

MAS

Management Advisory Service

www.mas.org.uk



Management Standards for Effective Managers

January 2012

Copyright Derek Mowbray. Please respect our copyright over these materials and do not reproduce them or relay them to others without our permission.



What is an effective manager?

Context for management

Most people live their lives in the context of organisations, whether they be informal, such as a bus queue, or formal, such as the workplace.

Organisations appear and disappear constantly, even within a formal workplace. Meetings, for example, are organisations, just as much as a queue for the canteen. They appear for a purpose, and normally involve people implicitly and explicitly negotiating and persuading each other to do things that benefit each other.

Organisations exist to overcome the limitations of individual ability and competence.

Organisations rely on people interacting with each other in a manner that produces an effective outcome. An effective outcome is often idiosyncratic, and is a personal perception of an outcome to an activity.

In a shop, for example, an item that is required may not be obviously on display. To find the item and then arrive at a decision to purchase requires the shopper to interact with someone, preferably someone who may know whether the item is in the store or not. Much depends on the shopper as to his or her degree of persistence and determination (resilience) to be personally satisfied that the item is available or not, depending on the quality and evaluation of the interaction between the shopper and the shop assistant. The shop assistant may or may not be working in a 'healthy organisation', one that provokes attentiveness in its staff towards its customers. If the shop is a 'healthy organisation' the prospects are high that the shopper will evaluate the interaction between the shopper and the shop assistant as one that produces a definitive answer as to the location of the product. If the shop is an 'unhealthy organisation', where the shop assistant is at best disinterested in the shopper, the shopper may need to call on personal resilience and form an attitude of determination to find out from someone else whether the product is available, as the initial encounter with the shop assistant was unconvincing in its ability to satisfy the shopper.

The scenario above is part of everyday life. A spin off from the scenario is that if the shopper is greeted with enthusiasm and cheerfulness, combined with an obvious knowledge of the products, their utility and availability, the shopper is almost bound to return to the shop for other items in the future, not out of necessity and gritted teeth, but out of feeling satisfied and comfortable and, potentially, uplifted by the experiences in the past and anticipated experiences in the future.

Behind the shop assistant is a shop manager.



Organisations have similar characteristics to communities, communities being groups of people with common interests, possibly common values, and maybe a common purpose.

Within a formal setting, organisations are controlled communities, controlled by managers.

Managers, classically, have three functions – to provide a direction for everyone else, to co-ordinate everyone and everything to ensure the direction is reached, and to control everyone and everything to ensure that the direction is achieved and the co-ordination is effective. All of this is done. Normally, within an envelope of resources – a budget, income targets, expenditure targets, and profit margins.

The manner in which managers fulfil their classical functions is critical to the success of the workplace, particularly to the budgetary and profit elements of resources.

However, managers do not function in isolation. The manner of their interaction with their team or staff is heavily influenced by the culture and working environment of the workplace. Some managers have a symbiotic relationship with the culture and working environment, each influencing the other, with the manager forging a key influence that may be cascaded to other managers. If the boss exhibits the attributes and behaviours associated with encouragement, commitment, trust and engagement, this cascades to other managers. If the boss is, at best, disinterested in the workforce, this cascades outwards, and ultimately, in the scenario above, to the shop assistant, who also exhibits disinterest towards customers.

What can go wrong for Managers?

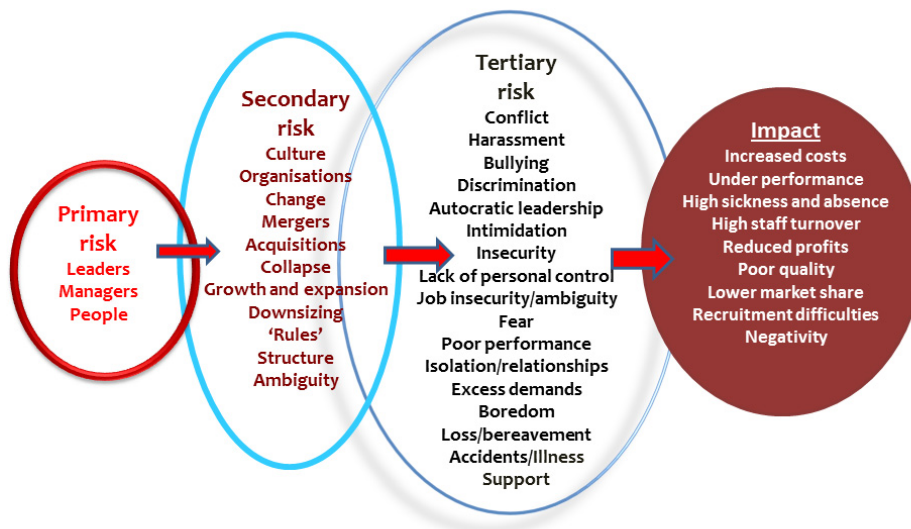
Many people find themselves taking on management roles without training in managing people. It is a common misunderstanding that managing people at work is the same as social interaction between people at home.

Managing people within the workplace carries a number of risks.

The diagram shows the potential and actual risks that managers need to manage.

The largest is discovering that those being managed under perform because of the behaviour of the manager.

This comes about because the manager is ill equipped in the attributes and behaviours that persuade others to do things they might otherwise not want to do, and to do them without experiencing distress as distress leads to under performance.



The secondary risks arise from the normal experiences of organisations. All organisations need to respond to internal and external pressures for change in order for them to survive and prosper. It is the manner with which these normal events are managed that presents the risk.

The tertiary risk arises from the fall out of the primary and secondary risks and has a direct impact on the workforce. It is the manner with which these risks are managed that determines the level of performance of those affected. With respect to these risks, the purpose of managers should be to prevent them from arising in the first place.

Managers and staff who experience these risks will respond to them in different ways according to a number of influences. These are:

- The strength of personal resilience, and ability to be able to draw on resilience, and therefore, cope with the impact of the risk.
- An organisational culture that promotes a 'healthy organisation' based on psychological wellbeing and performance, thereby attenuating the impact of the risk.
- The behaviour of managers, and whether this is perceived as being encouraging and supportive, thereby attenuating the impact of the risk.
- The amount of appropriate support that staff may access when confronted with a risk.

If managers are unable to manage these risks effectively, they run the risk of incubating psychological presenteeism.



Psychological presenteeism occurs when staff attend work but are unable to focus and concentrate because of diversions caused by one or more of the risks in the diagram above. This leads to under performance by staff.

The costs of psychological presenteeism are estimated to be 1.5 times the combined cost of sickness absence and staff turnover. Most of it is preventable.

Managers, therefore, run the risk of contributing to under performance by the workforce through their inability to manage people effectively.

Manager performance

There are many contributing elements to a high performing manager. These are set out in the diagram.

The skills required combine technical skills, knowledge and experience needed to support staff in their technical work, as well as the technical skills to provide direction, co-ordination and control for the organisation; skills in interaction that prevent hesitation, deviation or repetition in performance of the workforce; and skills to maintain a healthy organisation culture.

These Standards focus on the elements that provoke managers into exhibiting behaviours that encourage commitment, trust and engagement, as this leads to high performance without distress.



Management Standards for Effective Managers – purpose

These standards provide the benchmarks to be attained by managers seeking to be effective in promoting consistent high level performance from their staff without the costs of distress.



Management Standards for Effective Managers – structure

There are three inter-connected elements to be an effective manager.

They are:

- The capability of creating and sustaining a cultural environment within which staff are expected, encouraged and enjoy performing at their best.
- The capability of behaving towards staff in a manner that persuades them to feel commitment, trust and engagement between themselves, their manager and the workplace, as this produces psychological wellbeing and high performance at work.
- The capacity to form an attitude towards events that enables the manager cope with, tolerate, overcome and be enhanced by the event without experiencing distress.

Implementation of these Management Standards

The implementation of these Standards is a matter for each and every organisation.

Changing manager behaviour requires managers to think differently first. Among the thoughts needed to produce the required behaviours are:

- Healthy organisations produce outstanding performance.
- Managers encourage people to perform outstandingly.
- Managers who produce the best performance in others are really interested in the people they manage.
- Managers who produce the best performance in others share the responsibility for the organisation.
- Managers who produce outstanding results nurture, coach and encourage their staff.

Assistance with implementation is available – see www.mas.org.uk

Evaluating the impact of these Management Standards

Managers are encouraged to survey staff before these Standards are adopted, and every six months thereafter, to establish the impact of the Standards on the performance of staff and the organisation.

For help with evaluation – see www.mas.org.uk

To contact MAS, call 01242 241882, email Barbara.leigh@mas.org.uk or visit our website for further information.

Management Standards for Effective Managers

Managing my Organisation

Standard 1 – Managers should be clear about the purpose of their organisation, and express the purpose succinctly and in terms of the expected outcome.

Standard 2 – Managers should adopt as flat an organisational structure as they can, limiting the number of tiers to no more than three.

Standard 3 – Managers should align the corporate values of the organisation with the personal values of their staff; the values should be what drive the individuals towards their personal success and happiness.

Standard 4 – Managers should make the wellbeing and performance of the workforce central to corporate strategy, and sub-organisational strategies.

Managing my Workforce

Standard 5 – Managers should share the responsibility for the organisation with their staff.

Standard 6 – Managers should encourage independent thought and judgment amongst staff.

Standard 7 – Managers should ensure that all ‘Elephants in the Room’ are openly discussed and issues resolved.

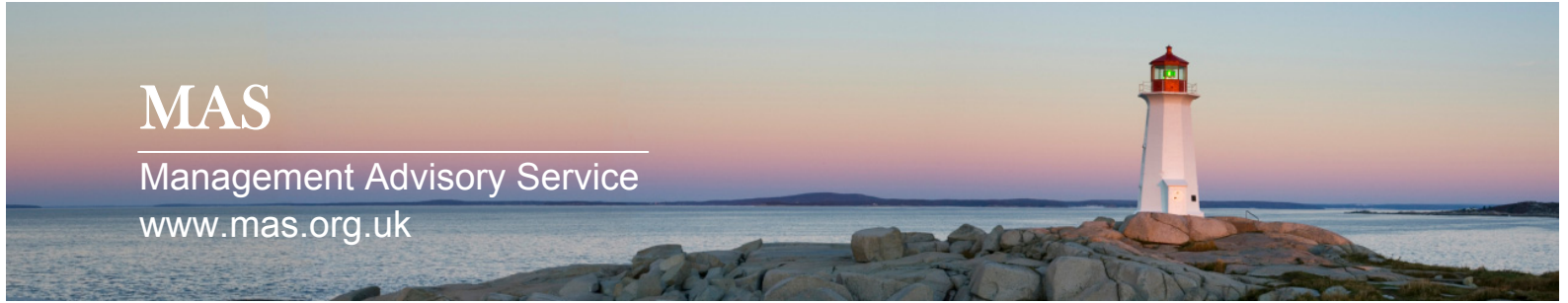
Standard 8 – Managers should adopt The Manager’s Code that sets out the behaviours and actions required to provoke commitment, trust and engagement between managers, their staff and the organisation. (Appendix)

Standard 9 – Managers should demonstrate attentiveness to staff, colleagues and customers at all times.

Standard 10 – Managers should demonstrate wisdom by showing interest in their staff, the issues staff raise, and taking care to respond with common sense and simple language.

Standard 11 – Managers should be trustworthy – demonstrating consistency of approach in managing staff.

Standard 12 – Managers should demonstrate direction with committed ambition to succeed.



Standard 13 – Managers should show intelligence with humour.

Standard 14 – Managers should identify the needs of staff and address them.

Standard 15 – Managers should encourage staff at all times.

Standard 16 – Managers should provide regular critical performance appraisal, and offer reverse appraisal with their staff.

Standard 17 – Managers should demonstrate to staff their passion for something.

Standard 18 – Managers should be assertive in their interactions, without causing any distress to others.

Standard 19 – Managers should nurture their staff, to help them grow and expand their skills, knowledge and experience.

Managing Myself

Standard 20 – Managers should establish a vision for their own future and follow it.

Standard 21 – Managers should identify their core values and drivers, and let them be known amongst staff.

Standard 22 – Manager should always be attentive to others, and interact in ways that provoke commitment, trust and engagement.

Standard 23 – Managers should ensure that mutual expectations between manager and staff are declared and clearly understood.

Standard 24 – Managers should practice problem solving

Standard 25 – Managers should ensure they have the techniques to organise themselves.

Standard 26 – Managers should learn to control their anxieties.

DM – January 2012.

To contact MAS, call 01242 241882, email Barbara.leigh@mas.org.uk or visit our website for further information.