

Fact sheet – Role and scope of Senior Mgt

An Expansion of the Typical Manager's Role.

The title of senior manager is most often used and encountered and used in large organizations with multiple layers of management. A senior manager has responsibilities and authority that are broader in scope than a front-line manager, and a door is typically open for senior managers to move into a director or general manager role.

The flip side is that the position can involve a good many challenges and it almost always brings with it a great deal of responsibility. Being a senior manager is not for the faint of heart, but it might be the perfect position for you depending on your personality and skills.



Common Responsibilities

Like all managers, the senior manager is responsible for planning and directing the work of a group of individuals. They monitor their work and take corrective actions when necessary. Senior managers might guide workers directly or they might direct several supervisors, who in turn directly manage the workers. They often supervise the largest or most important group or groups in a company.

Core responsibilities of the senior manager include:

- ❖ Providing guidance to direct reports, typically comprising first-line managers and supervisors
- ❖ Ensuring clarity around priorities and goals for the entire functional area
- ❖ Approving requests for investment to a certain level of authority
- ❖ Managing overall financial budgeting for her function
- ❖ Approving hiring and firing requests within her group
- ❖ Guiding the talent identification and development processes for a group or function
- ❖ Working across functions with peers in other groups to ensure collaboration for shared goals
- ❖ Interacting with senior management for reporting
- ❖ Working with executive and peers for strategy development and execution planning
- ❖ Communicating financial and goal results and key performance indicators to direct reports
- ❖ Facilitating goal-level creation for the broader function and working with managers to ensure the goals cascade to all workers

Why this position?

It's common for larger firms to evaluate their positions by scope, responsibility, size, and budgetary authority, and then to assign a level to these positions. The senior manager level or designation represents a step up from manager and offers the opportunity for individuals to take on new responsibilities and increase their contributions. Implementing this added and higher level also helps organizations recruit experienced professionals and slot them into roles that fit their capabilities and compensation.

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Too Many Layers of Management?

Complexity and inefficiency tend to increase as organizations grow and become more stratified with additional layers of management. Consider a department that includes supervisors, managers who are responsible for supervisors, and senior managers who are responsible for the managers who watch over supervisors. The myriad of layers in the structure can slow decision-making, increase political and communication complexity, and ultimately breed dysfunction.

The Case for the Senior Manager Role

Implementing the role of a senior manager makes good business sense under a number of circumstances. The senior manager can serve as the "adult" in the group at times when the team is growing quickly and chaotically. He can interface with other functions for needed resources and provide mature guidance to managers and workers during a period of change.

This position can represent a tangible target or step up as part of a manager's career development plan and responsibilities when there's a clear distinction between the role of manager and senior manager. The senior manager can also support managers and take on responsibility for discrete work teams when the span of control for a group's managers is too broad.



Developing as a Senior Manager

This role is an expansion of the typical manager's role in terms of breadth of responsibilities and overall accountability. A manager who is interested in advancing to this level should focus on personal professional development for leadership skills, including:

- ◆ Being more people centric (outward mindset)
- ◆ Deliver impact in all they do
- ◆ Focus on talent development
- ◆ Be a Coaching Expert
- ◆ Have a strategy for their department/area
- ◆ Understand the company value chain, how it makes money and have insight to its customers
- ◆ Have a firm grip on the finances, Capital expenditure, operational expenditure, budgets.
- ◆ Good influence and negotiation skills
- ◆ Good verbal, and written communication – especially presentations

Challenges the Senior Manager face

Regardless of the term "senior" in this position's title, a senior manager is still in middle-level management. These important middle-level roles are responsible for their people doing the work of the business, but they often lack the authority to add resources or to make the significant changes that are sometimes necessary to improve efficiency or the quality of the work environment. In spite of the challenges, the role is an excellent training ground for advancing to general manager at some point in the future.