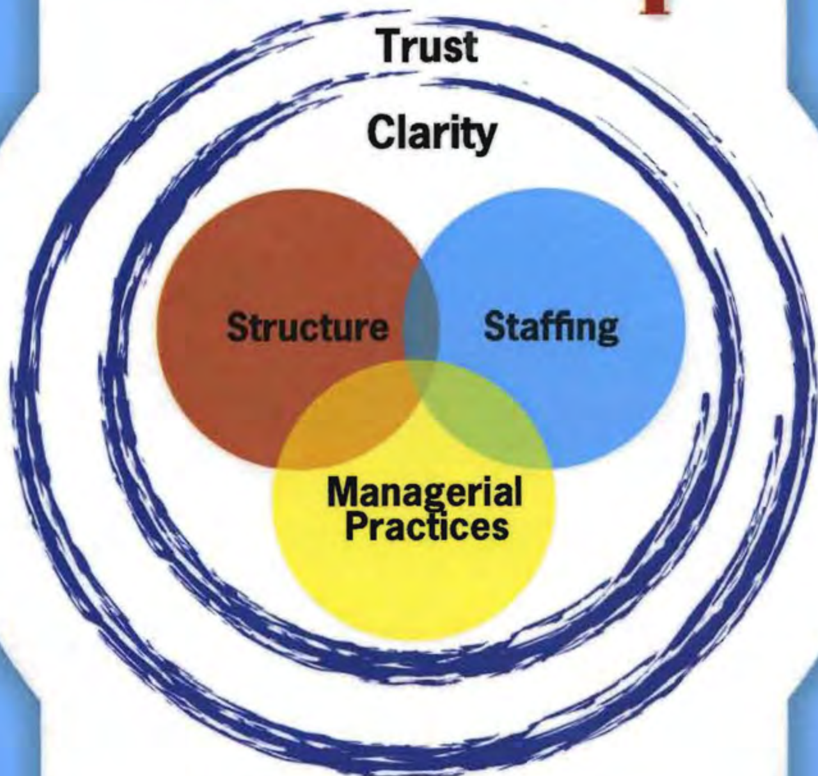
The Practice of Managerial Leadership



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THE MANAGER-SUBORDINATE WORKING RELATIONSHIP

The most important relationship in a managerial hierarchy is that of manager and subordinate. Managers are persons in a role in which they are held accountable not only for doing their best personally but also for the results of the work and the results of the working behavior of their subordinates. Contrary to much management theory, managers cannot delegate all of their work. They have substantial work to do that is their own, including the work of managing others.

Managers are accountable for selecting qualified subordinates who are capable of performing the work required of them and for overall unit/department results. They are accountable for building and sustaining an effective team of subordinates and for carrying out the required management practices.

Managerial Authority

In order to be held accountable for their work as managers, by their own managers, there must be certain minimum authority with regard to immediate subordinates, including vetoing appointments, deciding upon a subordinate's removal from role, assigning tasks and conducting appraisals. Without such authority managers cannot be held accountable for the results of their subordinates' work.

Veto Appointment

Managers cannot be held accountable for the work of someone whom they do not believe can do the work required. Therefore, a manager needs to be able to veto the appointment of such a candidate. A manager does not need to be the person who chooses the slate of candidates for a position; that is done by the manager's manager.

A manager is not to be forced to accept someone as an immediate subordinate whom s/he judges cannot do the work in the role. It is usually the more competent managers who are asked to take on subordinates who are unable to perform satisfactorily, in order to help the company handle some kind of difficult problem. This is not a requisite practice.

Decide on Removal from Role

Managers need to be able to decide to remove immediate subordinates from their roles whom they judge are not performing at the minimum level of work required. Managers do not need the authority to discharge these individuals, since they are employed not by the manager, but by the company. But, if a given subordinate's work continues to be unacceptable after the manager has discussed the problem with the person and provided substantial, ongoing coaching, the manager needs to be able to tell his or her own manager that s/he no longer will keep this person as an immediate subordinate. It is then up the manager's manager (with the help of HR) to see if any suitable place can be found in the organization. It is the manager's manager who determines the need for separation from the company if no appropriate role is available.

Assign Tasks

Managers decide what tasks they will give subordinates to do. The manager's manager is not to by-pass the manager and give assignments, nor tell the manager what types of task to give subordinates or how to do specific tasks. That is up to the manager and is the manager's work.

The essence of the manager-subordinate relationship is the clear specification of the tasks to be carried out. Managers are also accountable for coaching their subordinates and providing them with ongoing feedback so they know how well they are doing.

Appraisal and Merit Increase

It is up to managers to judge how well subordinates are doing their work. Managers have the authority to decide, within policy, how much merit increase each subordinate receives. Leaving decisions regarding merit increase to managers higher up or to committees seriously undermines the immediate manager's authority and his/her ability to exercise effective managerial leadership. Each manager must be able to decide the personal effectiveness appraisal of immediate subordinates and decide merit pay within policy. The operant word here is 'decide': it is not 'recommend'.

their subordinates' full cooperation both with the manager and with each other. Managers need to win their subordinates' confidence in the managers' ability, in the managers' method of working and in the tasks they set.

Managers in roles in each stratum must have the necessary capability to exercise effective leadership in relation to immediate subordinates. They must be capable of doing the work in one layer higher than their immediate subordinates in order to carry out their managerial accountabilities such as providing necessary context setting, delegating tasks appropriately and making judgments of the personal effectiveness of their subordinates.

Misconceptions about Managerial Work

Managerial work is somehow felt to be contrary to the idea of effective leadership. There is sometimes a feeling that managerial work is autocratic, one-way down, and controlling. These are misconceptions.

The essence of leadership accountability is for managers to enable all of their subordinates to work together in such a way that each person can get on with his or her own work, knowing where all relevant others are going. In this way, everyone moves along together and the desired outcomes are achieved. A requisite managerial hierarchy enables the managerial leaders and the subordinates to move along together to achieve the organization's goals.

Subordinate Accountability and Authority

The manager-subordinate relationship is a two-way working relationship. Subordinates, too, have explicit accountability and authority. Subordinates are accountable to work to accomplish the tasks they are assigned and to bring to bear their full capability in working to achieve those tasks. The basic nature of the employment contract is that employees will always try to do their best to carry out tasks assigned by their manager.

CROSS-FUNCTIONAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Managerial organizations need an extensive network of relationships between persons who cannot directly assign tasks to each other. These are people in roles who are immediate subordinates of the same manager or who are subordinates of different managers. The designation of cross-functional working relationships describes the exact nature of the relationship and clarifies the authority and accountability of each role involved with respect to certain specified activities or situations.

Cross-Functional Relationships Exist Between Roles

Cross-Functional Working Relationships (CFWRs) are established between roles, not between people. Frequently, what has seemed to be a clash of personalities disappears when working relationships are clearly spelled out. Employees know where they stand with each other, they know who is accountable for doing what and who has the authority to do what in relation to other roles. Establishing these relationships between roles enables disagreements and problem resolution, often caused by insufficient resources, to move up in the organization to a level where the issue can be resolved. For example, the task may need to be changed or more resources may need to be provided.

Establishing Cross-Functional Working Relationships

The Manager-once-Removed establishes CFWRs as a means of integrating the work of the organization across functional areas. Immediate managers, and often the individuals currently filling the roles, are consulted and can suggest which CFWR might be most effective in a given situation, but it is the MoR who makes the decision.

Where the relationship needs to be specified between roles at different levels in the organization, the type of CFWR is decided by the first cross-over manager. A cross-over manager is the first common manager of the roles involved. The MoR or cross-over manager communicates decisions about cross-functional accountability and authority to the individuals concerned and their immediate managers.

Designated cross-functional working relationships can be expected to change as conditions change and as the work in roles change. They need to be reviewed from time to time to determine if different CFWRs are needed.

Exploring CFWRs

If the person in a cross-functional working relationship who needs to initiate a task or take an action is designated as person A and the person who must respond is designated as B, here are some of the questions that arise in thinking about and determining what kind of accountability and authority to assign to integrate work:

Can A advise B?

Can A try to persuade B about something?

Can A tell B to delay doing something?

Can A tell B to stop doing something?

Can A tell B what to do?

Does A need a service from B in order to complete an assignment?

Does A need to get Bs to work together toward a common goal?

Can A report higher in the organization if B does not cooperate?

The Seven Cross-Functional Working Relationships

There are seven different cross-functional working relationships. The first is the Collateral Relationship and is the only one that exists between all immediate subordinates of a given manager. The other six CFWRs exist between roles at one or more remove from the cross-over manager. These are called Advisory, Monitoring Auditing, Prescribing, Service and Coordinative. These six relationships exist between persons who are subordinates of different managers.

Four of the CFWRs are related in nature and carry an increasing amount of accountability and authority. These are Advisory, Monitoring, Auditing and Prescribing. The remaining two CFWRs are called Service and Coordinative. Service accountability and authority is the most common CFWR. Coordinative accountability and authority is used when it is necessary for someone to integrate the work of a number of other persons.

Brief descriptions of the seven CFWRs are given below. Because these relationships are so critical to integrating work across functions, more detailed descriptions of each are also provided along with an example.

Collateral Relationship

The Collateral Relationship is the foundation of effective cross-functional working. Colleague subordinates of the same manager frequently have work that impinges on each other's, yet they are not accountable for each other's work. In this relationship each of the subordinates has the accountability and the authority to try to persuade the other regarding their respective needs. In the collateral relationship people cannot tell each other what to do, but their common manager can expect them to work things out in a satisfactory way. They are not to fight about who is right. If they cannot agree they then attempt to resolve the issue as they believe their manager would want the situation handled. If they cannot come to a mutually agreeable solution that they think would be satisfactory to their manager, then they go **together** to see him/her.

Advisory Relationship

Persons who have advisory accountability and authority are held accountable by their managers for providing information to designated individuals. The advisees are required, by their own managers, to keep the advisor informed about their work and to listen to the advisor's advice. Individuals whose roles have advisory accountability and authority are not held accountable as to whether or not the persons being advised act on their advice. It is the accountability of each individual's manager to see that the advice is used appropriately.

Monitoring Relationship

In a Monitoring Relationship, the monitor has the accountability and authority to be kept informed about the relevant activities of the person being monitored. A, the monitor, can try to persuade B to change what s/he is doing if A is not satisfied with what is happening in the area that s/he has the accountability to monitor. If A is still not satisfied, A can ask B to delay taking action. A then takes the matter up with his/her manager, who decides with B's manager what is to be done. The matter is resolved between the respective managers, and B's manager tells B what s/he should do. Taking the matter up higher is part of A's accountability and authority. If A does not do so, it is assumed A is satisfied with what B is doing.

Auditing Relationship

Auditing accountability and authority usually occurs only when there is some kind of threat to the organization, perhaps with regard to safety, environmental or financial issues. It is not enough, for example, for the persons with accountability in areas such as legal and regulatory merely to be able to try to persuade others to do something in critical areas. In addition to being informed about their work, the auditor is also accountable for requiring designated persons to stop doing something that s/he judges to be out of line with prescribed boundaries and where serious consequences may result. If they disagree, the matter is taken up to their respective managers.

Prescribing Relationship

This is the strongest lateral working relationship and is only used when health and safety issues are at stake. It is sometimes necessary for person A not only to tell person B to stop doing something but also for A to tell B to take a different kind of action if necessary, in order to avert a serious outcome or disaster. This is called prescribing accountability and authority and usually is held by someone who is an expert in a particular field or discipline.

Service Relationship

There are always two parts to the service relationship, the service-getter and the service-giver. They are authorized, respectively, to request and to provide the service in question. If the service-giver cannot provide the needed service for whatever reason, the service-getter must take the matter higher to his or her own manager. This generally happens when there is a shortage of resources that must be resolved by the relevant managers.

Coordinative Relationship

With coordinative accountability and authority A, the coordinator, has the authority to bring together the people whose work s/he is coordinating and to try to persuade them to take a suitable course of action. Coordinative accountability and authority is used where there is a group of people who need to be coordinated in some kind of action or process and need to be called together from time to time. This accountability and authority is given to leaders of coordinative teams.

Collateral Accountability and Authority

Collateral accountability and authority occur in the work of two or more immediate subordinates of the same manager, and who must interact in a manner of mutual accommodation. As has already been mentioned, **this is the only cross-functional working relationship between immediate subordinates of the same manager**. The obligation of immediate subordinates to work together brings about critical integration of the work within each manager's area, starting with the subordinates of the chief executive officer.

Each of the colleagues in a collateral relationship has the accountability and authority to:

- try to persuade his/her colleague to take appropriate action that could facilitate the task with which they are involved and increase its effectiveness
- solve problems based on the context set by the manager
- accommodate the other's needs as far as possible
- refer to their mutual manager any significant problems that cannot be resolved

All immediate subordinates of a manager have collateral accountability and authority with regard to each other and cooperative collateral relationships are required.

Example The president is the common manager of the vice president of sales and the vice president of production in a business unit. The sales vice president has the authority to try to persuade the production vice president to produce more, even though the production unit is up to capacity and scheduling this additional production will drive up costs because of overtime. The president has to be able to rely on these two colleagues to try to find a solution they know she would want them to have. It may satisfy neither of them, or it may satisfy one and not the other, but the president can expect them to work things out in a way that will be satisfactory to her. They can neither tell each other what to do nor stop each other from taking any particular action, but they can try to persuade each other. Only if they cannot come to the kind of solution that they think would be satisfactory to the president do they go together to discuss the situation with her.

Advisory Accountability and Authority

In the advisory relationship the person giving the advice (the advisor or expert) has the accountability and authority to:

- take the initiative in approaching the advisee and presenting ideas or information that may be useful
- take the time to explain to the advisee where and why the ideas may be useful
- be kept informed about the activities and problems of the advisee

There are clear limitations to an advisor's accountability and authority as follows:

- if the advisee does not accept the expert's advice, then the matter must rest there as far as the advisor is concerned. The expert will proceed no further.
- the advisor must not report the advisee's reaction to his/her advice to any other person. It is for the advisees' managers to judge how effectively subordinates are using advisory resources.

If an expert needs to have stronger authority than this, the advisor should instead be given monitoring accountability and authority. In the monitoring relationship the monitor can instruct the person in the role being monitored to delay an action until the matter is brought to a higher level in the organization.

Advisory accountability and authority is a way to ensure that the best use is made of resident experts. With their advisory role relationship clearly spelled out, experts are able to take the initiative in offering their expertise in the form of unsolicited advice to specified others. However, it is essential to define precisely who is authorized to take the initiative to give advice to whom and about what.

In addition, subordinates have advisory accountability and authority in relation to their own managers. If a subordinate thinks of something that might be important to his or her own work or to the manager's work, the subordinate is accountable for advising the manager.

Example The corporate CEO gives the corporate economist advisory accountability and authority to meet with each of the organization's business unit presidents to give them advice when there are major economic issues as well as information about what she thinks they ought to take into account when doing their work. The economist has the authority to go to see the specified individuals to provide them with information and they have to listen. However, it is the accountability of their manager, the corporate EVP, to ensure that each BU president notes the advice and uses that information appropriately.

Monitoring Accountability and Authority

Monitoring accountability and authority is needed in situations in which it is necessary to ensure that employees are adhering to policies and maintaining adequate standards by subjecting what they are doing to critical review. Examples of this are financial limits, technical standards and interpretation of policy.

A person operating in the monitoring capacity has the authority to:

- be informed about the activities and issues of the people being monitored
- discuss possible improvements with them and/or their managers
- try to persuade them to modify their present practices and procedures where necessary and, if not satisfied, to get them to delay until the matter is referred to the relevant managers
- recommend new policies or standards where required
- report sustained or significant deficiencies to his or her own manager

The monitoring component does not give authority to:

- permanently stop people from doing something
- instruct people to change their present practices and procedures
- judge the personal effectiveness of the person being monitored and report on him/her personally
- set new policies and standards

Monitoring involves persuasion but, unlike the advising role, the matter can be taken higher when the monitor is not satisfied with the results of the persuasion. If there is disagreement and the monitor chooses not to exercise his/her authority, then it means the monitor does not consider the disagreement to be serious and is prepared to accept accountability for letting the matter rest.

Example A development specialist has perfected a chemical cleaning process and has been given monitoring accountability and authority for ensuing that it is used effectively in a given unit. The specialist has the authority and accountability to go to the appropriate first-line managers in the unit, to stay informed about how the use of the new process is proceeding and to decide if the cleaning work is taking place in a satisfactory way. If the specialist is not satisfied he can try to persuade the person controlling the new cleaning process to make the necessary modifications.

The person being monitored may say, for example, "Look, this is too costly, I really can't do it this new way. This is the best I can do." If the specialist is not satisfied, he is accountable for taking the matter to his manager to see if there is some way to use the procedure properly. The person being monitored knows that this is what the specialist must do.

Auditing Accountability and Authority

Auditing accountability and authority is used to maintain the quality of the organization's processes and products.

A person in an auditing role has the authority to:

- have access to the work of specified others
- inspect the work in accordance with corporate procedures
- stop someone from doing something that is outside acceptable limits

If the auditor decides that the work being inspected is outside the rules, regulations, policies, tolerances or other limits governing it, the auditor has the authority to instruct the other person to stop doing the work unless and until it can be brought within the organization's agreed standards.

The auditor/inspector does not have the authority to:

- instruct the other person on what to do (if that is necessary then the accountability and authority must be that of prescribing)
- judge the effectiveness of the person being audited and report on him or her personally

If the person whose task is being audited disagrees, he or she must nevertheless stop and then refer the issue to his/her own manager.

Auditing accountability and authority has more force than that of monitoring. It is used for situations that might develop into an emergency or to deal with critical issues such as an environmental, legal or financial threat or where someone is operating too near the margin of safety in a situation or is just over that margin.

Example A boiler operator has set the boiler pressures so close to the margin of safety that the safety officer believes the boiler may explode. The safety officer has been given auditing accountability and authority for these situations. In addition to having the authority to try to persuade the boiler operator to make modifications in the pressure he uses, the safety officer can also tell him to stop operating in the way she believes to be unsafe, until they have both discussed the matter with their managers and the managers have discussed the situation with each other.

Prescribing Accountability and Authority

Prescribing accountability and authority is the strongest of all cross-functional accountability and authority. Here person A can require person B to do something and B must do it. B can raise questions afterwards if s/he is dissatisfied with A's prescription. When there is a difference of opinion between A and B and A has prescribing authority, then A makes the decision. B must do as A instructs.

Wherever there is danger that a catastrophe could result either from failure to conform to established limits or from interpretation of those limits, or in the event of an emergency situation, it is necessary to provide experts to make external checks on the work being done and for these experts to have prescribing accountability and authority.

Example In an organization that moves a dangerous chemical by truck throughout the country one role has been designated prescribing accountability and authority in the event of an emergency. If a road accident occurs the individual in this role is notified and all persons working for the company must do exactly as he instructs until the emergency situation is under control.

Service Accountability and Authority

Service-getting and service-giving accountability and authority are the most widespread cross-functional working relationships in most organizations. Clearly establishing the service component of relationships so that services are provided smoothly substantially increases work and organizational effectiveness. This requires that everyone is clear about the specific services they can get and the services they must give, and about how to act appropriately if they are unable to get or to give the authorized services. Service-getters need to have clearly specified what services they are authorized to get, and from whom, and service-givers need to know what services they must provide and to whom.

The service-giver cannot decide that s/he will not give an authorized service but must have the authority to decide when s/he cannot do so by the time requested. For example, s/he may not have the necessary resources to provide the service. When a service-giver cannot provide the service within the time requested by the service-getter, s/he must report the difficulty to his/her manager, who then resolves the problem and negotiates any delays or reduction of service with the manager of the service-getter.

The service-getter who is confronted by sustained difficulty getting the service required in a timely fashion is accountable for taking the matter to his/her own manager. The service-getter's manager then has the opportunity to negotiate an improved and consistent service provision with the manager of the service-giver.

When the limits of service-giving and service-getting are clearly spelled out and understood by all parties, wasteful and costly service and interpersonal difficulties can usually be avoided.

Example A first-line manager (FLM) is authorized by her manager to get services from the maintenance technician. The technician has the accountability and authority to provide maintenance services to specified first-line managers. The maintenance technician does not have the authority to tell the FLM he cannot provide the service. He does have the authority to tell the FLM he cannot provide it right away and to tell her by when it can be done. The FLM may not try to persuade the technician do it by when she needs the work completed. If she is unsuccessful in getting the service she requires in a timely fashion, she refers the matter to her manager, who discusses it with the manager of the technician.

The FLM is not reporting about 'bad' service, but is taking the matter higher in an effort to postpone the maintenance until the technician can do it, to get more resources allocated to maintenance or to be given the authority to seek maintenance services elsewhere. The matter is referred up a level to where the problem can be resolved.

Coordinative Accountability and Authority

Coordinative accountability and authority is useful as a means of arranging for a number of people to work together who are not subordinate to the same manager. The function of the coordinator is to persuade a group or team of people from different functions to work together in a joint undertaking. The coordinator and the individuals whose efforts are to be coordinated are specified by their own managers.

The coordinator has the accountability and authority to:

- propose how tasks should be approached
- keep the group informed of progress in carrying out the tasks
- help overcome setbacks and problems encountered

In order to carry out these functions, the coordinator has the authority to:

- try to persuade the others to act together to implement plans for action
- arrange meetings
- obtain necessary information from team members
- take issues and disagreements to his/her manager if persuasive efforts fail to settle the problem

A coordinator does not have the authority to issue overriding instructions when there are disagreements. If a coordinative team member is not participating as fully as needed, the leader/coordinator reports the problem to his/her manager, who takes up the issue with the manager of that function. The manager with functional accountability for the issues resolves any problems that the coordinator in unable to resolve.

Example New sales territories have been laid out and some national accounts have been identified. The shifting of accounts has to be done in a smooth fashion. One regional manager is assigned coordinative accountability and authority in regard to implementing these changes. This regional manager will get all of the sales representatives involved together and persuade them to time their actions in a coordinated fashion, and will help coordinate the common courses of action that seem best for the customer and the company.

Summary of Cross-Functional Working Relationships

In these role relationships the person with the specified accountability and authority is not held accountable for what the other person does except in the cases of auditing and prescribing. Person A, with the designated accountability and authority, can initiate activity but the other person, B, has the authority to decide whether or not to accept the instruction or initiation. The manager of A, the initiator, is accountable for the A's work in relation to the other person, B. B’s manager is accountable for B’s work and outputs.

In the case of prescribing and auditing accountability and authority, the auditor can tell person B to stop doing something and the prescriber can tell B what to do, or what action to take to avert some kind of serious event. The instructions to delay or to do something must be carried out by B, who can refer questions to his/her own manager afterwards. Prescribing and auditing accountability and authority are generally specified only for serious circumstances. Ordinarily one would want to provide coordinative or monitoring accountability and authority, or even, where appropriate, the lesser advisory type of accountability and authority.