

THE MANAGER

The Manager guides a team of employees to meet project goals through planning, support and clear communication

OVERVIEW

Managers can be found in almost every profession. Although their projects may be different, their goal is the same. They want to be sensible decision-makers, strong communicators and team leaders. Usually, managers have a business background with general knowledge of computer and technical skills pertaining to their career.

There are as many titles for managers as there are job categories. Principals and school superintendents are education managers. Mayors and senators are government managers. Program directors and producers are communications managers. Loan officers are banking managers. Facilities managers and office managers are administrative services managers. In the business world, the top management position is the chief executive officer or CEO.

Introducing: Sylvia Mclvor Manager/Engineer at Energy Systems Group

Sylvia Mclvor is a Senior Business Development Manager for Energy Systems Group (ESG). ESG is an energy service company that provides comprehensive energy and performance contracting services to schools and others by delivering self-funding solutions that increase comfort and productivity; reduce operating costs and allow buildings to perform at peak efficiency.

Sylvia began her career as an engineer. She attended an all-girls high school that had only two career tracks: high level secretaries for big corporations and science. The school was ahead of its time, encouraging girls to look at high level science like medicine and engineering. She was good at math and, after attending an engineering camp, decided to follow that path.

She attended SIU-Carbondale and the college invited corporations to come to the school for interviews. A plant manager from one of ComEd's coal plants interviewed Sylvia and her first job was with ComEd. The company had a policy of promoting engineers into the management path where they served as customer liaisons with the utility's largest customers. Having a technical background allowed Sylvia to effectively present the actions the customers could take to be more efficient.

Sylvia's emphasis is on putting together the right team for each customer. This involves matching skill sets and styles for the good of the customer and making the process as seamless as possible to the customer. She's found that the right team can be easy to manage while, people who aren't interested in doing a quality job, are extremely difficult to manage.

Sylvia is the first generation in her family to speak English and to attend college. She has learned that if you're hard working and have integrity, people will trust you. She has never been unemployed and attributes that, in part, to her engineering degree. She believes that if you choose the right field, work hard, are open to people guiding you, willing to take risks, and keep developing yourself personally and professionally, you will have success.

OPPORTUNITIES

The best management opportunities are available to those people who have technical skills and knowledge in one area of business combined with people skills.

Some of the career fields where managers are predicted to excel over the next few years are:

Computer and Information Systems Managers: as technology industries expand so does the need for managers who can lead the way.

Operations Managers: are senior-level employees who oversees the production of goods and/or providing of services. His or her aim is to ensure that the organization is running as smoothly and efficiently as possible, and that the goods and/or services produced meet client or customer needs.

Marketing Managers: plan the best ways of promoting their employer's products, services or brand. If you're organized and love communicating messages and ideas, this could be the job for you. You will need to have the management skills to lead and motivate a team.

Medical and Health Services: also called healthcare executives or healthcare administrators. They plan, direct, and coordinate medical and health services. They might manage an entire facility or specialize in managing a specific clinical area or department, or manage a medical practice for a group of physicians.

The increase in managers in each of these fields is directly related to changing conditions in the business world. New technologies, increasing exports, and faster-paced, information-based society is impacting the way business works. The result is that managers must keep abreast of current information through reading and networking with other professionals. A manager who is better informed can make better decisions about ways to reach project goals.

Salaries of managers vary from field to field. The yearly pay for a Marketing Manager average about 170,000 a year. Whereas, a Computer and Information Technologies Manager averages a salary of around 120,000 a year.

EDUCATION

The education path needed to become a manager depends on the type of management position you are pursuing. For instance, an Information Technologies manager should major in Business Management with a minor in Computer Science.

Personal Traits

Students interested in a management career should be self-starters with good leadership abilities. They should also have the ability to review information and make sensible decisions.

High School Preparation

Students can prepare for a role in management by working on team building skills either through participation in school organizations or sports. It may also be helpful to take a wide range of courses to gather knowledge in a number of areas.

College

More and more employers are looking for managers who have a Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A.) coupled with experience in the management field to which they are applying.