

THE CONCEPT OF A MANAGER, THE ESSENCE OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION

Naimova Nargiza Akbarovna
Asia International University

Annotation: This article explores the concept of a manager, delving into the essence and classification of their personal and professional characteristics. It outlines the multifaceted roles and responsibilities of managers within organizations, emphasizing their importance in decision-making, team leadership, and strategic planning. The article categorizes managers into hierarchical levels (lower, middle, and upper) and discusses their functions, leadership styles, and the evolving nature of managerial roles in modern organizations. Additionally, it examines various leadership styles—authoritarian, democratic, and liberal—highlighting their impact on organizational efficiency and employee relations.

Keywords: manager, management, leadership styles, organizational hierarchy, decision-making, team leadership, strategic planning, authoritarian, democratic, liberal

A manager is an individual engaged in managerial activities, authorized to make decisions regarding specific aspects of an organization's operations within market conditions. Managers occupy various roles within an organization (e.g., director, team leader, organizer of specific tasks, head, or administrator), address diverse issues, and perform multiple functions. An organization cannot function effectively without managers, as they fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Establish connections between individual operations within the organization;
- Ensure the organization fulfills its primary objectives;
- Lead the organization or departmental team;
- Act as influential leaders, leveraging their reputation, high professional skills, and positive emotions to manage subordinates effectively;
- Develop the organization's strategic plans;
- Bear responsibility for the outcomes of the organization's activities;
- Safeguard the interests of individuals or entities associated with the organization;
- Serve as the primary liaison with the organization's external environment (e.g., authorities, partners);
- Form teams, guide their development, and uphold high ethical standards while providing proper guidance to team members;
- Generate new ideas, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and strive to understand the essence of problems;
- Analyze and evaluate completed tasks, identify measures to improve employee conditions, and implement them;
- Represent the organization at various events.

The roles and situations managers handle are diverse, yet three primary functions can be distinguished. First, managers define the organization's core objectives, allocate resources, and implement operational adjustments, remaining accountable for the consequences of their

decisions. Thus, a manager must not only choose the most favorable course of action but also decisively lead their team in a specific direction. Second, managers collect and disseminate information about internal and external environments, explaining the organization's goals to stakeholders. The effectiveness of a manager's work depends heavily on the amount of information they possess. Third, managers shape internal and external relationships, motivate team members to achieve goals, coordinate their actions, and act as the organization's representative. They must be individuals whom employees are willing to follow.

Based on their roles and tasks within the organization, managers' responsibilities may align to varying degrees with their capabilities. Traditionally, managers are classified into three hierarchical levels: lower, middle, and upper.

Lower-level managers (supervisors) directly oversee workers and other non-managerial staff. Their work is characterized by frequent transitions between tasks, with very short timeframes for decision implementation. Middle-level managers coordinate and supervise the work of lower-level managers, typically managing large organizational units and acting as a buffer between upper and lower management. Upper-level managers are responsible for making decisions that affect the entire organization. Their work involves higher risks and lacks clear endpoints. There are significantly fewer upper-level managers compared to other levels, and their work is highly valued, often commanding higher compensation.

In Western organizations, the following distinctions are made:

- "Top management" – the highest level of management (e.g., CEO and other board members);
- "Middle management" – mid-level management (e.g., heads of departments or independent units);
- "Lower management" – lower-level management (e.g., heads of subdivisions or similar units).

Historically, in the United States, considered the birthplace of modern management, rational managers with engineering and economic skills and structured management approaches were predominant. However, a new type of manager has emerged, increasingly focusing on human factors in production. This shift is reflected in diverse professional behaviors.

It is worth noting that the higher a manager's hierarchical level, the more time they should dedicate to strategic and forward-looking tasks. Conversely, lower-level managers focus more on operational issues. The recommended time allocation for upper-level managers is 60% strategic tasks, 25% tactical tasks, and 15% operational tasks; for middle-level managers, 20% strategic, 50% tactical, and 25% operational; and for lower-level managers, 10% strategic, 25% tactical, and 65% operational.

Managers can also be categorized as line or functional. Line managers oversee entire organizations, institutions, or workshops, while functional managers lead specific functional units.

Managers form a significant social stratum, playing a vital role in society, primarily within private companies. A manager's professionalism is defined by specialized knowledge and skills in production (or commerce) and management organization, as well as the ability to work with diverse individuals. Previously, it was believed that managing an organization did not require expertise in the specific field, as knowledge of management techniques and the ability to work with people were deemed sufficient.

A critical requirement for managers at any level is the ability to manage people, which includes:

- Thorough knowledge of subordinates, their abilities, and their capacity to perform assigned tasks;
- Understanding the conditions linking the organization and its employees, and fairly protecting their mutual interests;
- Psychological competence in management;
- The ability to maintain team cohesion, eliminate underperformers, and ensure the organization's operational efficiency.

Leadership styles range from complete democracy to absolute autocracy. Studies by psychologists and sociologists on various types of leaders and their effectiveness have identified three prevalent leadership styles: authoritarian (autocratic), democratic, and liberal. However, purely autocratic or democratic leaders are rare in practice.

Authoritarian Leadership: An autocratic leader is intolerant of objections, provides minimal information to subordinates, trusts no one, and rarely discloses their intentions. They frequently change their course of action, are dismissive toward subordinates, and are prone to hasty decisions. The best employees under such leaders are those who can anticipate their thoughts. Subordinates refer all questions to the "boss," and the autocratic leader's reactions to events are unpredictable, leading to frequent conflicts. The leader's excessive personal involvement in all matters often causes disorder and reduces work efficiency.

Liberal Leadership: This style is characterized by inefficiency and non-interference in work processes. A liberal leader follows directives from higher management, avoids responsibility, and may change decisions under external influence. Critical issues are often resolved without their involvement. In relationships with subordinates, they are courteous, granting nearly complete freedom, lacking in demandingness, and reluctant to monitor work. To gain favor, they may offer unwarranted privileges or rewards, perform tasks for lazy employees, and avoid dismissing poor performers.

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