

What do Managers do?

What do managers do? This is a simple and basic management question. But it is germane to many companies in America for two reasons:

1. Managers, by definition, don't "do", they "manage". Yet how many managers have yet to realize their primary responsibility is to get results through others, not to do those things themselves? Often the reason they do this is because when they were promoted to a management position, they were not taught how to manage.
2. The other reason is because companies themselves do not clearly set out their expectations of managers within a performance management framework. Without guidance, managers may often revert to what they do best and what is within their comfort zone.

Here's what Peter Drucker says about manager's responsibilities



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What do managers do? One good answer to this question comes from the late Peter Drucker, whose name that stands out above all others in the century-long history of management studies.

A native of Vienna, Austria, Mr. Drucker was an intellectual who worked as a journalist and studied economics. At some point in his studies he had an epiphany: economists, he realized, "were interested in the behavior of commodities, while I was interested in the behavior of people." That led him to, in effect, create the modern study of management.

Mr. Drucker divided the job of the manager into five basic tasks. The manager, he wrote:

- 1) Sets objectives.** The manager sets goals for the group, and decides what work needs to be done to meet those goals.
- 2) Organizes.** The manager divides the work into manageable activities, and selects people to accomplish the tasks that need to be done.
- 3) Motivates and communicates.** The manager creates a team out of his people, through decisions on pay, placement, promotion, and through his communications with the team. Drucker also referred to this as the "integrating" function of the manager.

4) Measures. The manager establishes appropriate targets and yardsticks, and analyzes, appraises and interprets performance.

5) Develops people. With the rise of the knowledge worker, this task has taken on added importance. In a knowledge economy, people are the company's most important asset, and it is up to the manager to develop that asset.

While other management experts may use different words and focus on different aspects of these responsibilities, Mr. Drucker's basic description of the manager's job still holds.