

owner may make the big decisions about crops, animals, facilities, supplies, and money. But in most agricultural firms, the staff working with these inputs actually produce what generates revenue, and if you don't have those folks working well, you cannot be successful.

What actually is involved in managing human resources? Despite one tongue-in-cheek analysis, a lot:

*As nearly everyone knows, a manager has practically nothing to do except: to decide what is to be done; to tell somebody to do it; to listen to reasons why it should not be done, why it should be done by someone else, or why it should be done in a different way; to follow-up to see if the thing has been done; to discover that it has not; to inquire why; to listen to excuses from the person who should have done it; to follow up again to see if the thing has been done, only to discover that it has been done incorrectly; to point out how it should have been done; to conclude that as long as it has been done, it may as well be left where it is; to wonder if it is not time to get rid of a person who cannot do a thing right; to reflect that he or she probably has a family, and that certainly any successor would be just as bad, maybe worse; to consider how much simpler and better the thing would have been done if one had done it oneself in the first place; to reflect sadly that one could have done it right in 20 minutes, and, as things turned out, one had to spend two days to find out why it had taken three weeks for somebody to do it wrong.*

—Anonymous



## Functions of Management

As tempting as it may be to throw up your hands at this prospect and try to find a way to do all the work yourself, the laws of physics simply will not allow it. A more constructive, classical view is that managers perform the following five broad functions, which result in other people carrying out work integral to the business:

1. Planning—Developing the business purpose, philosophy, goals, and strategies
2. Organizing—Establishing a system of roles and relationships to achieve business goals; dividing the work to be done, defining units (e.g., ranches, departments, crews, jobs) responsible for portions of it, and providing a means of coordination among them
3. Staffing—Attracting, developing, and retaining people able and willing to perform the jobs as organized
4. Leading—Directly influencing people and facilitating their work, generally through interpersonal communications

Need to Be a Manager

5. **Controlling**—Assessing results against objectives, seeing what was actually done compared to what had been planned, and taking corrective action where required

In larger businesses, these functions are divided among managers at different organizational levels. Owners and general managers usually do most of the planning and organizing. Foremen and field supervisors handle day-to-day leading and controlling. All these functions require knowledge and skill. Organizational and personnel management are complex activities, so investments in managerial awareness, knowledge, and skills are instrumental to good business results, just as biological expertise is to cultural practice decisions.

Managers wear many hats. In *The Nature of Managerial Work*, Henry Mintzberg identifies 10 somewhat overlapping roles that managers commonly assume, and depending on their level in the business and specific position, managers play these roles to different extents. As shown below, they divide into three groups: interpersonal, informational, and decisional.

## Types of Activity in Managerial Roles

### Interpersonal

- **Figurehead**—Officially represents the business, greets visitors, and signs legal documents
- **Leader**—Sets a tone; directs, trains, equips, counsels, and evaluates employees
- **Liaison**—Maintains information links both inside and outside the work unit or organization

### Informational

- **Monitor**—Seeks and receives information, especially nonroutine, from published, as well as personal, sources in other organizations
- **Disseminator**—Provides outside information to others in the department or business, and facilitates internal communications
- **Spokesperson**—Tells outside stakeholders about business situations, plans, policies, achievements, and problems

### Decisional

- **Entrepreneur**—Identifies and introduces ideas for improvement, initiates planning for change, directs improvement projects
- **Disturbance Handler**—Deals with internal and external crises, disputes, and other situations not resolved through routine procedures
- **Resource Allocator**—Decides how time, staff, equipment, funds, and other allocable assets are distributed throughout the business
- **Negotiator**—Confers to reach agreement on terms of transaction with suppliers, customers, creditors, and service and labor organizations