

Managers can – and should learn how to manage

Management is a skill that should be acquired by everyone who relates to other people

by Claus Moller



Claus Moller is the founder and chairman of TMI, Time Manager International A/S. He is an internationally acclaimed keynote speaker, author and an experienced management consultant.

Claus Moller developed the Time Manager and was a pioneer in the field of service quality. He coined the concepts of *Putting People First*, *The Human Side of Quality*, *Employeeship*, *Heart Work* and *Practical Leadership*. He has helped many organisations all over the world to create some remarkable results.

He is the author of several books and articles on management, communication, quality, productivity and human relations: He has developed a number of renowned practical tools to improve results for individuals, teams and organisations.

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A vast portion of the workforce has an education – a profession. This is a matter of course to us. We wouldn't dream of letting a butcher cut out meat if he wasn't trained to do so.

We also expect painters, chefs, surgeons or IT specialists to be properly trained before they start practising their skills. The very idea of letting a pilot take off with a passenger plane without a pilot's certificate seems absolutely ludicrous.

Nevertheless, managers are given the task of leading other people even if they do not have any management training. The moment a person is appointed a manager, he or she is able to influence what other people are supposed to do. Just like it is necessary to teach a pilot how to fly, it is necessary to teach a manager how to manage. Mismanagement may have disastrous effects on the organisation in the form of loss of revenue, customers and employees or a bad image, lack of teamwork, apathy, distrust, stress and conflicts.

If you ask people in the street what management is, you will get an array of different explanations. There is no unequivocal definition of management.

Many managers are so busy trying to handle their day-to-day working life as professional specialists that they do not even have the presence of mind to get a bad conscience about failing to live up to their role as managers. This applies to some senior hospital doctors, architects, professors, IT managers, chefs, master builders, accountants, etc

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So what does it take to manage a company or an organisation to achieve good, lasting results? Do any universal management principles even exist? The answer to both these questions is "YES". Approximately every third year, a new management principle comes into fashion, and most people adopt it immediately in their organisation without even knowing why – except not to seem old-fashioned. It is interesting to note that the organisations that achieve the best, lasting results are the ones that, at an early stage, set up some clear and simple management principles, make sure that everybody knows their role and the rules for getting a yellow or a red card – and stick to these principles instead of jumping from one management fashion to another.

There are four principles or processes that all organisations, large and small, in all businesses, in all cultures, in the private as well as the public sector, need to have in place in order to manage the daily operation, adapt to the changing demands of the world around them and to create their own future. These are:

1. The Management process
2. The Productivity process
3. The Relations process
4. The Quality process.

The classic conception of management is that it is 'something you do to others' and that nobody does anything on their own, i.e. that the staff are like a number of instruments that you can use to reach your goals.

The other main conception is that staff are colleagues with brains like the manager him/herself. This implies that all processes take place in an inter-action between managers and staff. This kind of democratic management, which TMI calls "Employeeeship", i.e. everybody feels responsible for the results to be achieved (just like a foot-ball team), is gaining more and more ground all over the world.

Management is about setting goals, solving problems on the way towards the goals and creating a common language that enables everybody to understand where we are going and how to get there – *together*.

The Productivity process works when everybody contributes towards reaching the team's and the organisation's goals, and when the principle that all activities should add more value than costs pervades the entire organisation.

The Relations process works when the relationship is good between all parties involved: Management and staff. The members of a team. Between the teams, so that the organisation is a "team of teams". The organisation and its external stakeholders (the ones that can influence the organisation's results).

The Quality process works when the customers – not the products – come back. It is about building up the organisation's "Brand value" and ensuring loyal customers.

In this connection, management behaviour can be divided into three: Goal-setting behaviour, problem-solving behaviour and communication behaviour. Real management is doing these three things at once in interaction with others.

The way a manager practises management behaviour depends on his/her personal competence and on the management culture in the organisation.

How do you learn these universal management principles? How do you get the essential processes to work in the organisation? This is something you can learn. We (TMI) have developed a programme in 'Practical Leadership' that is based on management behaviour, Productivity, Relations and Quality.

In October 2002, CNN published a list of the organisations whose quotations increased the most during the past 30 years. Top 3 were Southwest Airlines, Wal-Mart and Intel.

A common feature of these three top achievers is the fact that, at an early stage, they established simple and clear management principles and stuck to them. All three of them consult their staff's opinion, and the management process takes place in interaction

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between management and staff – in what TMI calls an "Employeeeship culture", characterised by everybody's commitment, responsibility, loyalty and initiative.

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If you wish to be successful, it is not enough to be professionally skilful. The necessary prerequisite is a cocktail of skilful professionals who are good managers too.

And it is possible to learn management.

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