CHAPTER 2

The nature of management, managers and their work

Learning objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

■ understand the key roles and activities of a manager’s job;
■ apply these roles and activities to your own job and to those of your colleagues;
■ understand the importance of different contexts in shaping the jobs of managers;
■ understand how management competences relate to the different managerial roles and levels at which managers perform;
■ distinguish between management as a form of control and management as a form of leadership;
■ understand and recognize the components of wise decision-making and how they relate to sound judgement;
■ apply sound judgement to your work;
■ understand how the personal qualities of managers relate to effective managerial performance;
■ self-assess your personal qualities for management.
Introduction

In the previous chapter we examined some of the key ideas underlying the study of managing people in context, including universalism and relativism, the importance of changing contexts and their influence on managers’ jobs, and the role of management thinkers in shaping our understanding of management. These ideas are further developed in this chapter, in which I also want to ‘drill down’ into the practicalities of management.

We shall develop a framework for thinking about a ‘well-rounded’ manager by drawing on the work of highly respected writers in this field, including Henry Mintzberg, John Kotter, Gareth Morgan and Karl Weick. This framework integrates the personal qualities that managers bring to their jobs, the activities and contexts inherent in effective managerial work, and the different levels at which managers can take action. It also introduces you to the notions of wisdom and managerial decision-making, neglected areas in the literature on management but very important for you to understand and be able to apply to your career.

Because this is quite a complicated chapter, I have introduced four exercises along the way dealing with specific aspects of the well-rounded manager framework, rather than having an integrative case at the end of the chapter. This should help break up the text and show how specific aspects of the framework can be applied to managers’ jobs.

The background to the study of managerial work

To understand managers and the process of management, we can draw on a long tradition of research into the nature of managerial work, what managers do and what managers should be doing. Since the 1980s much of this research has focused on defining, measuring and developing managerial competences, especially in the USA and the UK. For example, the USA Office of Personnel has developed a set of standards for supervisors and the UK government has sponsored research and development into producing new occupational standards for different levels and type of management, initially through the
Management Charter Initiative during the 1990s, and more recently through the Management Standards Centre, which launched its new standards for management and leadership in 2004.

Key concept: Management competence and standards

Management competences are the functions and activities that individuals with management and leadership responsibilities are expected to be able to undertake in their organization. Sometimes a distinction is made between competence and competency. Competence usually refers to the functions or activities undertaken by managers, such as developing people, whereas competency usually refers to the personal qualities an individual may bring to a job, such as networking skills or creativity. There have been various attempts to turn these competence frameworks into management standards – responsibilities that managers are expected to be able to undertake regardless of their industry sector or type/size of organization. The National Standards for Management and Leadership in the UK is an excellent example (http://www.management-standards.org.uk/). These standards, launched in November 2004, describe the level of performance expected for a range of management and leadership functions and activities, including managing and working with people, managing self and personal development, facilitating change, using resources, providing direction and achieving results, all of which are examined in this book.

In this section, we trace the origins and trajectory of these developments, and propose a new framework to help you think about the nature of management. This framework draws on different ideas from some of the leading thinkers on management, and will provide the basis for much of the subsequent discussion in this course.

Reviewing the literature on the future of management, Harry Scarborough (1998) described two schools of theory on management. The first of these is the empiricist perspective, which attempts to address the question: What do managers do? This stream of writing is best exemplified by the various studies of effective managers’ roles and behaviour, such as Mintzberg (1973), Kotter (1990) and Stewart (1979). These writers developed rich descriptions of managerial behaviours and practices, classified them according to the functions they perform for organizations, and developed prescriptive theories of what managers should do. Probably the best known of these was Mintzberg’s (1973) analysis of managerial work, work that has formed the point of departure for many subsequent discussions of management (see Box 2.1).
Box 2.1: Mintzberg (1973) – Managerial work: analysis from observation

Based on a one-week observation of the chief executives of five medium-to-large organizations, Mintzberg suggested a new answer to the question: ‘What do managers do?’

He described the characteristics of the work of these managers in the following terms:

- Managers performed a great quantity of work at an unrelenting pace.
- Managers’ activity was characterised by variety, fragmentation, and brevity.
- Managers preferred issues that were current, specific and ad hoc.
- Managers sat between the organization and a network of contacts.
- Managers demonstrated a strong preference for the verbal media (telephone and meetings, as opposed to mail and tours).
- Managers appeared to be able to control their own affairs (despite the fact that they have so many obligations).

Mintzberg broke down the content of the work of a manager into the following roles:

- Interpersonal roles – arise directly from his formal authority and involve basic interpersonal relationships
  - Figurehead: a symbol, attends ceremonial events, signs legal documents.
  - Leader: motivates subordinates, develops the work milieu.
  - Liaison: horizontal communication with other managers, informal relationship.

- Informational roles
  - Nerve centre (monitor): the focal point for the movement of non-routine (internal and external) information, including contacts with people who are nerve centres in other organizations.
  - Disseminator: transmission of information and values to subordinates.
  - Spokesman: transmission of information to outsiders.

- Decisional roles
  - Entrepreneur: looking for opportunities and potential problems that may cause him to initiate improvement projects.
  - Disturbance handler: handling situations that are not covered by the routine rules.
  - Resource allocator: scheduling their own and their subordinates’ time, and authorizing all significant decisions before they are implemented.
  - Negotiator: as part of being the organization’s legal authority, its spokesman and its resource allocator.
The second of the schools identified by Scarborough is the essentialist perspective, the various strands of which are characterized by the attempt to uncover the ‘essence’ of management and its relationship to the underlying functions management performs for organizations, such as controlling employees. This essentialism is closely related to the developments by the early writers on management, such as Taylor, Ford and Fayol, to uncover a one-best-way or science of management. Such a perspective has a long history, and is underpinned by the universalistic principles discussed in Chapter 1.

Both perspectives have weaknesses, one of the most important of these being their neglect of the institutional, cultural and national contexts in which management is practised. As we have already seen from the illustration on Germany in Chapter 1, there has been resistance to management practices developed in the USA. Similarly, private sector practices, developed in contexts for which profit maximization or increasing shareholder value are the dominant concerns, may have less relevance in the public sector. The public sector tends to be characterized by multiple stakeholders, all of whom have a legitimate claim on organizational goals and resources. Finally, neither perspective has much to say about the kinds of personal characteristics or competencies required of effective managers in different situations, a topic that has been the subject of recent work on leadership and emotional intelligence (Goleman et al., 2002), and one to which we shall return in the next chapter. In the remainder of this chapter, I have put together a framework for thinking about management which draws on the ideas of the eminent management thinkers who are widely acknowledged to have made a major contribution to the literature on management and organizational behaviour.

Case 2.1: Using Mintzberg’s descriptors

1 Using the description of Mintzberg’s work in Box 2.1, would you expect to find significant differences between managing in the public sector and managing in the private sector? If so, which roles would you expect to be more important in the public sector?

2 Again, using the description of Mintzberg’s work in Box 2.1, think about someone who has had responsibility for your work. Which of the roles did he or she tend to perform most effectively and least effectively? How did his or her performance in these roles affect your work?
Any selection of thinkers on management is bound to be restrictive, because writing about the topic has become ‘big business’ and, as we noted in Chapter 1, there is a growing guru industry that has developed to meet the insatiable demand for new insights into management. High on anyone’s list of experts would be Henry Mintzberg, a Canadian whose earlier work we have already discussed. Mintzberg has spent much of his academic career studying managers in context and developing models of management, with a view to setting out his ideas for a ‘well-rounded manager’ who would be able to function effectively in most business situations.

As we have already seen earlier in this chapter, Mintzberg’s earliest work during the 1970s helped map out the territory by describing a number of roles that managers performed during his studies of managers. This work was notable because it was based on observation and what managers did in practice, not on what managers were supposed to do. However, in a more recent formulation of the nature of management, Mintzberg (1994) attempted to ‘round out the manager’s job’. Prompted by criticisms of the ‘atomistic’ listing of managerial roles and competences, taken by many organizations, Mintzberg offered a more holistic approach to management. He argued that the listings of well-documented roles and competences ‘even if joined up in a circle’ did not capture the integrated nature of a manager’s job. Nor did they attempt to explain how different competences related to each other, except in a very general sense. For example, such a criticism could be made of the older version of the UK Management Standards, developed by the Management Charter Initiative in the early 1990s. In these standards, competences were categorized together under roles such as managing people or managing resources. Little or no attempt, however, was made to show how the competences related to each other, except as part of managing people, etc., or to show how the roles themselves related to the overall job of managing in different contexts. The new version of the standards has gone some way to meeting these shortcomings.

Thus, I believe that Mintzberg’s rounding out of the manager’s job is an excellent starting point to develop a holistic explanation, rather than mere description, of management. It can also be used to relate the
practice of management to some of the key contexts in which it is performed. Building on his work, I have attempted to show how important managerial competences, including the much-neglected issue of exercising judgement, relate to his model of the well-rounded manager in context (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1). In fleshing out Mintzberg’s ideas, I have drawn on the work of three other academic writers who have also continued to produce excellent insights into the work of managers during the last few decades. These academics are Gareth Morgan, Karl Weick and John Kotter.

From Figure 2.1, you can see how Mintzberg’s model of a ‘well-rounded’ manager can be depicted by relating the person in the job, through a series of concentric circles, to the context of the job, including its frame, its purpose and perspective, the agenda of the work and the internal and external contexts of the organization. Let’s look at each of these factors in turn and provide some examples of how they help us understand the complex nature of management.

The person in the job

Mintzberg’s framework of the well-rounded manager began with a discussion of the manager him/herself or ‘the person in the job’. People come to managerial jobs not with a ‘blank slate’ but with a set of values about what is right and wrong and what is acceptable behaviour for managers. They bring with them a set of prior experiences that have helped them create a set of job and personal competences, and also develop a body of job-related knowledge (such as that needed for many professional occupations). And, as we saw in Chapter 1, such knowledge and experience also help them develop a set of mindsets through which managers view their world and create solutions to the problems they face. These mindsets are a way of seeing, and can lead to lots of creative insights, but they are also a way of not seeing (Morgan, 1997). For example, managers who lack knowledge and experience outside their own specific functions, organizations or even countries can run into trouble. If you can see from only one perspective – for example, as an accountant in XYZ organization in the UK – every problem will be framed in this way, summed up in the aphorism ‘If you only have a hammer, every problem is likely to become a nail’. Mintzberg suggests that these specific combinations of values, experiences, competences, knowledge and models all go to make up a manager’s personal style, which strongly influences how he or she tackles the job.
Table 2.1
The well-rounded manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person in the job</th>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Roles and associated competences (note that some competences are associated with two or more roles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Their values</td>
<td>Purpose of the job creation, adaptation</td>
<td>Agenda of the work Managing inside</td>
<td>Which role they favour science,</td>
<td>Managing information</td>
<td>Conceiving, Creating and innovating, exercising judgement Effective oral and written communication, interpersonal effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing outside</td>
<td>How they perform the roles</td>
<td>Managing people</td>
<td>Controlling, Creating a performance culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their models</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the job creation maintenance, adaptation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scheduling, Project management, strategic flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their degree of Emotional intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of the job creation maintenance, adaptation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linking, Building teams, managing conflict, networking, interpersonal effectiveness and intrapersonal effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The self-development</td>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of the organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing action</td>
<td>Leading, Strategic flexibility, delegating, managing change, giving and receiving feedback, creating and performance culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘attitude of wisdom’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The nature of the industry</td>
<td>The relationships among the roles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doing, Interpersonal effectiveness and intrapersonal effectiveness, making wise judgements and decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The national institution and cultural context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building teams, coaching, dealing with ambiguity, creating and innovating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.1
A model of the well-rounded manager.
Two key ideas I wish to single out for special attention in analysing what a manager may bring to a job are emotional intelligence and an attitude of wisdom. Both of these ideas are critically important in developing the necessary competences for effective management. The first, emotional intelligence, has become a widely discussed notion in management and leadership that we shall develop more fully in Chapter 3. At this point, however, we need to understand that, although managers usually need fairly high levels of what we call cognitive intelligence, or sometimes IQ, the mental reasoning abilities associated with these ideas are not enough to predict how well a manager will be able to perform in different organizational contexts. So, writers such as Goleman et al. (2002) have argued that emotional intelligence, which focuses on key personal qualities that managers bring to a job, is what will help managers perform effectively. Emotional intelligence has been defined by Goleman et al. as an individual’s potential for mastering the skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. These skills, in turn, become the basis for learned abilities or competences. For example, self-awareness provides an accurate means for an individual to self-assess his or her strengths and weaknesses, a competence that is essential for someone seeking to manage a career. Emotional intelligence, however, is not something that one is necessarily born with, nor is it a fixed personality trait. One of its key features is that it can be developed, in some people quite substantially. A second feature that forms an important input into what a person brings to a job is an attitude of wisdom (Weick, 2001). I shall set out what this means in more detail later in this chapter. Suffice to say at this point that the abilities to reflect critically on what one has learned during the course of taking action and to exercise judgement in making decisions are likely to be critical skills in shaping managerial performance. It may be evident that there is also a close relationship between an attitude of wisdom and being self-aware, again a point to which we shall return later in the chapter.

The components of managers’ jobs

Mintzberg’s next contribution is in analysing managerial jobs into three components. The first is the frame of the job, the second is the agenda of the work to be undertaken and the third is the context in which the work takes place.
The frame of the manager’s job

The frame of the job is defined in terms of its purpose, perspective and position. *Purpose* refers to what a manager is attempting to do with the unit he or she is managing. For example, the frame might be to run a business school to produce high-quality education, or to manage a hospital ward, or to run a whole organization. Usually, the job is circumscribed by the collective *perspective* the organization has taken on the unit or department’s role and how it fits into its ‘theory of the business’, or what has become known in everyday business language as the ‘business model’. For example, the US-based Sears organization developed a customer–service–profit chain to describe how all units might work together to create profits through high levels of customer satisfaction. Similarly, Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, a Scottish-based international brewery, has developed a theory of the business that shows how HR departments fit into its overall mission to develop profits through building effective brands. The final aspect of the frame of the job is its *position*, which broadly refers to how an organization or unit locates itself in its external product–market environment and how it proposes to do business. Michael Porter and other well-known writers on strategy have developed positioning models that provide good examples of the positioning concept, e.g. whether an organization essentially seeks to compete on cost-effectiveness, on differentiating its products and services from competitors, or on focusing on niche segments in the market.

The frame of the job gives rise to the first of Mintzberg’s key managerial roles, which is *conceiving*. This role is defined as ‘thinking through the purpose, perspective and positioning of a particular unit to be managed over a particular period of time’ (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 13). As he also suggests, managers interpret their jobs differently depending on their style and on the circumstances of the organization. For example, some managers are forced to adopt a particular style because of external requirements or tight internal controls, whereas others are able to be more creative. Managers also vary according to how vague or sharp their frame is; some frames are characterized by a highly focused aim, such as achieving x per cent in sales revenue, whereas others are characterized by a more flexible desire to become the best company in a particular industry.

What does this conceiving role mean in practice? Gareth Morgan (2003) has described two general managerial competences that help managers ‘imaginize’ through new mindsets. These are:

- creativity and innovation;
- strategic flexibility.
Creativity, to borrow from Marcel Proust, a nineteenth century philosopher, is a voyage of discovery, and consists not in seeing new lands, but in seeing with new eyes. In his earlier work, Morgan (1997) developed a range of different metaphors or ‘eyes’ for reframing problems, based on the rationale that a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing. According to him, if organizations are to survive in an increasingly changeable world, managers need to use multiple lenses to analyse problems and be able to reframe them to produce novel and compelling solutions. More recently, he has relabelled these metaphors as mindsets, the concept we shall use in this book to describe different ways of seeing.

Being strategically flexible involves an attitude of mind, e.g. being wise and self-aware, as well as employing a number of practical competences. These include thinking about problems as opportunities for learning, anticipating major problems before they happen, learning through strategic planning by using techniques such as scenario planning and search conferencing, using multiple perspectives to analyse and solve problems, and challenging conventional organizational wisdom before it becomes a kind of ‘psychic prison’ that traps managers and their organizations into outmoded ways of working. For example, it has now become commonplace in industries such as air travel to ‘put customers first’ by creating a business class for those who wish to pay the extra money for such a service, but this was not always the case. Passengers in the 1980s were ‘cargo to be transported rather than customers to be pleased’, with engineering and logistics dominating airlines’ policies rather than marketing and customer considerations (Pascale et al., 2000). As a consequence, airlines that failed to adopt a new ‘customer-first’ perspective have gone out of business.

The agenda of the work

Mintzberg and other writers such as John Kotter (1990) have pointed to the importance of agenda-setting as a key influence on managers’ jobs. Simply put, agenda-setting refers to ‘figuring out what to do, despite all the uncertainty of what is going on inside and outside the organization’. Managers have to respond to particular issues that are framed by the job, in terms of position, purpose, perspective and also to their preferences, which are essentially dictated by their style. Such issues are usually ‘chunked’ into manageable tasks, where the key managerial role associated with setting and carrying out an agenda is scheduling. Scheduling is likely to involve prioritizing activities and allocating time and resources to carrying out these activities on a day-by-day and
week-by-week basis. In addition to strategic flexibility, project management skills are likely to be essential. The kinds of skills involved here will include: defining the scope and mandate for the project and developing a project mission, producing a project plan, creating and deploying a project team, keeping track of the project progress and being able to close the project once the goals have been achieved.

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**Case 2.2: A certain kind of manager**

Mario Moretti Polegato is the owner of Geox footwear, an Italian company that makes sports shoes. His company has grown rapidly from sales of 1.4 million pairs of shoes in 1998 to 6.5 million by 2004, with export sales accounting for nearly half. By any standards, this is impressive growth and his expectations were for 10 million sales by 2005, increasingly in a global market.

However, according to an *Economist* article, Polegato has a number of advantages. First, he is Italian, and Italy has led the world in footwear design and manufacture, especially in the region around Venice. Second, he has brought some innovation to the business by attempting to solve the problem of foot odour and clamminess around the toes. This interest in solving the problems of sweat derive from his personal experience of running in America, during which time he developed an idea of a ‘membrane that fitted between the sole and the foot and stopped water from getting in through the holes, but allowed the vapour from perspiration to get out’ (*The Economist*, 11 March 2004).

He patented this idea and others, which he took to the branded designers of sportshoes, including Nike and Adidas, but without success. So he turned to design and production himself, initially with a staff of five. He now employs more than 2800 in Italy on design and production, plus many more in subcontracted manufacturing of shoes in low-cost Slovenia and Romania.

Like any business in the fashion industry, and sports shoes are a major part of it, tastes can change. So Polegato now plans to diversify into clothing, using his membrane technology to aid underarm sweat collected in shirts and jackets to dissipate, removing the need for deodorants. He has a vision of a world without underarm deodorants. This borders on the obsessive but then, according to *The Economist*, many inventors and innovators embody this quality.


1. What are the kinds of values and experiences that Mario Polegato has brought to his job, and how have they shaped his business?
2. How does he display creativity and strategic flexibility?
3. Thinking about yourself, what values that may influence you as a manager either now or in the future do you hold most deeply?
The context of the manager’s job

So far, we have been describing the core of the manager’s job, the person in the job, within a frame made operational through an agenda. We should note, however, that the core of a manager’s job is located inside, within and outside the organization. The inside context is the department or unit in which the manager works, over which he or she may have direct control, and this context is often the main focus for many middle managers. However, managers also have to work within an organization and liaise with other departments to achieve their objectives. For example, sales managers have to work with production departments, and HR managers rarely enjoy direct authority over other departments but have to liaise with these managers and their units to achieve their HR objectives. Finally, managers achieve their objectives by working with people and resources outside the organization, often relying on these to get the job done, despite having no formal authority or leverage to draw upon to achieve their objectives. So, for example, the main activities of a chief executive often involve sitting on national committees, or developing close relations with key customers or partners, rather than in managing his or her executives. This external context can provide the most difficult challenges to a manager, and requires networking, communications and interpersonal competences of a high order to achieve success. Nowadays, recruiters in the UK who are responsible for taking on graduate management trainees emphasize communications and personal skills, rather than the class or type of degree, precisely because so much of modern work requires networking abilities (Goldthorpe, 2003).

Managing on three levels

To be effective, managers have to translate their personal qualities (or, as they are sometimes known, personal competencies) into effective behavioural skills (or behavioural competences) inside, within and outside their organizations. According to Mintzberg, managers demonstrate these behavioural competences at three levels, moving outwards from the conceptual level to the doing or action level (see Figure 2.1). Thus, managers not only conceive and schedule, as we have just discussed, but also:

- manage action, by doing things directly themselves;
- manage people to get things done through others; and
- manage information to influence people to take action.
As Mintzberg pointed out, managers can choose to operate at any of these levels, but understand that any action taken at one level has ‘knock-on’ consequences for action taken at other levels.

Managers are also stylized by the level at which they prefer to work: some administrators, accountants or planners prefer to work at the informational level; ‘people-oriented’ managers prefer to work through others; whereas ‘doers’, often in front-line supervision, ‘roll their sleeves up’ and take direct action. In his most recent work on management, Mintzberg (2004) has reworked these issues of preferences in managerial styles and levels into a model of three poles of managing: management as a science, management as a vision and management as a craft (see Figure 2.2).

Managers who prefer to work at the informational level are often influenced by the idea of management as a science, which involves applying rational techniques and thinking about leadership and strategy, best achieved through systematic assessment and planning. Managers who prefer to work through people are more likely to be influenced by the idea of management as an art, which relies on creative insights and holding out a novel and compelling vision that others can buy into. Managers who prefer to work through action are influenced by the idea that management is a craft, learned and practised through direct experience, experimentation and action.

![Figure 2.2](image_url)

**Figure 2.2** Managerial styles. *(Source: Adapted from Mintzberg, 2004, p. 93.)*
The critical point, according to Mintzberg, is that the well-rounded manager needs to function effectively at all three levels and achieve a degree of balance among the three poles in Figure 2.2. He contends that there are three balanced styles:

- **A problem-solving style**, which combines the strengths of rational analysis with practical experience (and presumably just enough people-management intuition thrown in). Such a style, common among middle-level managers in production and engineering environments, is reminiscent of the Germanic model of management.

- **An engaging style**, which is people oriented and experience based, but with just enough science to take it out of the ‘gifted amateur’ category. Such a style is associated with those managers who prefer to coach and facilitate, and is reminiscent of a British cultural stereotype of good managers.

- **A visionary style**, which is strong on art and vision, but is also rooted in experience, again with just enough science thrown in to give the ideas credibility. This style is one that is associated with successful entrepreneurs, and is close to a stereotype of an American model of good management.

Note that his idea of balance among styles, however, lies in reconciling two out of the three, with just enough of a third style to keep things in check. His view is that if we try to achieve a balance among all three simultaneously, we run the risk of either having no style at all or of not making a choice over how to manage.

Mintzberg also highlights the dangers of too little balance in styles, an issue to which we shall return in a discussion of leadership in Chapter 3. *Calculating* managers who manage purely at the informational level run the risk of dehumanizing the situation and lacking sufficient grounding in experience. This charge has often been made against the recruitment strategies of firms that target inexperienced MBA graduates and provide them with high degrees of responsibility early on in their careers. In Chapter 3, we shall look at the idea of talent management and some of its problems that exemplify this danger. *Tedious* managers, on the other hand, are often guilty of not being able to see the big picture because they rarely move out of their own comfort zone of experience. Often, this charge is made against engineers or other professionals who are promoted because they have been good at their professional ‘craft’, but who fail to provide people with a compelling vision or well-worked-out strategy. *Narcissistic* managers run the danger of being strong on vision, but with little else. We shall also
explore this style in Chapter 3. Finally, heroic managers, according to Mintzberg, are perhaps the most dangerous of all. Their style is influenced above all else by the need to promote shareholder value, which has involved a shift away from hard analysis but not from calculation. This time, however, the calculation is about how best to promote their careers (such as the account of Elton Mayo in the last chapter). The heroic style is largely about providing drama, rather than true art, and is focused on selling stories without substance to the investment community. Mintzberg’s ‘tongue-in-cheek’ characterization of heroic leaders involves: (1) looking out rather than in; (2) ignoring existing business, because anything established takes time to fix; then (3) doing anything you can to get the stock price up and cash in before you are found out.

We are now in a position to attach behavioural competences to each of these three levels of managing and their associated poles.

Managing by information and the problem-solving style

The first broad category of competences is communication, which is the collection and dissemination of information. John Kotter (1990), in his work on general managers, pointed out that much of communication wasn’t written and formal but oral and informal, sometimes operating at the non-verbal level – joking and kidding and talking about anything and everything remotely connected with the business with people inside and outside the organization. Mintzberg reinforces this point when he suggests that nearly every serious study of managerial communications has stressed the informal and face-to-face nature of communications. However, given the availability of electronic mail, other electronic means of communication such as mobile telephony, and the growth in ‘virtual’ organizations and globally distributed working that makes face-to-face communication more difficult, the emphasis on developing skills in electronic communication is likely to become more important (see Chapter 8). Regardless of the medium, much of managerial work is concerned with building human networks to access information, sifting through this information, and sharing what is relevant with outsiders and insiders. Given this key role, communicating effectively though formal and informal means and acquiring interpersonal effectiveness skills are essential to effective managerial performance.

Gareth Morgan (2003) has provided some excellent insights into what managers need to be able to do to communicate effectively.
There are at least three clusters of competences associated with effective communication. These are:

- cultivating emotional intelligence by developing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills such as influencing and listening (see Chapter 3);
- communicating effectively by tailoring the message, ensuring clarity of communication, engaging in two-way listening, receiving feedback well and understanding non-verbal communication; and
- giving feedback to your boss, to colleagues, subordinates, etc., and being able to deliver good news, bad news and constructive criticism.

The second broad category associated with the informational role is using information in a controlling sense to get people to act. Such action is provoked by developing information systems, by designing structures of control and by issuing directives for people to follow. For example, managers often spend lots of time creating and using planning and performance control systems, including budgets and appraisal. By defining responsibilities and creating hierarchies, they indirectly influence information flows. Managers can also issue instructions and directives, though, as Kotter (1990) surprisingly pointed out, this is not something that managers usually do in a Western context, nor is it the traditional Japanese way of managing, which is focused more on managing by consensus.

There is little doubt, however, that one of the key competences associated with controlling is the ability to create a performance culture in an organization. In addition to the three sets of competences above, Morgan (2003) has stressed the following sets of skills that managers need to be able to use:

- Promote quality and continuous learning as core values in an organization.
- Create stretching benchmarks, by measuring performance against practices from other organizations or industries and continuously raising the standards of these comparisons.
- Use problems as opportunities, by using them as springboards for future success rather than treating them as barriers to change.
- Unlearn to create room for new developments, because progress often requires managers to take a couple of steps back and unlearn previously held beliefs and attitudes in order to go forward.
Challenge conventional wisdom by looking outside an individual or organization’s conventional mindset for new solutions and ways of thinking, or by appointing ‘deviants’, ‘heretics’ or ‘court jesters’ to think and say the ‘unthinkable’.

- Improve performance through action-based learning, which uses real, workplace-based problems facing the organization as the basis for learning and aims to produce solutions to these problems, rather than to use ‘schooled’ learning that is remote from practice.

- Understand and deal with resistance to change, by ‘knowing where people are coming from’ and attempting to ‘reframe’ problems as opportunities for interested parties.

- Think ‘win–win’, by ensuring that all parties can achieve something of their aims, without any one party being seen to dominate the agenda.

- Manage projects, using the skills outlined in the previous section.

Managing through people and the engaging style

The second level at which to manage is through people, which is more direct than managing through information but not as direct as managing by action. As Mintzberg suggests, the focus here is on affect not effect. Once again, most of the studies of management have stressed that much of a managers’ time is taken up with managing people over whom they have no direct control, such as those individuals and groups within and outside the organization. However, you would not get this impression from reading many of the management texts, which lay great stress on the relationship between superior and subordinates, and are rooted in a model of pyramid-style organizations. Such a focus on hierarchical relationships, while not outmoded, is likely to form even less of a manager’s time in the new forms of organization, such as the virtual and networked companies that are beginning to appear in many industries (Cairncross, 2003). We shall look at these new organizational structures in Chapter 4.

We can identify at least three broad sets of competences associated with managing people within and without organizations. These are leading, linking and networking, which have received lots of attention in the business literature. Of these three, leading is the one that has received most treatment, and we shall look at this in more detail in...
Chapter 3. However, it is worth noting at this stage that, as Mintzberg has pointed out, managers can exercise leadership at the individual, group and unit levels. Individual leadership refers to the ability of managers to inspire, motivate, coach, develop, drive, push and mentor people. Morgan’s (2003) model also highlights these competences, many of which are associated with managing change and developing people. Group leadership, which Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) found to be one of the most important levels at which leadership can be exercised, has become more important with the ‘rediscovery’ of teamworking in the 1980s by Japanese organizations. Building and managing teams (Morgan, 2003) are key competences for group leadership. However, managers also have to provide a different kind of leadership at the unit level, which is sometimes differentiated from the personal or group level by applying the label ‘strategic leadership’ (Leavy and Wilson, 1994). Often, as we noted earlier, managers act as figureheads or in a symbolic role as strategic leaders, representing the organization to the outside world or at ceremonial events such as graduations. This level of leadership requires managers to be strategically flexible and to create strong, performance-based cultures (Morgan, 2003).

Finally, as Mintzberg (1994) argued, managers exercise leadership through linking the unit to the external world by advocacy and by being the focal point of external pressures and information coming inwards. Such a role is often underplayed in the texts on leadership, but is increasingly important in complex organizational networks and in newer forms of networked organization. For example, many managers spend much of their productive time promoting their units with managers of other units or with potential customers. At the same time, they act as a buffer or protector of their units from external pressures, such as the manager who spends his or her time taking criticism directly from irate customers when things go wrong as a result of actions taken by staff. Mintzberg used the metaphor of the manager as a valve to capture the essence of this role, which is probably more accurate than the use of the term ‘gatekeeper’. Key competences associated with this linking and networking role are interpersonal effectiveness, managing conflict and communicating effectively. It also requires elements of emotional intelligence, which we shall examine in Chapter 3. The dimensions most associated with the linking and networking roles include a high degree of self-awareness, empathy and social competence. The networking aspect of the role also requires managers to create and develop a wide range of contacts to lobby effectively, provide information and set agendas for action, as well as mediate between the
pressures coming in from the outside by disseminating information and delegating effectively.

Managing action and the visionary style

To manage effectively, managers have to take a direct involvement in actions. This is a controversial topic, with some writers preferring managers as thinkers rather than doers. However, in most Western industrialized settings, managers are required and respected for being able to take action, and for leading by example, and for not being seen as remote from colleagues. As we have already discussed, the debate over managers as thinkers rather than doers is reflected at the national cultural level. For example, one researcher who studied how British employees in Japanese-owned factories felt about Japanese managers concluded that Japanese managers were more likely to obtain respect from their British employees because they were willing to become directly involved in sorting out problems on the shopfloor, reflecting an engaging style. Similarly, senior German managers in manufacturing industry tend to be highly qualified engineers who are able to solve technical problems themselves, reflecting a problem-solving style. This ability to take direct action was contrasted with senior British managers in UK manufacturing firms, often with no technical background (Stewart et al., 1994). Mintzberg labelled this the doing role, which refers to getting closer to the action, sometimes managing the doing of action directly in a supervisory sense and sometimes doing the job themselves. Doing can be ‘inside’, carrying out projects and solving problems, substituting and doing regular work such as a surgeon leading a medical team during a complex operation or a professor leading a research team by directly undertaking the work him or herself. In addition, doing can be ‘outside’, in the sense of doing deals and handling negotiations, essential components of many managers’ jobs. Competences associated with this action level are being able to deal with ambiguity and helping others deal with ambiguity. On many occasions, especially during significant change, people will feel uncomfortable about the lack of clarity and certainty in their jobs. These feelings are related to personality and preferred learning and thinking styles. Understanding your own personal tolerance for ambiguity, and being able to strike the right balance with others between imposing structure on the one hand and creating an atmosphere of openness and flexibility on the other, are essential skills.
Case 2.3: Exercise on the distinction between management and leadership

Background
In the preceding text on the nature of management, I referred to the distinction that is sometimes made between management and leadership, though I argued that leadership was essential to the job of all managers. This exercise examines the distinction between these two concepts and shows how they overlap. It also helps to identify how you can implement leadership in your day-to-day jobs.

We know that organizational performance is increasingly a product of the motivation and focus of the people the organization employs. We have also argued that a major influence on people’s motivation and focus is the quality of managerial performance, of which leadership is a key element in our model. Consequently, encouraging managers, supervisors, team leaders, etc. to be better leaders is an important and continual theme in management education and training.

According to Terry Gillen (2004), however, there are three problems that hinder learning about leadership:

- Most books on leadership concentrate on the activities of charismatic and maverick chief executives or on famous explorers whose situations are far removed from those of most managers and supervisors.
- Our views on what constitutes good leadership in today’s organizations are changing. We have come to see leadership less in images of charismatic commanding officers leading troops into battle and more in terms of the subtle day-to-day interactions among all managers and their staff at every organizational level.
- Most managers’ performance is monitored, assessed and rewarded in a way that encourages them to concentrate on scheduling and controlling management processes rather than on leading their staff.

Task 1
In Table 2.2 is a list of activities, some of which could be classified as managerial, some of which could be classified as leadership, and some of which could fall into both categories. Use Table 2.3 to position these activities.

Task 2
Reflect on why you have placed these activities in the various categories. What makes them management or leadership oriented? If you have placed some of the activities in the middle, why have you done so?

Source: adapted from Gillen, 2004.
**Table 2.2**
Lists of managerial and leadership activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delegate tasks</th>
<th>Act as interface between team and outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use analytical data to support recommendations</td>
<td>Plan and prioritize steps to task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate staff</td>
<td>Explain goals, plan and roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure predictability</td>
<td>Inspire people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal to people's emotions</td>
<td>Coordinate effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate resources</td>
<td>Share a vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide focus</td>
<td>Give orders and instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide progress</td>
<td>Monitor feelings and morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a ‘culture’</td>
<td>Monitor progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check task completion</td>
<td>Create a positive team feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow systems and procedures</td>
<td>Ensure effective induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor budgets, tasks, etc.</td>
<td>Provide development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unleash potential</td>
<td>Use analytical data to forecast trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor progress</td>
<td>Look ‘over the horizon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take risks</td>
<td>Appeal to rationale thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be a good role model</td>
<td>Build teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.3**
Worksheet for Task 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very high on management</th>
<th>Managerially oriented</th>
<th>Strong elements of both management and leadership</th>
<th>Leadership oriented</th>
<th>Very high on leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
The well-rounded manager

The process of rounding out the manager

It should now be evident that effective management requires the role holders to be ‘rounded out’; managers who emphasize one set of roles, style or preferred level of managing at the expense of others are likely to become unbalanced, and may fail to perform in the medium or long term. This is not to say that context and preferred style are unimportant – indeed, as I have already argued, the opposite is the case – but that a rounding out of a manager is likely to enable him or her to be able to meet changing contexts and preferences by those for whom they are responsible and accountable. A similar point has been made by Morgan (1997) in his claim that managers need to be able to read situations through multiple lenses and act on these more complex readings to organize and manage effectively. He quoted F. Scott Fitzgerald, an eminent American writer during the 1930s, who suggested that the sign of intelligent people was the ability to hold two or more contrasting ideas at the same time and work with them. This is a key competence for managers, and is obviously linked to the ability to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty (Morgan, 2003).

As Mintzberg cautions, slavish following of some of the well-worn nostrums produced by the management gurus and leading practitioners – such as ‘don’t think, do’, ‘steady, fire, aim’ or ‘it’s all about communications’ – is inconsistent with rounded managers. Moreover, although it is possible in conceptual terms to analyse managerial jobs into distinctive roles and knowledge-based competences, it is close to impossible to distinguish them behaviourally, because work is not practised as a set of independent or atomistic lists of competencies but as a whole. Thus, managers who think ‘their way into acting’ at the expense of ‘acting their way into thinking’ or who manage well on the outside but fail to manage on the inside will, more or less inevitably, be unable to achieve significant results in the long run. Similarly, the core roles of leading, communicating, conceiving, linking, controlling and doing cannot in practice be separated into outside and outside roles, nor can they be separated from each other, because they tend to infuse each other and blend into a mix of all.

If this is true of the key managerial roles, it is equally true of the competences that are associated with them. For example, interpersonal effectiveness is as important to linking and doing as it is to leading. Similarly, creating a performance culture and managing change are
part of the roles most associated with managing on the outside as well as managing on the inside. Of course, how managers ultimately perform will be shaped by their preferred style as well as context. As Mintzberg argued, style will influence which roles a manager tends to stress, how he or she acts out these preferred roles, and how one role relates to another. For example, managers in ‘ivy league’ US or ancient UK universities and in the traditional healthcare sectors in many countries tend to prefer linking rather than leading, because they are often dealing with autonomous and relatively powerful professionals who have been brought up in a fragmented culture in which professors and doctors have considerable personal and positional power. On the other hand, the preferred management style in the US state and newer European universities and in some parts of the privatized healthcare sector, which have less of a history of employing autonomous, powerful and highly rewarded professionals, is more likely to emphasize leading and controlling. In terms of the acting out of roles, managers in small organizations and entrepreneurial firms will probably favour more doing than conceiving. As Weick (2001) points out, however, these roles are related. Acting your way into thinking about strategy, if done reflectively, has major benefits for managers over the think–lead–act style. The most obvious of these advantages is that it requires managers to learn through incremental actions and experience rather than implement abstract principles or theories without having knowledge beforehand of how they may influence outcomes.

Making wise decisions

Making sound judgements

We have already introduced this idea when discussing the person in the job in an earlier section. Surprisingly, making wise decisions thorough sound judgement is rarely discussed in the management literature. There were some early attempts to deal with this issue in the 1950s and 1960s, when a group of researchers at American universities set out to find a more scientific method to make judgements. They created a discipline called ‘decision science’, which aimed to take the human element out of risk analysis, claiming it would provide a way of making soundly based decisions for a future fraught with uncertainties. This approach involved using computer models for forecasting, estimating the probabilities of possible outcomes and determining the
best course of action, thus avoiding the various biases that humans bring to decision-making. Such models, the researchers believed, would provide rational answers to questions such as whether and where to build a factory, how to deal with industrial relations negotiations and how to manage investments.

Many business schools adopted management science as part of the core curriculum, in part because it gave them some legitimacy with their science colleagues, and even some senior policymakers were persuaded by the arguments. Decision science’s highpoint was probably during the Vietnam war, in the 1960s and 1970s, when Robert McNamara, then America’s Defense Secretary, used such techniques to forecast the outcome of the conflict (though, as it turned out, without much success). But, for the most part, the approach did not quite catch on, especially in the less rationally oriented countries such as the UK. Decision-makers, whether in business or politics, were loath to hand over their power to computers, preferring instead to go with their gut instincts (*The Economist*, 22 January 2004). If this lack of faith in the application of rational sciences to business was evident in the last few decades of the twentieth century, it is even more so now as we operate in an increasingly unknowable and unpredictable world, disrupted ever more frequently by technology and global events (Cairncross, 2003; Wheen, 2004). As a consequence, many managers have been grappling with the problem of how to exercise judgements that strike a balance between overconfidence and over-cautious doubt.

**Reflection and judgement**

Karl Weick (2001) began an engaging discussion on this issue, suggesting that having an attitude of wisdom will be one of the key management competences in the ‘increasingly unknowable world’. Drawing on case research from studies of disaster management, when decisions can have immediate and life-threatening consequences, Weick examined ‘wise’ practices. So, for example, firefighters cited in his research operated by a maxim ‘don’t hand over a forest fire to an incoming crew during the heat of the day’ because that was when winds were strongest, the temperature at its hottest and humidity at its highest. Thus, a handover during the evening gave the incoming crew more time to learn and adjust to the conditions of uncertainty. Such maxims, he argued, revealed two initial properties of wisdom – reflection and judgement.

Reflection referred to a way of considering events in the light of their consequences in a wholly systemic fashion; in other words, it is
about making considered decisions by articulating the ‘big picture’. If
reflection, as Weick argued, dealt with the substance of decision-
making, judgement was more about the process involved in coming to
reflective decisions. Judgement has often been thought of as ‘gumption’ or ‘common sense’, which to most of us means bringing to bear
common knowledge to the decision-making process. However, Weick
believes bringing judgement to the reflective decision-making process
is more than mere common sense and must involve using the ‘non-
obvious, significant, shrewd and clever’ characteristics of decisions that
deal simultaneously with knowing and doubt.

This process of judgement exercised during reflective decision-
making, according to Weick, focuses not so much on what is known but
on how knowledge is held, shared and put to use. And, for him, having
an attitude of wisdom is the key to exercising sound judgements,
which is succinctly defined as knowing without excessive confidence or
cautions. Overconfidence, he argues, arises because managers and
entrepreneurs find it difficult to doubt what they ‘know’ or admit to
themselves that they can know only a small part of what is knowable
about any situation. We have seen many examples of such overconfi-
dence occurring during the dot-com bubble at the end of the 1990s,
when a huge number of e-business start-ups came to market and
subsequently failed. Not only were the entrepreneurs behind these
businesses guilty of misplacing faith in the power of technology to gen-
erate new business models, but so were the financiers and venture
capitalists who lent them the money (Cairncross, 2003). Once people
made confident decisions, they became excessively attached to them,
defending their positions even in the light of contradictory evidence.
Such commitment to a course of action inevitably leads to blind spots
and inattention to questions and alternatives, yet in business circles
committed action is usually seen as preferable to doubt. This is because,
as many writers have suggested, businesses and managers value action
and anything that gets in the way of action – including reflection and
wisdom – is likely to be discouraged.

If we accept the notion of excess confidence, though as we have
pointed out this is less likely to be defined as a problem by practition-
ers, we can also be excessively cautious. On this last topic, there is a
much larger literature, because it is seen by managers and businesses
as a greater threat to action. This is reflected in their criticisms of busi-
ness schools, which have been characterized as institutions that pro-
duce analytical thinkers rather than ‘doers’ (Mintzberg et al., 1998).
Excess caution, according to Weick, is a relative concept, depending
very much on the position one starts from. So if we admit we don’t
know (the answer), or if we notice we fail to notice (I’ve just discovered I was wrong and I should have accepted your alternative answer – you were right!), we begin to doubt ourselves. If those doubts begin from a position of overconfidence, then we move towards wisdom; if, on the other hand, we are too cautious to begin with, then we move further away from being wise. In short, wisdom is a fulcrum around which attitudes vary, and people make sense of their worlds differently, depending on which side of the knowing–doubting scale they place themselves.

Improvisation and wisdom

The main problem for managers, according to Weick, is to act their way into confidence when confidence is already high, because that is a position from which they will find it difficult to return. Instead, Weick, rather controversially, argues that the point of balance between knowing and doubting is best summed up as an intended oxymoron – the ‘achievement of ignorance’. This he defines as the ability to act while remaining doubtful. And achieving ignorance, the sign of the wise manager, is based on his or her ability to improvise – the metaphor of the manager as a craftsman. Such improvisation is not the ability to make something from nothing, as is sometimes believed, but is the ability to rework existing knowledge and materials to deal with unanticipated ideas and problems during the course of work. In doing so, we produce relatively unique solutions to ‘local’ problems set in particular contexts, rather than use preplanned recipes in an inflexible way (think again about the saying ‘give someone a hammer and every problem becomes a nail’). To give an example, the wise manager is one who when presented with a novel problem – say, the need to get academics or doctors to become more business oriented – is able to use his or her knowledge of people, whether formally or informally derived, and to fashion a solution that will work in a particular context. Thus, in the case of academics and doctors, financial gain may work with some people at certain stages of their lives, whereas the opportunity for flexible work arrangements or to travel may work with others at different points in their careers. Such a wise course of action is qualitatively different from that taken by a manager who, following attendance on a business course where he read up on some theory or best practice on motivation through incentive schemes, then tries to apply these without regard to the local circumstances, history or culture of the organization. Such an approach is to treat his or her knowledge as infallible.
Instead, wise managers treat their knowledge as fallible, but at the same time have sufficient confidence to take what knowledge they have and combine it with other aspects of their repertoire to deal with new circumstances and problems. In short, this is a learning strategy, in which managers can act their way into thinking as much as they think their way into acting.

Case 2.4: Kenneth Lay and Enron

Read this adapted account of Kenneth Lay and Enron, based on ‘The energetic messiah’ (The Economist, 1 June 2000).

The 1 June edition of The Economist carried an article about Kenneth Lay and Enron, which was an interesting piece of foresight, unfortunately not widely shared among the financial community at the time.

The story began by praising Ken Lay for turning Enron from a ‘stodgy gas concern into a soaring new-economy company’ but added the qualification ‘What has he learned along the way?’

Enron’s success was due to its ability to read the future and help create it in a world of deregulated electricity and gas markets in the USA, Europe and Asia. Lay forecast how government-controlled markets for national supplies of energy would change; he also put pressure on the US government to liberalize the energy market and exploited every legal loophole to ensure that his company could benefit. The results were spectacular, with a nine-fold growth in market capitalization and an almost ten-fold rise in sales from $4.6 to $40 billion during 1990 to 2000.

However, Lay wasn’t satisfied with that success; he also sought to do the same in the first decade of the millennium through his passion for leveraging market forces in the new, high-technology, digital economy. ‘In a flurry of initiatives, he has propelled Enron into trading wholesale power on the Internet, into web sales of electricity to retail consumers, and even into Internet trading of bandwidth … The response from investors has been astonishment, followed by praise. Enron’s share price has rocketed far faster than those of other energy companies …’ Lay asserted that Enron was a new-economy company ahead of its time and brashly stated that the best was yet to come. This boast was despite some costly mistakes in the Californian retail market for electricity and a major blunder in the UK North Sea involving gas exploitation some years ago. As The Economist noted, his replies usually laid the blame on someone else, mainly the regulators, but it ‘leaves one wondering if he ever learns from such mistakes’.

The article also noted a problem of corruption during an Enron power project in Maharashtra, India, where it had also been accused of ‘lack of transparency, insensitivity to local citizenry and complicity in human rights abuses by police’. During his presentations to senior business leaders, Lay has consistently denied these rumours and laid the blame on Indian bureaucracy. When asked
about what lessons he has learned and what he might do differently, the answer was ‘nothing’.

The company has been charged with arrogance, to which Lay responds with a characteristic defence. He pointed to the unfair treatment of other innovative American companies such as Drexel Burnham Lambert, a ‘freewheeling investment bank that shot from nowhere to market prominence in the junk-bond boom of the 1980s’. Lay spoke in glowing terms about its leader, Michael Milken, another star who was accused of arrogance. He argued that he was just aggressive and innovative in trying to invent new rules, but, as The Economist article pointed out, Milken ended up in jail for breaking the existing rules and Drexel collapsed. The article concludes with the comment: ‘For all of its arrogance, Enron is hardly likely to share that fate: but hubris (arrogance) can lead to nemesis (major failure), even so.’ Just how prophetic the author was!

1 How does Karl Weick’s discussion of wisdom help explain the analysis of Enron’s prospects in this article?

### A model of effective management

Bringing these ideas together on the well-rounded manager, we can map out the relationship between the person in the job (i.e. what managers bring to a job) and their effectiveness as managers. The core relationship is set out in the horizontal sequence of boxes in Figure 2.3.

So, what I propose is that effective management performance is related to the person in the job, including:

![Figure 2.3](image-url)

**Figure 2.3**
Modelling the relationship between the manager in the job and effective managerial performance.
their values, previous experience, their models of management (assumptions);

■ their degree of emotional intelligence and their self-development.

However, it is also clear from the previous discussions that the relationship between these personal qualities and management performance is directly influenced by two key mediating factors, which are:

■ the roles they are required to play (or choose to emphasize) as part of their work, which include conceiving, communicating, controlling, linking, leading and doing;

■ the level of associated behavioural competences they display in performing their new roles, including creating and innovating, communicating, creating a performance culture, project management, demonstrating strategic flexibility, managing conflict, building teams, networking, having an attitude of wisdom and making wise decisions.

In addition to this direct ‘line of sight’ between what managers bring to the job and their effectiveness, the different contexts in which individual managers work will have an important moderating influence on this relationship. Moreover, within given constraints, managers have a choice in which roles they emphasize in their work and how they perform these roles (e.g. some managers are noted for emphasizing close control over the work of their colleagues, whereas others prefer to delegate). These contexts and choices give rise to two related sets of moderating factors that we can place above and below the core, horizontal axis or line of sight in Figure 2.3:

■ The frame of the job. This refers to its purpose as set out by the organization, the particular theory of the business employed by the organization (its assumptions regarding success and its business model), and its product/market position, structure of controls and systems, etc.;

■ The near and far contexts of the job. The near contexts include the agenda set by the manager’s bosses, the problems of managing inside the manager’s department, the problems of managing within and across the organization, and the problems of managing outside the organization, including dealings with customers, suppliers, government departments and employer’s associations. The far context refers to the nature of the organization, including its structure, etc., the nature of the industry (product/services/consulting, etc.), and the
national and institutional framework in which the manager is undertaking his or her work.

The choices that managers can make can be set out in terms of the two interrelated factors that Mintzberg identifies as style and level. Most managers have a degree of discretion over:

- Their preferred *style*, including the roles they prefer to perform, how they perform their roles, and how they choose to configure and relate one role to another. The choice is between how they achieve balance between the three polarities of management – management as science, craft or art.
- The *level* at which they choose to operate, which reflects their assumptions and preferred style of managing. They can choose to manage action directly, they can choose to manage other people taking action, or they can influence other people by managing the information flows surrounding their jobs so that they take necessary actions.

Let’s see if you can apply this model to understanding your job as a manager or a manager with whom you are familiar.

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**Time Out: Self-reflection**

Thinking either about yourself or a manager who is, or has been, close to you, use Figure 2.3 to analyse the relationship between what you (or they) bring to the job and your rating of yourself (or their) effectiveness as a manager. Use a sheet of paper to redraw and annotate the diagram, because it will take up quite a lot of space if you do this correctly. Doing so should be a useful exercise in understanding yourself or your managerial colleague, and can lead you to think about your own self-development.

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**Questions**

1. What personal qualities might you (or they) need to perform more effectively as a manager?
2. Which roles do you (or they) choose to emphasize more than others in your (or their) managerial work? Are these the right choices for managerial effectiveness, given the context of the job?
3. What are the most important contextual factors that influence how you (or they) perform their jobs? What can be done to influence these (if anything)?
4. How does the frame of the job influence the roles you (or they) perform? And can anything be done to shape the frame of the job to make you (or them) more effective as a manager?
The key learning points from this chapter are:

- The well-rounded manager brings values, attitudes and experiences to the job, two of the most important of which are levels of emotional intelligence (in addition to cognitive intelligence) and the abilities and attitudes to engage in critical self-reflection and make sound judgement, which balance overconfidence and doubt.

- The frame of a manager’s job, which includes its purpose, the mission of the organization or department and the position of the organization in its chosen market milieu, will have an important influence on how the manager performs his or her key roles, and the roles the manager chooses to play.

- Managers spend much of their time in figuring out what to do, or in setting agendas and priorities. Particularly at senior levels, they are rarely told what to do directly.

- How managers perform their key roles and the types and levels of competences they demonstrate will be influenced by the near and far contexts of their work. Effective management is strongly embedded in context, and being good in one situation doesn’t always mean that someone will be good in another situation.

- Managers can operate at three related levels, indirectly through manipulating information flows, more directly through getting other people to act, or acting oneself. Effective managers operate at all three levels, depending on the context of the job and tasks at hand.

- Management is sometimes distinguished from leadership, in the sense that management focuses on stability and control whereas leadership is necessary to produce change. The
well-rounded manager has to have both of these characteristics in his or her repertoire.

- Having an attitude of wisdom, which means having enough self-confidence to take action while remaining doubtful, is a key feature in effective management. Acting one’s way into thinking can sometimes be a more effective strategy for managers than thinking one’s way into action. The former is a learning approach whereas the latter is a planning approach. Usually, however, managers need to be good at both.

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**Review questions**

**Multiple-choice questions**

2.1 Early studies on managers were mainly criticized for which one of the following reasons?
   
   A. Being too simplistic.
   
   B. Not having enough prescription of how managers should behave.
   
   C. Lacking evidence of how managers behaved in practice.
   
   D. Lacking cohesion between roles and activities.

2.2 You have just been asked to think about taking on a new job, which takes you outside your present function and would put you in charge of a large number of people. Which of the following characteristics should be highest on your list of ‘things to reflect on’?
   
   A. Your self-awareness.
   
   B. Your social awareness.
   
   C. Your interpersonal effectiveness.
   
   D. Your ability to deal with ambiguity.

2.3 According to Mintzberg, the frame of a job consists of which of the following?
   
   A. Networking, communications and interpersonal skills.
   
   B. Purpose, perspective and position.
   
   C. Conceiving and planning.
   
   D. Purpose, position and conceiving.

2.4 Scheduling is the ability to do which of the following?
   
   A. Understand the frame of the job.
   
   B. Prioritize targets, activities and resources.
   
   C. Create a performance culture.
   
   D. Produce a quantifiable outcome.
2.5 During your appraisal, you boss tells you that he wants you to develop a ‘performance-oriented culture’ in your department. He then asks you for ideas on how to achieve this at the next meeting. Which one of the following would be the best response for long-run success?

A Create an environment in your department in which everyone has an equal say in decision-making.

B Create an environment where you welcome new ideas and encourage everyone to engage in continuous off- and on-the-job training.

C Create an environment in which change is the norm and in which maintaining things as they are is discouraged.

D Create a system of rewards in which people are paid extra for their expertise.

2.6 Which of the following is considered a core competence when managing at the action level?

A Technical expertise.

B Effective communication.

C Managing conflict.

D Strategic flexibility.

2.7 Which one of the following best describes a ‘well-rounded manager’?

A Someone who is flexible in exercising leadership styles.

B Someone who is flexible in style and can work at different levels.

C Someone who is slightly overweight.

D Someone who can deal effectively with customers and employees.

True or false questions

2.8 A detailed list of the kinds of competences needed by all managers is the best way of underpinning management development. T or F?

2.9 It is best to recruit managers who have little experience of managing because you can easily mould them into your own way of doing things. T or F?

2.10 The ability to be self-reflective is innate and cannot be taught. T or F?

2.11 Your boss says to you that a good manager should always ‘lead from the front’ by becoming directly involved. T or F?
2.12 Non-verbal communication is as important to managers as verbal communication. T or F?

2.13 The study of decision science aimed to take the risk out of decision-making by eliminating human bias. T or F?

2.14 Managers always need to be confident in their own judgements. T or F?

References


