

Career in Management

The lure of management as a career path is strong. After all, it's good to be the boss. Or, is it?

In typical organizations, managerial positions range from front-line supervisory positions to the top manager in the firm, the CEO. In-between, there are managers of managers, general managers, product and project managers (focused on initiatives and offerings) and a variety of other roles that regardless of the title are still management positions.

- Senior managers and directors are typically responsible for a number of groups and departments, and they invest a great deal of their time on supporting the development and translation of strategies and goals into programs and actions. They are directly accountable to senior executives, often reporting to a person with a vice-president title.
- Vice presidents are often the highest ranking individual in a particular function. From sales to marketing, to I.T. to finance and engineering, most firms identify the functional leader as a vice-president reporting to someone with a "C-level" title. These individuals are functional experts charged with working with other senior executives to form and implement strategy and then to ensure that their functional resources are aligned around the right initiatives and activities.
- A general manager is accountable for all resources and results for a line of business in the company. The general manager is a mini-CEO, responsible for strategy, structure, talent, key decisions and operating results including revenues and costs. The general manager is accountable to a corporate group, often the CEO, and her time is spent predominantly on overseeing large strategic initiatives, facilitating key decisions and coaching and developing direct functional managerial reports.

The Positives of a Career in Management:

There are most definitely great reasons to pursue a career in management. As one great engineer turned engineering manager once expressed to me:

As an engineer, I can help the company with my contributions. As a manager of engineers, I can help the company in a much larger way by supporting and developing a whole team of great engineers.

The ability to impact your firm in a larger way as my engineering friend suggests is one great driver to pursue a career in management. Others include:

1. You have the ability to amplify your own ideas on strategy, direction and problem-solving through others.
2. You gain the reward that comes from developing great professionals over time.
3. You become involved in defining how the business improves and changes over time.
4. You develop your own skills for leading and coaching.
5. You have some autonomy over your own priorities, although less than you might imagine.
6. Adding managerial responsibilities to your job function will result in increased compensation. However, many firms also offer compensation growth options for their valued individual contributors, so moving to management is not the only way to grow your income.
7. You are immersed in working with people of all levels, backgrounds and experience sets: this can be exhilarating.
8. Many managers, particularly those closer to the customer or front-line employees are involved in constant problem-solving and troubleshooting, which can be rewarding and certainly make the days fly by.
9. As you grow as a manager, more of your work shifts to guiding others instead of doing the actual tasks. You grow your skills and diversify your experience by moving into management.

The list of the most popular MBA specializations in no particular order is as follows:

- Marketing
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Systems
- Operations
- Hotel Management
- Consulting
- Entrepreneurship
- Production Management