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Management

This is the first of six units on management. It includes a listening activity about the qualities required by managers, based on the opinions of two MBA students at the Judge Business School of Cambridge University, a text summarizing the different functions of management as defined by the management theorist Peter Drucker, and a short communicative activity about recruiting the right manager.

Lead-in

These questions, like virtually all the questions, exercises and activities in the course, are to be discussed in pairs or small groups. The learners can then compare their answers with the rest of the class. (Unless you are teaching one-to-one, of course!)

Management is probably a mixture of innate qualities and learnable skills. Business schools clearly believe there are learnable skills and techniques, but they know that these alone do not suffice to make a great manager.

If the learners cannot think of business leaders they admire, you could perhaps suggest that they think of managers in *sport*: sports fans *all* have opinions about the managers of the teams they support.

Managers are figures of fun in many cultures. For example, in Britain, one of the most popular television comedy series in the early 2000s was *The Office*, featuring a disastrous manager acted (and co-written) by Ricky Gervais. The American cartoon strip *Dilbert*, which does nothing but ridicule managers, is also well known. In these countries there seems to be a widespread feeling that many managers have the unfortunate habit of making their subordinates' working lives unnecessarily difficult, by imposing too many procedures, meetings, performance reviews and appraisals, and so on.

The cartoon relates to a worry shared by many people lower down in hierarchies that their bosses unfairly get the credit and rewards for their subordinates' ideas.

Many learners are likely to choose Steve Jobs as the most interesting and impressive of the five managers shown, especially if they are the proud possessors of iPods and iPhones. His career path is certainly atypical. Akio Morita also had a remarkable career, and is an exemplary example of someone who understood inter-cultural differences. At the time of writing (early 2009), Carlos Ghosn (pronounced *Ghohon*) has had a remarkably successful career, and Meg Whitman's political career has

yet to begin. Jack Welch is celebrated in business circles, but many people find his methods too ruthless: there are probably 10% of inefficient people in every 'un-Welched' organization; but firing 10% *every year*?

Listening: What makes a good manager? ▶1.2 ▶1.3

The Cambridge MBA students feature in the listening exercises in the first four units. Two of them have 'non-native' accents (Italian and Russian), while four of them speak established varieties of English, from India, Singapore and South Africa.

They speak quite quickly, so it will probably be necessary to play the recordings twice to let the learners answer the questions, and a third time to check their answers.

AUDIO SCRIPT

CARLO DE STEFANIS ... so managers should pursue the company goal, maximize value for shareholders, and so on, but on the other hand they should accomplish also the personal goals and objective of the people they manage, for instance helping young professionals to develop, and understanding the expectation of everybody in their team, and trying to match goals of the company and even helping people to develop in their team.

OLGA BABAKINA I believe that good managers actually don't manage anybody, and good managers basically they are good executors of strategies, because the companies today, those ones who are successful, are not those who have lots of business plans and strategies somewhere in the reports and files, but those companies who have managers, executors of plans, so basically in order to be a good manager you have to know how to lead people, how to motivate people, and how to make sure that you are meeting your targets ...

ANSWERS

	Carlo	Olga
A good manager should:		
1 follow the company's goals	✓	
2 help subordinates to accomplish their own goals and objectives	✓	
3 help young colleagues to develop	✓	
4 know how to lead people	✓	✓
5 know how to motivate people		✓
6 make a maximum profit for the owners (the shareholders)	✓	
7 meet the targets they have been set		✓
8 successfully execute plans and strategies		✓

Discussion: What makes a good manager?

Other qualities that the learners may suggest include having good ideas, having integrity, being prepared to take risks and take responsibility for them, being hard-working, decisive, persuasive, honest, intelligent, educated, etc.

The third point (motivation and communication) again involves leading and developing people. The fourth point (measuring performance) involves meeting goals and targets. The fifth point (developing people) involves helping subordinates to accomplish their own goals and objectives and helping young colleagues to develop. But all this is clearly open to discussion.

Reading: What is management?

A possible warm-up activity with the books closed, before reading the text: discuss in pairs for two minutes what exactly it is that managers *do*, hoping to elicit vague notions (though perhaps without the correct vocabulary) concerning organizing, setting objectives, allocating tasks and resources, communicating, motivating, budgeting, and so on.

Peter Drucker (1909–2005), the (Austrian-born) American management professor and consultant, was the author of many books about business. The text paraphrases the extended definition of management he gives in one of his management textbooks, *An Introductory View of Management* (1977).

ANSWERS

Among the qualities mentioned in the Listening, Drucker's first point (setting objectives and developing strategies) certainly involves following the company's goals. The second point (organizing) requires knowing how to lead people and knowing how to successfully execute plans and strategies.

Writing

The learners' written summaries are likely to be very similar to the sentences in the text.

Vocabulary**ANSWERS**

- 1 1 D 2 E 3 B 4 F 5 H 6 G 7 A 8 C
 2 1 set objectives 2 allocate, resources
 3 perform tasks 4 supervise, subordinates
 5 measure, performance 6 deal with crises, make, decisions

Vocabulary note

The plural of *crisis* is *crises*; cf. *thesis* – *theses*, *hypothesis* – *hypotheses*, and their pronunciation.

Case study: Selecting a Chief Operating Officer

This case study will not take long. (There is a longer exercise involving extracts from letters of application in **Unit 5** on Recruitment.)

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

Candidate 1 would appear to be the most suitable for Company C, which wants to maximize advertising revenue by broadcasting programmes with very large audiences. It wants its staff to execute senior management's strategies, and Candidate 1 has been successful at doing that.

Candidate 2 would be suited to Company B, which has creative, talented and undisciplined people who need to be creative but probably also need to work in teams.

Candidate 4 might be the best for Company A, which needs to implement new systems, and would also benefit from someone skilled at communicating with both employees and the outside world.

Candidate 3 rather seems to see him or herself as a CEO setting objectives rather than a COO managing day-to-day operations, and is probably not best suited to the positions advertised.

Writing

MODEL ANSWER

I would recommend Candidate 4 for the position at Company A, which needs to implement new systems, and could use a skilful communicator. Candidate 2 would be suited to Company B, which needs to make its creative people work in teams. Candidate 1 is the most suitable for Company C, which needs its staff to execute senior management's strategies.