

"Perhaps the world's premier management thinker"
Tom Peters
"One of the most original minds in management"
Fast Company

HENRY MINTZBERG SIMPLY MANAGING

The award-winning *Managing*, streamlined for busy managers

What Managers Do—
and Can Do Better

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Henry Mintzberg offers a practical sensibility as he reflects on the roles and responsibilities of managers in the work place. After studying a variety of jobs, from orchestral leader, factory manager, to managing a United Nations refugee camp, he has aligned common characteristics, and issues managers face in their roles. Mintzberg offer a practical overview of the job of managing that acknowledges the inherit flaws of those who occupy these challenging roles. He also challenges the fact that

the roles of managing can be separated. Perceiving managers as people, from a holistic perspective, Mintzberg considers all managers to be inherently flawed but tempers this with the fact that managerial flaws are not always fatal.



About the Author

A graduate from the college of Mechanical Engineering from McGill University (1961) Mintzberg went on to work in

Wecome To Simply Managing

Chapter 1: Myths

Chapter 2: Relentless Pressure

Chapter 3: What Managers Do and Why

Chapter 4: Varieties of Managing

Chapter 5: Conundrums

Chapter 6: Effectiveness

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Operational Research at the Canadian National Railways. He then went on to receive his masters and doctorate from the MIT Sloan School of Management in Boston. He returned to McGill in 1968 joining the Desautels Faculty of Management. He has been a visiting professor at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburg, London Business School in the U.K. During the past two decades, Mintzberg has collaborated with colleagues from around the world publishing over 170 articles and writing 17 books.

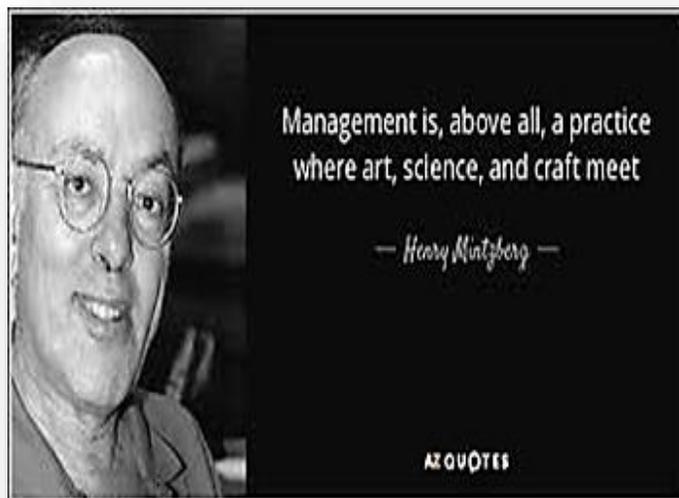
Mintzberg has also been selected as Distinguished Scholar for the year 2000 by the Academy of Management, two McKinsey prizes for articles in the Harvard Business Review, included election as an Officer of the Order of Canada and National Order of Quebec.

Chapter 1: Managing Beyond the Myths: What Managing is and isn't

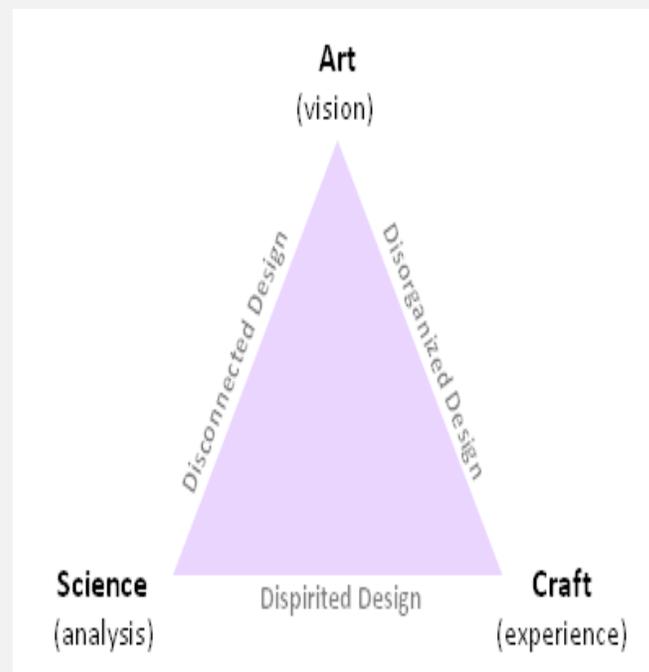
Mintzberg immediately confronts the current separation of leadership from management. He considers the role of leadership and managing as a balance between communities of people within an organization. He considers the role of management to be a blend between art, craft and science. The managerial role must bring out the best in people, so they can know better, decide better, and act better (Mintzberg, 2013). Mintzberg considers art of developing insights and vision while developing the craft of management while learning through experiences. He promotes the idea that there is no “one best way” to manage and that time, place, situation and “fit” are all key environmental conditions that must be navigated within an organization. Mintzberg offers no magic bullets or simple solutions but encourages the reader to reflect and question their practices.

Mintzberg's theme had been echoed from a previous interview conducted by McGill University,

“Managers that don't lead are boring and leaders that don't manage have no ideas what is going on” (Mintzberg, 2010).



MANAGEMENT AS ART, SCIENCE AND CRAFT



Key Points from Chapter 1

- Sobering Realities
- Enough Leadership – Time for “Communityship”
- A Practice, Not a Profession
- Management is Not Changing

Chapter 2: Managing Relentlessly: The Pressures of Managerial Work

In this chapter Mintzberg examines the pace, variety of activities, actions, formal and informal communication and the lateral nature of managing between the operational core and the strategic apex. Managing according to Mintzberg is a job with “perpetual preoccupation: the manager can never be free to forget work, never has the pleasure of knowing, that there is nothing left to do” (Mintzberg, 2013). He considers a manager's ability to shift between mundane activities to those which require an intense investment physically or socially. Sitting between the strategic apex and the operational core managers make decisions about who, how and what information is disseminated. Informal communication such as gossip, hearsay and speculation become a part of the managerial privilege thus becoming a center of information. Effective managers promote the establishment of lateral relationships among colleagues and act less like delegators than seeking out personal who can mutually benefit by being involved in particular activities.

THE INTERNET MAY BE ENHANCING NETWORKS WHILE WEAKENING COMMUNITIES, WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS AND ACROSS THEM.

E-MAIL IS RESTRICTED BY THE POVERTY OF WORDS ALONE. THERE IS NO TONE OF VOICE TO HEAR, NO GESTURES TO SEE, NO PRESENCE TO FEEL. MANAGING IS AS MUCH ABOUT ALL THESE THINGS AS IT IS ABOUT THE FACTUAL CONTENT OF MESSAGES

(MINTZBERG, 2013)

Managerial Facts and Folklore

Fact	Folklore
<p>Study after study has shown that:</p> <p>(a) managers work at an unrelenting pace</p> <p>(b) their activities are characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation, and</p> <p>(c) they are strongly oriented to action.</p>	<p>The manager is a reflective, systematic planner.</p>
<p>Managers tend to favor informal communicating, especially telephone calls and meetings, as well as e-mail</p>	<p>The manager depends on formal information.</p>
<p>Managing is as much about lateral relationships among colleagues and associates as it is about hierarchical relationships up and down some hierarchy.</p>	<p>Managing is mostly about hierarchical relationships between "superiors" and "subordinates"</p>
<p>The manager is neither conductor nor puppet: control in this job, to the extent possible, tends to be covert more than overt, by establishing obligations to which he or she must later respond and by turning other obligations to his or her advantage.</p>	<p>Managers maintain tight control—of their time, their activities, their units</p>

Chapter 3: Managing Information, People, Action: A Model of Managing

In this chapter, Mintzberg considers managing on three planes: through information, with people and for action. By disregarding any, one of these three planes the full job of management cannot be realized (Mintzberg, 2013). By focusing on only one aspect of these three planes excludes the influences they exert on each other. Managers encourage others through coaching, building teams and motivation. Information is used to guide people to take action. Information is communicated between the operational core and strategic apex while also being influenced by the environments inside and outside of the organization. Managers lead and link people to information while doing internal scheduling and planning and dealing with outside influences

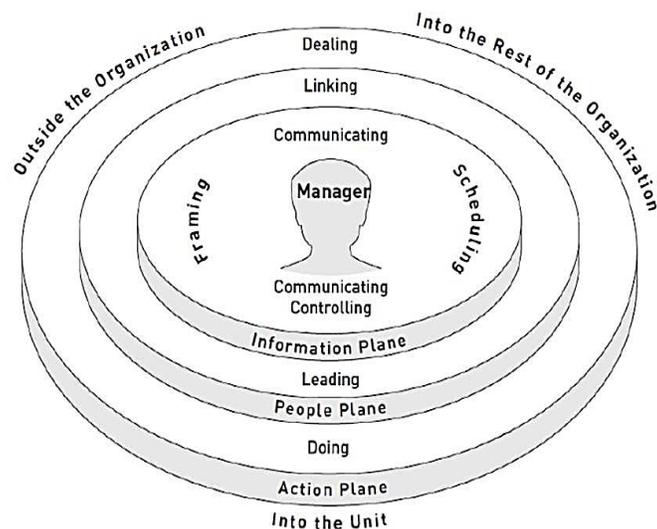


Figure 3.2 A MODEL OF MANAGING

2009

Managing Through Information

The Manager Is Monitor. He or she may not know that much about any particular specialty but is in a position to know something about all of them. Thus, **the manager becomes the *nerve center* of the unit—its best-informed member**

The Manager Is Disseminator. Much of the manager's information is simply disseminated to other people in the unit. **Like bees, managers cross-pollinate**

The Manager Is Spokesperson. As spokesperson for the unit, **the manager represents it to the outside world**, speaking to various publics on its behalf, lobbying for its causes, representing its expertise in public forums, and keeping outside stakeholders up-to-date on its progress

The Verbal, the Visual, and the Visceral. Indeed, much of an informed manager's information is not even verbal so much as visual and visceral—in other words, seen and felt more than heard

The job of managing is significantly one of information processing, especially through a great deal of listening, seeing, and feeling, besides just talking

(Mintzberg, 2013)

Controlling Inside the Unit

Mintzberg (2013) considered that controlling has to be done, but the trick is to avoid being captured by it, so that it comes to dominate the work of managing.

Decision Making as Designing. Managers design things—projects, structures, systems—in order to guide the behavior.

Decision Making as Delegating. Here the manager identifies the need to get something done but delegates the specific deciding and the doing to someone else in the unit.

Decision Making as Authorizing. In this case, decision making reduces to passing judgment on the decisions of others.

Decision Making as Allocating Resources. Managers devote a good deal of their decision-making, including within their budgeting systems, to the allocation of resources—money, materials, and equipment, as well as the efforts of other people. **Treating employees as "human resources" means to deal with them as if they are just information: they get reduced to a narrow dimension of their whole selves.**

Decision Making as Deeming. Finally, there is deeming, which has become an increasingly popular form of controlling, but hardly under that label. ("Management by objectives" is a better-known one.) By deeming, I mean imposing targets on people

Managers have to get beyond the targets—into the workings of their units. Put differently, some deeming is fine; management by deeming is not (Mintzberg, 2013).

Managing With People

On this plane, the manager helps others and encourages action to be taken. Managers work to engage staff members through persuading, supporting and working with people collegially or through teamwork. Mintzberg explains that this component engages a manager’s ability to lead people through being perceived as helping staff to develop themselves as individuals.

Managing Action

Proactive and Reactive

Manages approach action from a proactive and reactive perspective. Proactivity they plan and manage projects internally. Reactivity managers handle disturbances that act externally on the organizational system. Mintzberg asserts that the effective managers do not avoid disturbances but have built coalitions that are capable of dealing with turbulence and can mitigate risk.



- Leadership Means
- Helping to Develop Individuals
- Helping to Build People
- Helping to Build and Maintain Teams

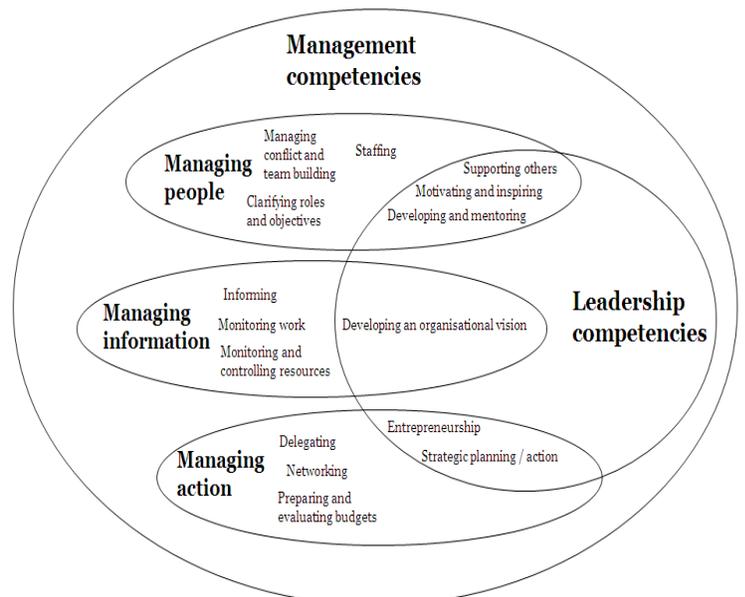
5 Ways To Get It Wrong

1. Sieves
Influence flows too easily
2. Dams
Block too much from the external
3. Sponges
Absorb most of the pressure
4. Hoses
Turn the pressure on the people outside
5. Drips
Too little pressure on the outside

Well-Rounded Managing

Mintzberg reminds us that a balance between the people-oriented, information-oriented, and action-oriented planes calls for a well-rounded manager. He considers the need for managers to reflect on themselves using a holistic perspective.

Mintzberg outlines 4 managerial competencies which include, **Personal**, **Interpersonal**, **Informational**, and **Actional**. Mintzberg’s diagram below shows the relationships between each of the competencies.



“Managing is almost as varied as life itself, because it is about so much that happens in life itself” (Mintzberg, 2013)

In this chapter Mintzberg moves from discussing the characteristics and content of managing to the variety of styles. As he examines management, we are reminded that we cannot dismiss or isolate any one influence or factor “what we can dismiss is the effort to understand managing one factor at a time. These factors thus have to be considered together, one practice at a time”, (Mintzberg, 2013).

The External Context of Managing

The managerial job itself is somewhat removed from the operational core. Even though there are many unique cultures many studies have shown similarities. A “business knows best” ideal does not consider the wide variety of business models and management styles that operate within them.

The Nature of The Organization

Managers had the strongest impact on professional organizations, especially when managers worked closely with operating professionals

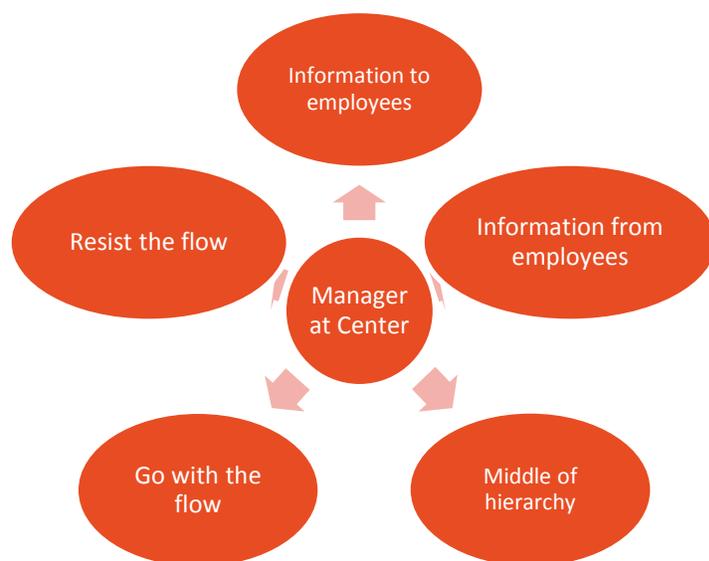
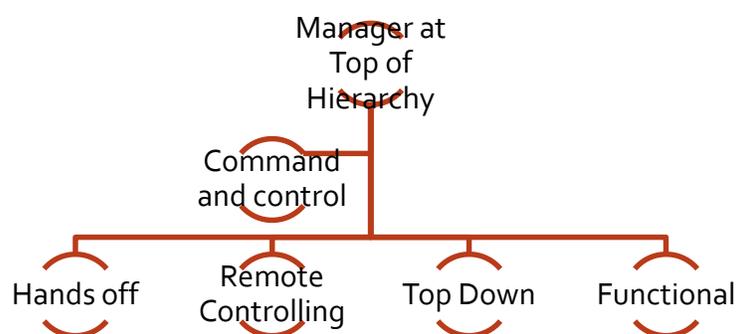
Man Once again, the simple generalities do not work. As Quy Huy of Insead has put it, middle managers are often “far better than most senior executives ... at leveraging the informal network ... that makes substantial, lasting change possible.” They know “where the problems are” yet can also “see the big picture” (2001:73.). Managers do what they have to do, not what theory tells them.

The Temporary Pressures of Managing

Mintzberg considers the daily life of managing to be perpetually immersed in pressure, with an occasional crisis such as a strike or other outside environmental influence. He cautions the reader from using theories that perpetuate the “heroic leadership” model but favours participative management.

The Postures of Managing

Mintzberg considers how managers adopt each posture during different times and situations. Managers may need to exert a top down style in one situation, but may integrate themselves through a web in another. Understanding that each posture serves a purpose can help manager’s better suit themselves to certain situations.





The Person in The Job

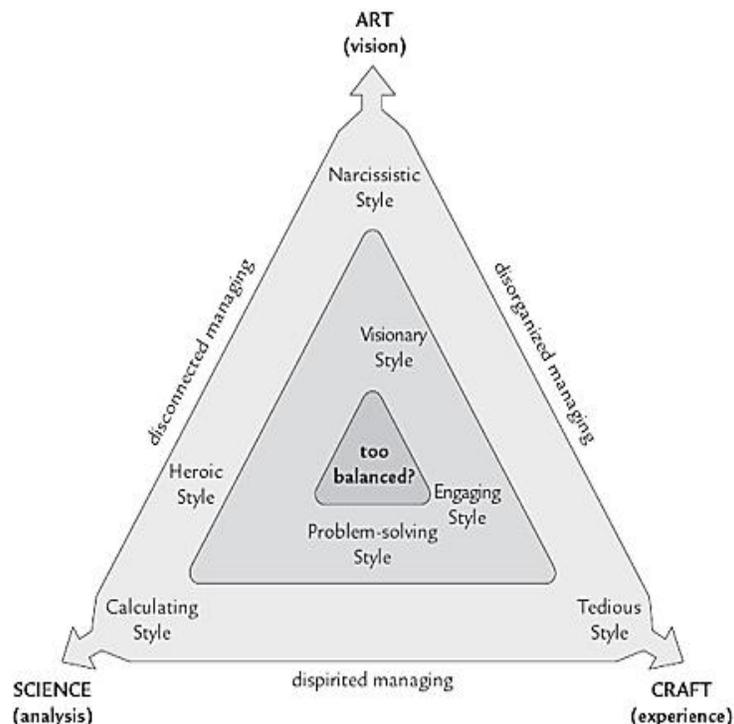
Mintzberg takes a holistic approach as he seeks to explain managerial styles. He considers the managers background, tenure, nature of the organization and it's ability to nurture managerial candidates and personal styles.

Manages can see themselves as being on the top, at the center or interwoven throughout a web of activity. Those who consider themselves interwoven may fit the context they manage more easily.

Circle one of the three words from each row that best describes management. When done add up how many you have circled in each of the three columns.

Art	Craft	Science
Ideas	Experiences	Facts
Intuitive	Practical	Analytical
Heart	Hands-on	Head
Strategies	Process	Outcomes
Inspiring	Engaging	Informing
Passionate	Helpful	Reliable
Novel	Realistic	Determined
Imagining	Learning	Organizing
Seeing it	Doing it	Thinking it
"The possibilities"	"Consider it done!"	"That's perfect!"
Total=	Total=	Total=

Mintzberg's management triangle can help managers understand their strengths and weakness while striving for balance.



ONLY MANAGER

Maximal-plan organize coordinate control Fayol 1916-1949

Participative-empowered, decentralized...implied that power can be given and then taken away

Shared-linking, dealing the external while controlling, leading, a balance between technical, artistic and craft

Distributive- amongst individuals as well as collective decisions

Supportive- If nonmanagers can do more of the managerial roles, then managers themselves can do less. **Consider carefully this form called supportive managing because we are going to be seeing a lot more of it.**

Minimal- Here there is hardly anything left to manage, sometimes hardly even an organization as such. But there does remain some coherent activity in need of coordination, from managers. **Decentralization**

NO MANAGER

Chapter 5: Managing on Tightropes: The Inescapable Conundrums of Managing

Mintzberg suggest that managers walk tightropes, as they are responsible for reconciling interests, conditions and conflicting forces rather than trying to resolve issues. He considers the Syndrome of Superficiality, The Predicament of Planning, and The Labyrinth of Decomposition as managers think about their roles.

Syndrome of Superficiality

How much attention an issue will receive?

Does an issue need time for reflection?

Managers must balance between pressure, time and attention.

The Predicament of Planning

Does planning, technique, and strategy suffer in the place of innovation and creativity?

Can new strategies emerge informally?

Managers must balance between planning and flexibility.

The Labyrinth of Decomposition

Are issues chunked, examined, then put back together and synthesized?

“The big picture has to be painted stroke by stroke, experience by experience”. The painter may start with an overall image, but from there the picture has to emerge from a host of little actions. (Mintzberg, 2013)

Mangers must balance between micromanaging and disengagement.

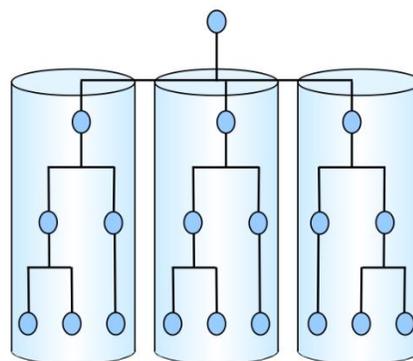
The Quandary of Connecting

Mintzberg considers how mangers keep in touch with the operating core and the strategic apex when the very nature of their job is intrinsically disconnected.

Silos

The following illustrations show how different compartments, silos, can be separated like classrooms in a school. They operate independently, side by side with little communication between them. Consider a school principal at the top with classroom teachers, then students compartmentalized, in classrooms.

Silos in Organizations

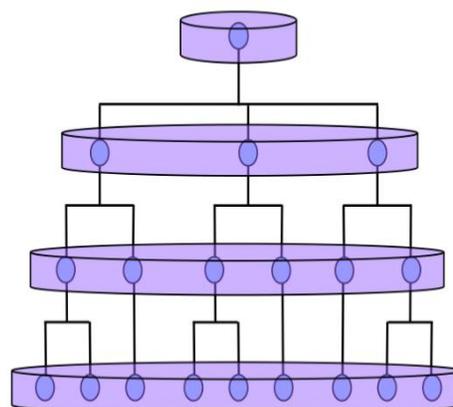


PPT Organization Short (including I&M) Feb 2015
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Slabs

In this illustration, slabs show the separation between each level of organization that may lead to strategic gridlock. Senior managers may lack detailed knowledge of robust strategies that may go unrecognized below them.

Slabs in Organizations



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Connecting may seem easy but Mintzberg again recognized the nuances between people, hierarchy, and environment.

Closing gaps by simply:

- bringing people “up” to connect with management
- taking management “down” to get in touch with operations
- shrinking “gaps” between barriers
- using middle managers to connect “up” with “down”

Depend on connections that require effective use of managers as they link each level.

The Dilemma of Delegating-Information Plane

Regular sharing of information to those who need to know and can assist and help in the future and is mutually beneficial.

Delegation by dumping is not responsible

The Mystery of Measuring-Information Plane

Mintzberg challenges the adage that “if you can’t measure it, you can manage it.”

1. *Hard data are limited in scope.* They may provide the basis for description, but often not for explanation.

2. *Hard data are often excessively aggregated.* These data usually comprise many facts combined together and then reduced to some aggregate number, such as that quintessential bottom line

3. *Much hard information arrives too late*

4. *Finally, a surprising amount of hard data is just plain unreliable.*

The Enigma of Order-People Plane

Because while every organization wants to keep going, some outside forces inevitably keep changing. How to bring order to the work of others when the work of managing is itself so disorderly?

As Andy Grove of Intel put it: “Let chaos reign, then rein in chaos” (1995:141). “The perfect conundrum! They have to weave back and forth between letting the chaos reign and reining in the chaos”. (Mintzberg, 2013)

The Paradox of Control-People Plane

How is a manager to maintain the necessary state of controlled disorder when the manager above is imposing order?

Having the wisdom to know where and how to disobey orders are skill developed by sophisticated managers. This can serve to promote change up the hierarchy.

The Clutch of Confidence-People Plane

All alone, the managers have to convey the impression that they know where they are going, even when they are not sure, so that others feel safe to follow. In other words, managers often have to feign confidence. For modest managers, this can be difficult enough; for the supremely confident, it may be not difficult at all, just catastrophic.

So the Clutch of Confidence reads, **How to maintain a sufficient level of confidence without crossing over into arrogance?**

The Ambiguity of Acting-Action Plane

Of course, events are always unfolding. And major events usually unfold unpredictably. So **the trick is to know when to wait, despite the costs of delay, and when to act, despite unforeseeable consequences.** And for that there is no manual, no course, not even any five easy steps—just informed judgment.

The Riddle of Change-Action Plane

Mintzberg continues to challenge current ideals of change as he states, “These days we hear a great deal of hype about change,. Yet our automobile engines use the same technology as the Ford Model T. **Even the claims about change haven't changed:**”

Few phenomena are more remarkable yet few have been less re-marked than the degree in which material civilization, the progress of mankind in all those contrivances which oil the wheels and promote the comforts of daily life have been concentrated in the last half century. It is not too much to say that in these respects more has been done, richer and more prolific discoveries have been made, grander achievements have been realized in the course of the 50 years of our own lifetime than in all the previous lifetimes of the race.

This appeared in *Scientific American*—in 1868!

Managers must balance the search for short-term certainty and long-term flexibility (Mintzberg, 2013)

The Ultimate Conundrum

Mintzberg challenges the simplicity of a prescriptive understanding of management because of the varied contexts that it occupies. He even considers the idea of attaining longitudinal balance as fleeting because of the dynamic environment that the manager occupies.

“Managing is to not just walk a tightrope but to move through a multidimensional space on all kinds of tightropes.” (Mintzberg, 2013)

Managers must face their predicaments, riddles, challenges, and work with the idea that they can reconcile differences through understanding and reflecting.

Chapter 6: Managing Effectively: Getting to the Essence of Managing

In his final chapter Mintzberg continues to refrain from offering easy answers and assessments of managers. Mintzberg asserts that, “believing in easy answers only makes it harder”. Managers and those who work with them must face the complexities and variables of the environment and how people adapt within it.

Mintzberg lists 52 qualities of the supposedly effective manager but then states that if you can achieve all of them you would be effective...just not human. Here are a few:

Courageous, committed, reflective, insightful, innovative, perceptive, pragmatic, proactive, charismatic, passionate, visionary, energetic, engaging, collaborative, supportive, stable, fair, accountable, consistent, balanced and finally...**tall**.

Mintzberg included “tall” because it ranked ahead of many other items because managers are on average taller than other people. This is a good example of the “soft underbelly” of “hard data”.

The Inevitably Flawed Manager

“Successful managers are flawed—we are all flawed—but their particular flaws are not fatal under the circumstances” (Mintzberg, 2013)

Aligning personal strengths and weakness with the task of leadership and management to a particular environment can promote success. Finding a good fit for those who manage.

Unhappily Managed Organizational Families

Person Failures

Imbalance with an overemphasis on art, craft or science. They can be perceived as narcissistic, tedious, calculating, while lacking of focus, character, and style.

Job Failures

An organization may have embedded problems that makes failure a foregone conclusion. Consider a sales manager of a company with poor products.

Fit Failures

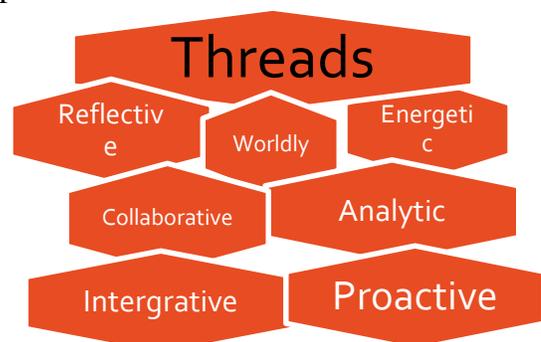
Mintzberg challenges the idea that a “good” fit may always be the best matching.

Success Failures

Growth and success may change the managers. Success may cause lack of innovation and an ability to adapt to an environment of constant change.

Happily Managed Organizational Families

Mintzberg offers a framework for effectiveness without emphasizing the importance of any particular part but a considers this to be a tapestry of competence.



Selecting Effective Managers

Mintzberg offer some sage advice when considering how managers are selected which include acknowledging:

- Flaws as much as qualities
- Providing a voice to those who are managed
- Considering an outside insider, “choosing the devil you know”

Assessing Managerial Effectiveness

Mintzberg acknowledges that a manager must be judged by the unique context in which they are placed:

- Matches are effective
- There are no effective managers in general
- No such thing as a professional manager
- Managerial effectiveness within the unit
- Contributions managers have made to the unit
- Impact beyond the unit and even organization

Developing Managers Effectively

Developing managers in the classroom provides an understanding of function but without practical experiences development cannot be attained.

- *Managers, let alone leaders, cannot be created in a classroom*
- *Managing is learned on the job, enhanced by a variety of experiences and challenges.*
- *Development programs can help managers make meaning of their experience, by encouraging them to reflect on it personally and to share it with their colleagues.*
- *Intrinsic to this development has to be the carrying of the learning back to the workplace, for impact on the organization*
- *Programs for managers need to be organized according to the nature of managing itself*—for example, in terms of managerial mindsets, not business functions. Marketing + finance + accounting, etc., does not = management

“There is nothing so powerful, or so natural, as engaged managers who are committed to developing themselves, their organizations, and their communities” (Mintzberg, 2013).

Managing Naturally

Finally, Mintzberg espouses his desire to reunite or reconnect the human, holistic component of people managing...people. He cautions against treating organizations as monolithic, mythical entities but rather as communities of people in which all are striving for the same goal, respect.

Managerial Reflections

“By the excessive promotion of leadership, we demote everyone else. We create clusters of followers who have to be driven to perform, instead of leveraging the natural propensity of people to cooperate in communities. In this light, effective managing can be seen as engaged to be engaging, connected to be connecting”

(Mintzberg, 2013)

As a part of the reflective thread, Mintzberg offered the following questions for managers to ponder.

1. Where do I get my information, and how? Can I make greater use of my contacts? How can I get others to provide me with the information I need? Do I have sufficiently powerful mental models of those things I must understand?
2. What information do I disseminate? How can I get more information to others so they can make better decisions?
3. Do I tend to act before enough information is in? Or do I wait so long for all the information that opportunities pass me by?
4. What pace of change am I asking my unit to tolerate? Is this balanced with the needed stability?
5. Am I sufficiently well informed to pass judgment on the proposals submitted to me? Can I leave final authorization for more of these proposals to others?
6. What are my intentions for my unit? Should I make them more explicit to guide better the decisions of others? Or do I need flexibility to change them at will?

7. Am I sufficiently sensitive to the influence of my actions, and my managerial style in general? Do I find an appropriate balance between encouragement and pressure? Do I stifle initiative?
8. Do I spend too much time, or too little, maintaining my external relationships? Are there certain people whom I should get to know better?
9. In scheduling, am I just reacting to the pressures of the moment? Do I find the appropriate mix of activities, or do I over concentrate on what I find interesting? Am I more efficient with particular kinds of work at special times of the day or week?
10. Do I overwork? What effect does my workload have on my efficiency and my family? Should I force myself to take breaks or reduce the pace of my activity?
11. Am I too superficial in what I do? Can I really shift moods as quickly and frequently as my schedule requires? Should I decrease the amount of fragmentation and interruption?
12. Am I a slave to the action and excitement of my job, so that I am no longer able to concentrate on issues? Should I spend more time reading and probing deeply into certain issues?
13. Do I use the different media appropriately? Do I know how to make the most of written communication and e-mail? Am I a prisoner of the pace of e-mail?
14. Do I rely excessively on face-to-face communication, thereby putting all but a few of my reports at an informational disadvantage? Do I spend enough time observing activities firsthand?
15. Do my obligations consume all my time? How can I free myself from them to ensure that I am taking the unit where I want it to go? How can I turn my obligations to my advantage?

Evaluation, Reflection and Growth

by Jason Collin

As the vice-principal of a K-12 rural school for the past six years, I find Mintzberg's ideas **refreshing yet familiar**. He offers no simple solutions or answers to the complex role of the manager. He **dispels the mythology** of a "one best way" perception of leadership and organizational structure as well as the idea of a "heroic leadership" by individuals. Mintzberg acknowledges the **ever-changing** relationships, environments and communities that form through organizational structures. Mintzberg challenges the idea of managing people through "Human Resources" and considers the human aspect from a **holistic** perspective, which is more consistent with the title of "Human Relationships".

His book offers a **reflective lens** to view the management position and forgives the people who occupy these positions for their flaws. Mintzberg promotes **thought, reflection** and **growth** for those who wish to better understand the turbulent role of management. Applying Mintzberg's perspective and examining a school, as a **community of people** is certainly a resounding notion for any aspiring manager, principal or staff member.

Source: Adapted from Mintzberg (1973:175–177)

