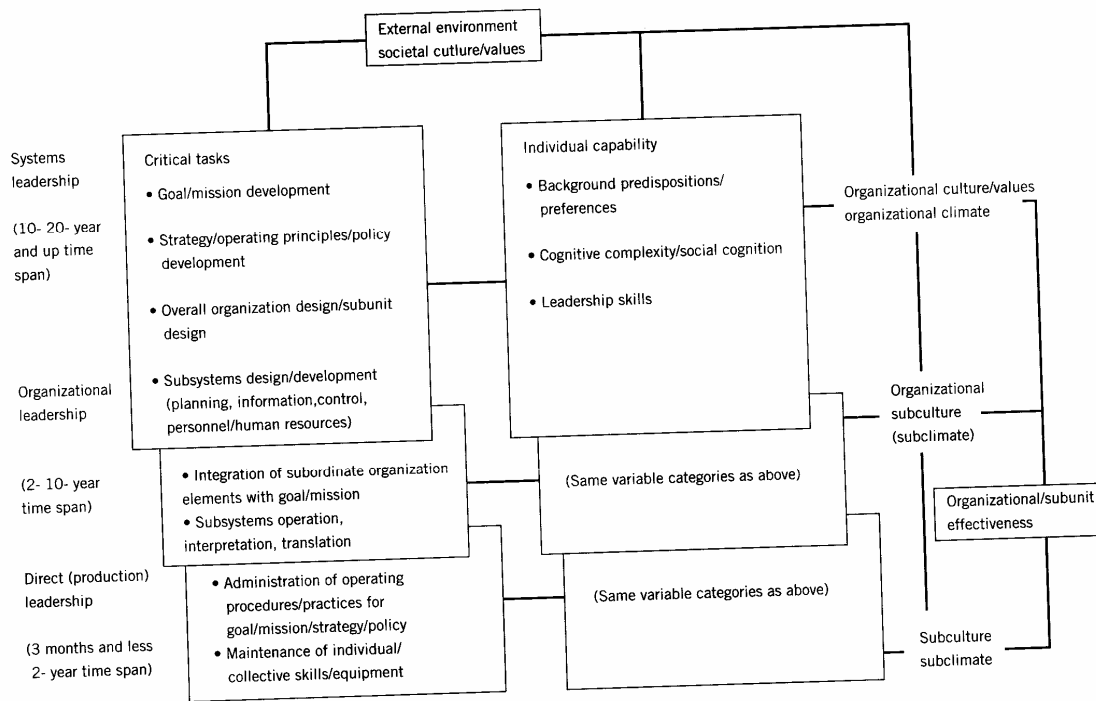


Figure 3. The Margerison-McCann teamwork wheel

Note. From "Team tasks and management development," by C. Margerison and D. McCann, 1995, American Journal of Management Development, 1(1), p. 23.



**Figure 4.** Extended multilevel leadership model.

**Note:** From James G. Hunt, *Leadership: A New Synthesis*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991, p. 28 (as cited by and Buono, 1994, p. 240)

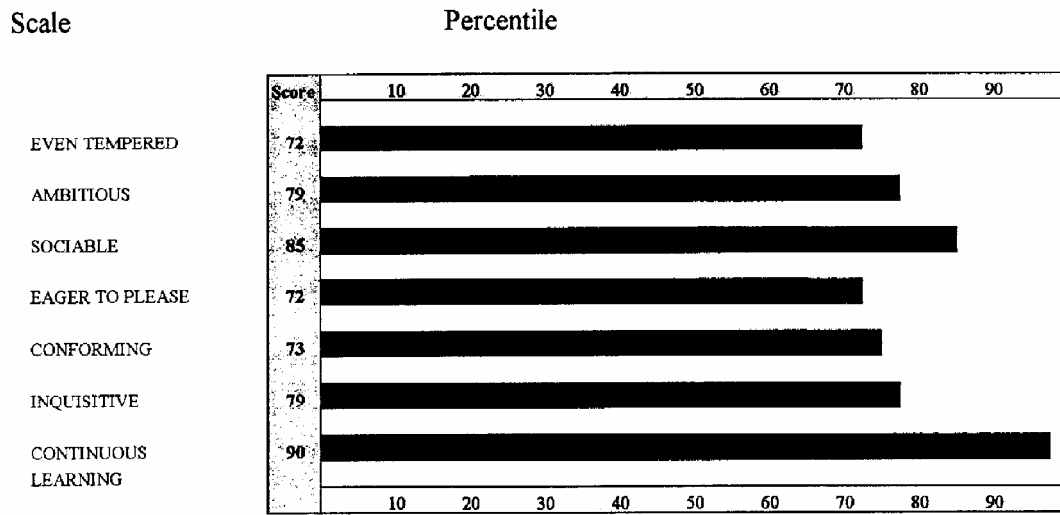
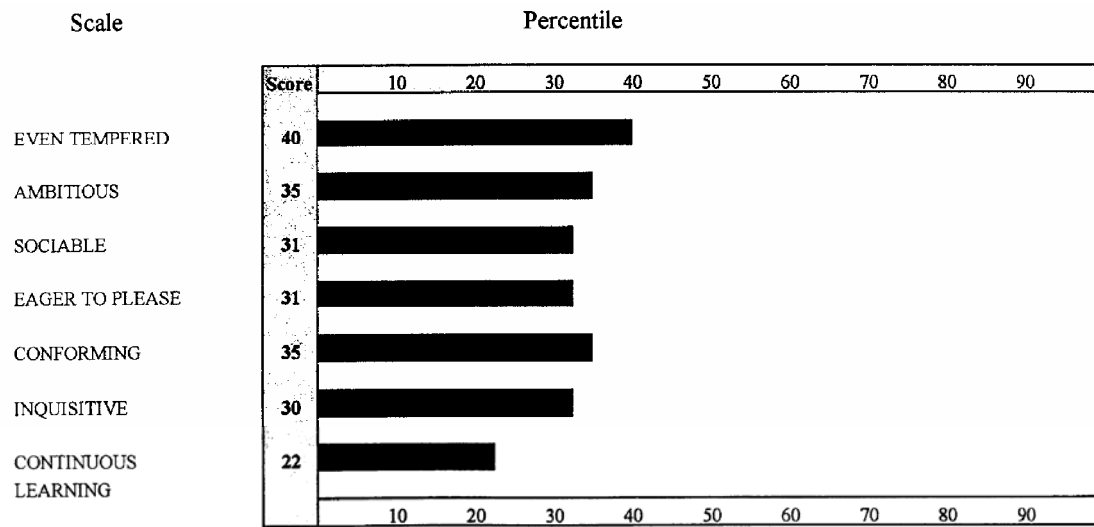


Figure 5. Profile of an Ideal Manager.

Note. From Preliminary report: Redesigning the Hogan Descriptive Adjective Inventory, by B. D. Holland, 1998, Poster session presented at the 44<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Southwest Psychological Association, New Orleans, p. 23.

**Figure 6.** Profile of a Poor Manager.

**Note.** From Preliminary report: Redesigning the Hogan Descriptive Adjective Inventory, by B. D.



Holland, 1998, Poster session presented at the 44<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Southwest Psychological Association, New Orleans, p. 24.

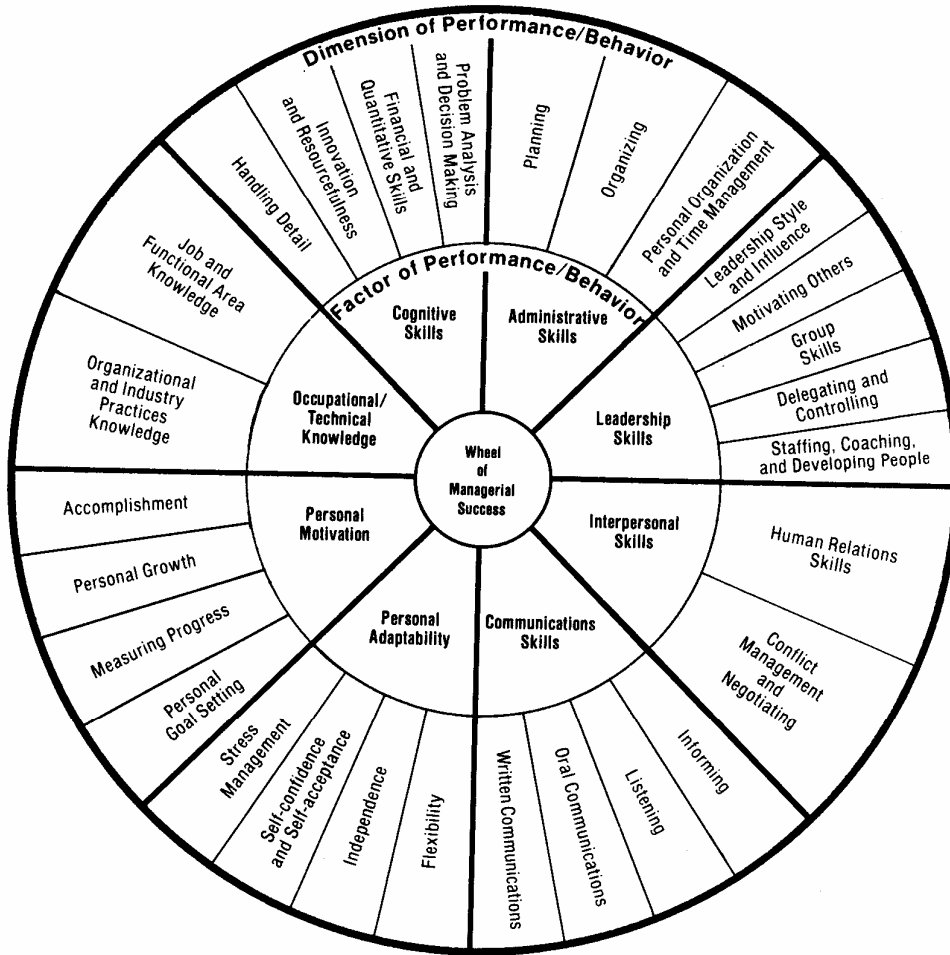


Figure 7. The Wheel of Managerial Success.

Note. From *Successful Manager's Handbook*, by B. L. Davis, L. W. Hellervik, and J. L. Sheard (Eds.), 1989, Minneapolis, MN: Personnel Decisions, Inc., p. 7.