

LEADERSHIP AND THE FUNCTION OF DIRECTION

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Managers must think in terms of functions. Specific methods for doing work are the responsibilities of subordinates. The five basic functions, planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling, must all be fulfilled if the manager is to be successful.

Direction is defined as, "the getting of the day to day execution of plans and projects accomplished." This assumes, of course, that the manager has adequately discharged his responsibilities and has developed the following:

1. Statements of plans, programs, objectives and policies of the organization.
2. A sound organizational structure which has been properly staffed to handle any or all business transactions.
3. Controls that can accurately and promptly report results.

Only when the managerial functions have been properly handled can the functions of directing be effectively performed.

Leadership Styles

Most managers fit into one of three managerial styles: leader centered, group centered and individual centered. The first of these relates to an individual who assumes full responsibility for the setting of goals and the way they are to be achieved. Thus he seeks or accepts little outside counsel. He is thus highly individualistic and leans more toward order giving rather than discussing.

The group centered or democratic leader is more oriented toward involving his subordinates.

The individual centered type allows the subordinate to have a more active hand in management.

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Leadership is seen to be a trait all managers should possess but in order to accomplish his objectives (profit, etc.) he must be able to direct his personnel, delegate authority and blend all the participants of his organization into a working unit.

Successful Practices in Direction

The checklist below allows a manager to see if he is effectively performing function of management in a workable way.

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. I determine what jobs must be done and who will do them.		
2. I determine what tools are necessary to do these jobs.		
3. I prepare clear and effective orders, instructions and/or information for all employees.		
4. I establish a standard of performance and inform all employees of these standards in advance.		
5. I provide for proper communication and relations with and between all organizational units.		
6. I help subordinates to develop their managerial capacity as they perform their assigned tasks.		
7. I provide for improvement of one's own managerial skills.		

The manager should strive for seven yes answers.

Obstacles to Effective Direction

One of the greatest obstacles to effective direction arises from ignoring this function altogether. Many managers have worked their way up often from a lower position and when they are in a managerial role, they manage as they have been managed. It all relates to the old saying that "good followership does not necessarily lead to good leadership."

Another obstacle to effective directing is the failure to recognize and use informal groupings of those people with more knowledge than himself to get the job done. Often the manager wants to shoulder too much of the load for he feels he will be held entirely accountable for the results. Having a sense of responsibility is fine but fear of delegation is an attempt to safeguard this and is most often a sign of insecurity.

Delegation

Delegation is, "the giving to someone else the authority to do a given task and then holding this individual accountable for his work." What should then the manager delegate and what not?

1. Delegate anything anyone else can do better than you. Use and fully utilize your specialists.
2. Delegate things which you might do poorly because of a lack of time.
3. Delegate when it costs too much for you to do the job.
4. If costs and time permit and if the job does not involve too much risk, delegate the job as a means of developing your subordinates.
5. If you find you are spending too much time on operations and not enough time on managing, delegate the work or develop someone to whom this work can be delegated.