

The Five Functions of Management

SUBMITTED BY: Knowledge@Wharton Summer Educator

SUBJECT(S): Management

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will learn about the five functions of management by reading several Knowledge@Wharton articles that present a range of concrete roles and responsibilities common to management. Students will begin by thinking about what management means to them, and work toward building a comprehensive understanding of the specific types of responsibilities that fall under the five functions of management framework: decision-making, planning, staffing, directing and controlling. This lesson is ideal for providing students with a basic knowledge of management, which can be used to support later case study analyses of businesses or the development of entrepreneurial plans.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Management, I. Management Functions

≡ WHARTON GLOBAL YOUTH PROGRAM ARTICLE:

- “Just Do It – But Ethically, Please”

Common Core Standard(s):

- *Speaking & Listening:* Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–

10-11-12 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- *Reading Standards for Informational Text*: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support the analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- *Reading Standards for Informational Text*: Determine the central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- *Writing Standards*: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating an understanding of the subject under investigation.

Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will be able to define the five functions of management and provide concrete examples of them.
- Students will be able to think about management from the context of a personal process to an organizational process.

Knowledge@Wharton Articles:

- [“Why Middle Managers May Be the Most Important People in Your Company”](#)
- [“Smooth as Silk: Product Diversification Gives Afghan Women a Competitive Edge”](#)
- [“What Makes Southwest Airlines Fly”](#)
- [“Michael Porter Asks, and Answers: Why Do Good Managers Set Bad Strategies?”](#)
- [“Urban Outfitters’ Glen Senk: Look for the Right Culture, Diverse Opinions and ‘Bad News’”](#)

Other Resources/Materials:

- White Board or overhead projector and blank slides
- Definitions of the five functions of management can be projected on screen or distributed as a handout (see vocabulary spotlight for definitions)
- Case study scenario ([Handout](#))

Vocabulary Spotlight:

Decision-making – Managers must identify the activities to be completed, assign duties, create and authorize responsibility and coordinate the different levels of operation.

Planning – Managers are responsible for setting the course of actions that will best fulfill the company's goals. Planning involves *knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it*. Managers are responsible for consulting with different departments of the company in order to set the appropriate path for allocating capital in the right directions.

Staffing – Keeping individuals in the proper departments and finding talent to employ are also among the functions of management. Staffing includes recruitment, performance, appraisal, promotions and transferring employees to the proper departments.

1. Recruitment – The process of identifying and hiring the best qualified candidate (from within or outside an organization) for a job vacancy, in a most timely and cost effective manner.
2. Promotion – The advancement of an employee within a company position or job tasks. A job promotion may be the result of an employee's proactive pursuit of a higher ranking or as a reward by employers for good performance. Typically, it is also associated with a higher rate of pay or a financial bonus.
3. Performance Appraisal – The process by which a manager or consultant 1) examines and evaluates an employee's work behavior by comparing it with preset standards, 2) documents the results of the comparison, and 3) uses the results to provide feedback to the employee to show where improvements are needed and why.
4. Employee Transfer – The transfer of an employee (within an organization) from one job to another. This movement may take place within the same building or between different sites or offices.

Directing – Managers must supervise, motivate, lead and maintain communications with their employees.

Controlling – Managers must control their departmental employees and operations to ensure that organizational goals are achieved.

Activities:

- 1) Do a quick introduction stating that the lesson's focus will be on understanding the roles and responsibilities that fall under the domain of management. What do we mean when we use this word? Is management a person, thing or process? What are the specific tasks and responsibilities of management? *(2 mins)*

- 2) Ask students to offer a word that comes to mind when they hear the word management (go around twice, if it is a small class). Record the students' responses on the board or on an overhead slide. *(3 mins)*

- 3) (Optional) Inform students that management is defined as having five major functions or responsibilities. Using the list that the class just generated, ask the students to brainstorm on what these five functions might be (i.e., have them group their responses into categories). Write these headings on the board. *(3 mins)*

- 4) Explain the five official functions of management (i.e., decision-making, planning, staffing, directing and controlling) to the students while also giving a definition of each component. *(5 mins)*

- 5) Divide the students into small groups, with each group being responsible for reading and analyzing one of the six articles recommended for this lesson. *(10 mins)*
 - Charge each group with the task of searching these articles for insights about the way in which management is defined — citing specific examples of any of the five functions of management that they just learned about. The purpose is to expand students' knowledge of the roles and functions of management and to strengthen their understanding of each of the five functions/components of management with concrete examples.
 - Encourage students to underline and highlight points of interest as they read. They should also record any questions that come to mind while reading.

- 6) Regroup students to discuss what they learned about the role(s) of management through their respective articles. *(12-15 mins)*
 - Have a representative of each group give a brief summary of their article and then present one or two takeaways from the article regarding the role of managers.
 - Lastly, the students should share examples of the five functions of management that were found in their specific article.

Tying It All Together: Have students try their hand at analyzing a short case study. Divide students into teams that focus on addressing one of the five functions of management. Afterwards, or on the next day, have students discuss the recommendations they came up with.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: Having students read different articles and report their findings was a good strategy for providing a quick foundation of knowledge about management — which was my intention. Some of the articles that generated the greatest response were the interview with Glen Senk (Urban Outfitters), “Just Do It — But Ethically, Please,” and the one titled “Smooth as Silk.”

In Step 6, I would recommend creating a table to be filled in by the teacher and students that records the real life examples of management functions presented in the articles. This might make this a less passive activity.

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