

Lesson 3

Management Skills



Key Terms

management
mandatory
procrastinate
resources
visualize

What You Will Learn to Do

- Assess personal management skills

Linked Core Abilities

- Take responsibility for your actions and choices
- Apply critical thinking techniques

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Identify five management principles
- Compare management skills and leadership skills
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

Good **management** is an essential tool of leaders in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. The skillful execution of basic management principles by leaders is seldom an accident. It is normally the result of clear purpose, earnest effort, and intelligent direction. This lesson defines management, introduces you to five basic management principles (planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling), and compares management to leadership.

Good management is also the sound use of the available means (or **resources**) to accomplish a task. It requires careful planning by a leader to employ those resources to achieve the desired results. Because it is rare that leaders will have everything they need or want, they must strive to succeed with what they have. As you will see, the principles of management have broad application to many leadership situations.

Management Defined

Management is the process of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling resources such as people, material, time, and money to accomplish a mission; however, the presence of these resources does not guarantee success or mission accomplishment. How well the leader uses these resources is much more important than the fact that the resources are available.

Of all the resources available to the leader, people are the most important. Because leaders must use people to coordinate time, material, and money, this resource is the foundation for the use of the other three. Leaders can control and/or influence this vital resource by properly applying techniques such as the principles and factors of leadership.

We can divide the five management principles into two stages: preparation and execution. During the preparation stage, a leader must plan, organize, and coordinate. During the execution stage, a leader must direct and control. The execution stage cannot begin until after the leader has made plans, developed the necessary organization to accomplish those plans, and completed all required coordination.

Planning

Planning is the basis for the problem-solving and decision-making processes; what goes on in planning affects what is done in those two processes. Leaders spend many hours in planning the activities of their organization. They must consider what the objectives are and how they are going to accomplish them.

When planning, leaders must **visualize**, examine, consider, realize, and reflect on the factors involved in accomplishing the mission. Planning is not an easy process and it requires a lot of work. To help, there are four basic steps to planning.

- **Define the objective. In this step, leaders begin to determine the tasks and conditions that are necessary to complete the objective. Timing is very important. Leaders must ensure that their team members can do all tasks within the specified time frame.**

Key Note Terms

management – the act of managing; control or direction

resources – a source of help or supply

Key Note Term

visualize – to form a mental image

- **Study the situation.**
- **List and examine possible courses of action the leader could take.**
- **Select the course of action that will achieve the objective.**

Additionally, there are four factors that leaders must consider when using the planning process to make and implement plans.

- **Time.** Leaders must consider time as they plan events, meet deadlines, and set goals; then they make plans and execute tasks according to an established time schedule. Effective leaders will schedule their time and the activities of their team to meet these events, deadlines, and goals.
- **Effort.** Leaders must exert effort to get things done. You cannot expect results if you do not work at putting your plan into action. Successful leaders are energetic. They work hard to accomplish goals; you should exercise that same type of effort.
- **Patience.** Patience is an ingredient that all leaders must possess. It is hard to be patient when challenges occur. To solve a difficult situation, you should reexamine the facts, coordinate with people who may be helpful, and readjust the plan, if necessary. Most important, do not give up. Exercise patience and maturity while the designated people carry out the plan.
- **Objective attitude.** An objective attitude is the ability to see and consider the different sides of an issue or situation. It involves being flexible, listening to opposing points of view, making compromises, or making changes when necessary. Your objective attitude determines how much time, effort, and patience you are willing to exert to ensure mission accomplishment.

Finally, leaders must plan or estimate approximately how many people (or man-hours) they will need to accomplish the objective. Before selecting these people or defining specific tasks, leaders must consider the requirements of the objective against the capabilities of their team members.

Organizing

Organizing is the process of creating the conditions necessary to effectively execute your plans. It involves systematically defining the tasks and arranging the resources with respect to the achievement of your objective. There are five factors involved in organizing:

- **Determine/fine-tune each task.** Identify all the tasks and subtasks that the team must do to accomplish the objective. Be specific. Develop detailed lists to record them and set measurable standards for each task/subtask.
- **Select personnel.** After you have a detailed list of tasks and subtasks, assign people to them. You should base your assignments on what each task/subtask requires versus the capabilities of your team members.
- **Develop a working structure.** With a detailed list of tasks completed and people assigned to do them, you are ready to organize the list sequentially. Determine which tasks your team must do first, second, and so on until you have included everything necessary to carry out the plan. The next step, setting priorities, goes hand-in-hand with this step. You and your teammates cannot do everything at once.

- **Set priorities.** Because some tasks are more important than others or you must start them before others because of their degree of difficulty, organize a to-do list in terms of priority for every task and subtask you have identified. Establish priorities in categories such as priority A, priority B, priority C, and so on, for each item on the to-do list. Do the A priorities first, then the Bs, the Cs, and so on.

Allow sufficient time for each team member to do the job well. Not planning sufficient time for each task could result in the work being half-done or done “slipshod.” Finally, you should develop a system for checking each other and ensuring that team members accomplish their tasks according to set standards and on time.

A common fault among many people is that of spending too much time on tasks that are unimportant. Another fault is the tendency to **procrastinate**, or to put off those things that need to be done. When studying for an exam or doing a project, do you find yourself putting it off until the last minute? Then you have to rush just to get the material studied or the project finished. Know what is **mandatory** and what is not when setting priorities and organizing your time.

- **Allocate resources.** In the final step of your organizing process, you must ensure that you have identified all required resources necessary for completing the objective, set aside all available resources, and planned for obtaining those that are not available.

Coordinating

Coordination is the active process of establishing contact and then keeping in constant touch with everyone involved to ensure the successful accomplishment of the objective (see Figure 6.3.1). Coordination is an essential part of the planning process. Plans that are not properly coordinated cannot be properly executed, directed, or controlled.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to coordinate with everyone you think might be involved somehow or at some point in completing the objective. Through coordination, leaders secure the cooperation of people not under their direct control. A key to effective coordination is the use of friendly persuasion and mutual cooperation.



Figure 6.3.1: Keep in contact with team members to ensure the objectives are being accomplished.

Courtesy of CACI.

Key Note Terms

procrastinate – to put off or delay

mandatory – something that absolutely must be done

Directing

Directing is the active process by which a leader issues instructions to achieve a predetermined objective. The leader uses two common methods of directing: written or spoken. Be sure to include all the necessary details and information in your directions. In an office situation, many supervisors may decide to direct through the written word by passing out memos. After you have told everyone by written or spoken directions what is expected of them, you must supervise to ensure that they go by the rules you have laid down. There are four basic types of directing that leaders use.

- **Demand.** A straightforward statement telling what must be done, who must do it, and when it must be done. For example, you tell cadets unexcused absences will not be tolerated.
- **Request.** A milder, more tactful approach to reaching the objective. The results usually would be the same if you requested, instead of demanded, specific behavior. In the demand example, you would ask your cadets to please provide reasons for each absence.
- **Suggestion.** This type of directing is used only when a suggestion is strong enough to get the job done. It relies on the manners and good taste of those to whom you make the suggestion. Here the leader suggests what should be done but does not say, when, by whom, or how it should be done. You may suggest to cadets it is preferable to provide an authorized excuse for any absence as soon as possible.
- **Volunteer.** Leaders rarely use this method except when they want to get someone to do something that they cannot require them to do. Because volunteering means to offer assistance, you would ask your cadets who are consistently absent to schedule a counseling session to discuss problems they are having in attending class.

Controlling

Controlling is when leaders compare the tasks that their team members are actually doing to the tasks that they had directed and planned the team to do at any point in the project. Remember, you have direct control over the managerial actions of your teammates.

Then, based on your team's progress, your options may include proceeding with the way the plan is progressing, modifying the plan and continuing on with it, or stopping the action and starting over again. As the leader, it is your responsibility to ensure that the objective is met within the required standards and according to the established deadlines. Controlling is continuous until you complete the task.

Management versus Leadership

Leadership deals with the personal relationship of one person to another. It is the way a leader influences subordinates to accomplish the mission. Management, then, is a set of activities or behaviors performed by those in senior positions to obtain, direct, or allocate resources to accomplish goals and tasks. A good leader will think and plan in a rational manner in order to efficiently utilize the talent and skills of the individuals that make up the team.

How do leadership and management relate? You must realize that although they are separate processes, you will almost never use them separately. At lower levels, you lead through face-to-face dealings with your people. You are still a manager, but higher levels of authority in the chain of command control most of the physical resources.

As leaders get promotions, they control more resources. Instead of just leading a group, they may now be responsible for the overall operation of the organization. For example, if you were the assistant manager at a fast-food restaurant, you would be behind the counter with your kitchen crew making sure they were performing their jobs correctly and in a responsible manner. If you were promoted to manager, you would not have as much face-to-face contact with the kitchen crew. Instead, you would be more concerned with putting together work schedules, hiring, and ordering food supplies and equipment. You would then check with your assistant manager to make sure that the employees were doing their jobs.

Time Management

In the reality of life, time will be one of your most valuable resources. As a leader, you must learn to use time wisely and to your best advantage. You may choose to write down a schedule so you can allocate the proper amount of time for each task you need to do (see Figure 6.3.2).

Most everyone can benefit from time-saving techniques that will make them more efficient managers of time. The following list addresses various time-saving techniques. Keep these techniques in mind and try to incorporate as many of them as you can in your everyday life. By following these tips, you will become a more effective time manager and a better leader.

- **Goal setting is the first and foremost key to success. The key points and the importance of goal setting were covered earlier in this lesson. Try posting notes around your area that will remind you of your goals.**



Figure 6.3.2: Keeping a schedule can help with time management.

Courtesy of Dex Images/
Corbis Images.

- **Learn to set priorities.** After you set your goals, determine your priorities. Learn to do first things first.
- **Identify your attention span and schedule/do work accordingly.**
- **Thoroughly plan your work.** In planning, learn to delegate authority. This will help so that you do not waste time and effort.
- **Make use of your spare time.**
- **Learn to say no to yourself and others.**
- **Examine old habits that may prevent efficiency.**
- **Do not strive for absolute perfection.**
- **Learn to outline.**
- **Use a desktop or pocket diary.**
- **Use a file system.**
- **Set time limits on meetings.**

As a leader, you also need to be aware of time wasters. Create an effective time management environment within your team—both you and your team members should learn to avoid these pitfalls. The most common time wasters are as follows:

- **Lack of organization**
- **Lack of priorities**
- **Lack of delegation**
- **Unclear objectives**
- **No plan available and no, or little, time spent planning**
- **No coordination**
- **No teamwork**
- **Procrastination**
- **Lack of self-discipline**
- **Lack of feedback**
- **Interruptions**

These management tips will help you to become a leader who is more efficient in managing your time as well as your team.

Conclusion

Becoming a leader means learning to manage your resources—people, money, material, and time—to their fullest extent. You must also continue to search for more effective ways of improving your management techniques. Whether you use the principles of management in your everyday life or as a member of the JROTC program, you must use them to your best advantage.

People with authority have the responsibility of leading and managing. To succeed, they must exercise leadership when dealing with subordinates while at the same time properly managing the resources of their organization.

Next, you will learn about the importance of communication. You will learn about the process of communication, the barriers to that process, the power of emotional intelligence, and the process of exchanging feedback.

Lesson Review

1. What is the most important resource available to a leader? Why?
2. List the five basic principles of management.
3. What are the four basic types of directing?
4. Choose one time-waster and discuss how this affects your life.