

THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS AND ITS NATURE

The Nature of Managerial Work

Whether they are presidents, deans, or supervisors, all managers perform tasks that can be described and analyzed to one degree or another. On a typical day, managers may actively plan, organize, lead, or control, but these four functions don't really describe what managers do during the course of their workdays. During the past two decades, researchers have developed additional frameworks to supplement the traditional four-pronged management model and to clarify the nature of managerial activities. The new research helps explain and differentiate a manager's day-to-day activities.

- **Fast pace, long hours:** Managers, especially top managers, work at an unrelenting pace. Many managerial jobs require exceedingly long hours only during peak seasons, but all managers generally have full workdays at any time of year.
- **Brevity, variety, and discontinuity:** In contrast to the image of managers concentrating on a few key problems. Mintzberg found that management activities are in reality characterized by brevity, variety, and discontinuity. Although additional research has shown that not all managerial jobs fall into this pattern, Mintzberg's description fits the workday of many managers.
- **Calls and meetings:** Most of a manager's time is taken up in oral communication, either face-to-face or on the telephone. Managers favor spoken communication because they can obtain up-to-date information and because many of their contacts do not put all the details on paper.

Managerial Roles

Mintzberg found that regardless of the type of organization or the level of management, managers act in specific ways when they interact with others in the course of performing the four management functions. He argued that all managers take on these behavior patterns, or roles, in order to be effective in their jobs. In all, Mintzberg described 10 management roles, which he grouped into interpersonal roles, informational roles, and decision roles.

Category	Role	Types of activities
Interpersonal roles	Figurehead	Cermonial and symbolic duties
	Leader	Hire, train, motivate and coordinate others
	Liason	Develop relations with other outside work unit