profile

OF AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER

for managerial excellence
in the united nations

Office of Human Resources Management
DIVISION FOR ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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introduction

This profile defines effective managerial performance within the context of the United Nations. It is based on the assumption that regardless of their level of responsibility within the organization, the defining characteristic of effective managers is that they achieve results, and that they do so with the full engagement of a committed and motivated staff or team of colleagues.

the managerial effectiveness model

The model defines both what an effective manager does, and what he/she achieves. It takes into account factors that have an impact on effectiveness, including the external environment in which a manager operates, his/her personality, culture and experience[1].

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Accountability

Values	Emotional competence	Managing across organisational boundaries	Organisational results
	Conceptual competence	Managing actions and change	Work unit results
	Technical competence	Managing people	Individual results

Personality   Culture   Experience

the model at-a-glance

Effective managers hold themselves and others *accountable*. This means that they account for, report on, and explain their actions and the use of the human and financial resources entrusted to them.

Effective managers operate on the basis of *values.* They exemplify and promote the core values of the United Nations in their day-to-day actions and decisions.

They are enabled by their *emotional competence*, their *conceptual competence* and their *technical competence*.

They manage *people, action and change*, and navigate *across organizational boundaries* in order to achieve organizational, work unit and individual results.

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1. Although the model takes these elements into account, they are not defined in detail in this profile.

values—the 'driver' of managerial effectiveness

Effective managers have a clear sense of their personal values. Their values serve as an internal compass for them, ensuring that their actions are consistently aligned with their values. Effective managers embrace and model the core values of the United Nations in their day-to-day behaviour and decision-making.

the enabling competencies

Emotional Competence, Conceptual Competence, & Technical Competence

These three sets of competencies are fundamental to managerial effectiveness.

Emotional competence may account for as much as 75% of a manager's effectiveness. It implies managing oneself and one's relationships with others. Emotionally competent managers are self-aware, managing their own emotions and the impact they have on others. They create a positive, energetic work environment, in which they and the people they work with are inspired to contribute their best efforts.

Conceptual competence is essential for managers to develop perspective on what is happening around them and on where they want to go. It allows them to discern patterns of action, emerging trends and how to respond to them. Conceptual competence is a fundamental requirement for creating a context for change.

Technical competence ensures that managers apply their substantive/technical knowledge in ways which benefit their work group and the organization as a whole. It implies sharing their knowledge and building knowledge networks, as well as developing themselves and others.

the domains of managerial effectiveness

Effective managers intentionally focus their attention and effort in a balanced way on a number of domains. They manage people, they manage action and change, and they manage across 'organizational boundaries'—navigating within the organization, building relationships with stakeholders and partners, and leveraging internal and external networks.

levels of mastery

Although all elements of the profile apply to managers at all levels, the profile defines how areas of competence are demonstrated by managers at different levels of responsibility: organizational leaders, senior managers, and middle managers.

Organizational leaders	**ASG and USG**	Organizational leadership responsibilities
Senior managers	**P5/D1/D2**	Significant staff and programme management responsibilities
Middle managers	**P4/P5/D1**	Programme management responsibilities, limited staff management responsibilities

The levels of mastery presented in this profile are *cumulative.* This implies, for example, that organizational leaders should also demonstrate behavioural indicators associated with senior managers and middle managers.

values—the 'driver' of managerial effectiveness

Aconsistent and intentional demonstration of values is the driver of managerial effectiveness. Effective managers are aware of their values, and act in accordance with them, creating a climate of openness and trust.

	Middle managers *Act in accordance with UN core values*	**Senior managers** *Promote and defend UN core values*	**Organizational leaders** *Build a culture of integrity*
Integrity	■ Apply UN core values in making decisions and clarifying choices ■ act as a role model to others in terms of their day-to-day demonstration of principled and ethical behaviour ■ Take clear ethical stands even if they are unpopular ■ Take the initiative to raise concerns about the ethics of a given situation ■ Can be counted on to do what they say	■ Protect fairness, identify and avoid conflicts of interest, and maintain political and interpersonal neutrality ■ Pursue defined goals and are resilient in the face of external pressures ■ Do the right thing for the right reasons and persuade others to do so ■ Share information openly relative to staffing and other 'contentious' decisions	■ Intentionally build a departmental and organizational culture of ethics and integrity ■ Demonstrate 'zero tolerance' for violations of integrity at a personal or 'systemic' level
Professionalism	■ Themselves demonstrate, and expect from others, basic professional discipline (punctuality, respect for normal hours of work, appropriate use of office equipment and telephones) ■ Define performance expectations and quality standards ■ Are conscientious and efficient in achieving results ■ Are decisive, able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures	■ Create an organizational rhythm of performance where meetings begin and end on time, deadlines are met, and results are achieved ■ Provide a focus on quality and continuous improvement ■ Create a stimulating, positive work environment ■ Ensure optimal use of resources ■ Lead to increases in efficiency	■ Set organizational standards of exemplary professional behaviour ■ Promote a culture of excellence in all aspects of individual and organizational performance
Respect for diversity	■ Understand diverse worldviews and are sensitive to group differences ■ Express their own views without imposing them ■ See diversity as opportunity, contribute to an environment where diverse people and perpectives can thrive	■ Intentionally build a diverse work force ■ Promote the organization's policies with respect to diversity ■ Challenge and act to diminish bias and intolerance	■ Promote organizational policies with regard to diversity ■ Take advantage of diversity in the pursuit of innovation, creativity and the achievement of outstanding results

Emotional competence

Effective managers understand that their own moods are contagious, and that by managing themselves effectively, they create a positive, productive work climate. Indicators associated with these competencies are the same for all levels of managers

	All managers *Effectively manage themselves and their relationships with others*	**Derailers**[2]
Self-awareness	■ Are aware of how their emotions affect their performance ■ Have a realistic sense of their personal strengths and limits ■ Are reflective, learning from experience	■ Are unaware of the impact they have on others ■ Fail to recognize/admit their own mistakes or inappropriate behaviour ■ Overstate their own contributions to the success of the team
Self confidence	■ Present themselves with self-assurance; have presence ■ Balance self-confidence with a sense of humility about themselves ■ Are decisive, able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressure	■ Are domineering and aggressive ■ Discourage the participation of others by being overbearing or unduly dominating discussions
Emotional self-control	■ Stay composed and positive even in difficult moments ■ Handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact ■ Are consistent in their behaviour towards others	■ Shout and/or use abusive language when under stress ■ Unnerve others through their own stress ■ Are moody and irritable ■ Are unpredictable in their moods and reactions, creating a climate of uncertainty and fear
Conscientiousness	■ Meet commitments and keep promises ■ Are organized and careful in their work ■ Accept responsibility for their mistakes	■ React defensively to criticism ■ Deny, cover up, or blame others for their mistakes
Optimism	■ Focus on what can be done in a given situation, rather than focusing on problems ■ Focus on possibilities and opportunities ■ Are energetic and enthusiastic, creating enthusiasm in others ■ Foster a favourable atmosphere for the accomplishment of organizational goals	■ Are negative and cynical ■ Complain frequently ■ Are easily discouraged
Achievement orientation	■ Set challenging goals for themselves and the team ■ Pursue goals with energy and commitment	■ Are satisfied with the status quo ■ Allow their effectiveness to be curtailed by surmountable obstacles
Empathy	■ Are attentive to non-verbal clues and body language of others ■ Show sensitivity and understand the perspective of others ■ Listen effectively to others	■ Are abrasive and arrogant ■ Intimidate others ■ Allow their empathy for others to interfere with sound judgment and decision making
Discretion	■ Respect the privacy of others ■ Recognize and respect the boundary between personal and professional issues ■ Are able to keep confidential things confidential	■ Violate confidentiality requests ■ Spread rumours and gossip

2. Derailers or ineffective behaviours are included for this element of the profile because their presence in the workplace seriously undermines managerial effectiveness.

Conceptual competence

Effective managers have what might be called 'peripheral vision'—they are able to pay attention to their environment and the world beyond it as if through a wide-angle lens, seeing how their actions and those of the work unit/department interrelate with other areas of activity. They understand and anticipate cycles of cause and effect that make up systems. They step back from day-to-day action, gaining perspective, and identifying patterns. They are able to make meaning out of apparent paradoxes. They use their insights to solve strategic issues.

Managers with conceptual competence frequently consult others to get their views and opinions, and to gather news and information about the environment. They maintain an 'open window' in their minds.

This competence is of importance to all three levels of managers, with indicators being the same for all levels.

All managers
Discern a 'big picture' allowing them to think strategically and far into the future

Use of concepts
- Explain events through the application of a concept, framework, or theory held prior to the event
- Are able to develop new concepts and frameworks to explain what they see which does not fit with existing framework; have an adaptive capacity
- Use frameworks to illustrate linkages between ideas and concepts
- See similarities between a new situation and a similar past situation, and use a concept, framework, or theory to explain the similarity
- Identify discrepancies or variations from what is expected or desired in a situation or a plan

Systems thinking
- Perceive the pattern of interrelationships between key components of a system
- Can predict the ramifications of actions they choose
- Are able to discern four levels operating simultaneously: events, patterns of behaviour, systems, and mental models
- Can predict unintended consequences of 'quick fix' solutions

Pattern recognition
- Identify patterns in an assortment of unorganized information or seemingly random data
- Can pick meaningful trends from information around them, and discern a 'big picture' allowing them to think strategically into the future
- Reduce large amounts of information through the use of a concept not previously applied to a situation
- See similarities of a new situation to aspects of past situations of a different type
- Use metaphors and analogies to explain events or information

Technical/ substantive competence

Technical competence, for the purpose of this profile, is the application of technical/substantive expertise in the workplace. It is the use a manager makes of his/her substantive expertise and knowledge, rather than the knowledge itself.

	Middle managers *Apply and share their knowledge*	**Senior managers** *Create knowledge sharing and learning mechanisms*	**Organizational leaders** *Develop a knowledge sharing and learning culture*
Knowledge and information management	■ Are aware of knowledge and information relevant to their roles ■ Demonstrate awareness of trends and best practice in their area of expertise	■ Identify, develop and articulate knowledge and information management strategies ■ Ensure that knowledge and information management strategies are embedded in key processes	■ Engage with substantive leaders within and outside the department to develop a knowledge-based vision
Knowledge networks	■ Build and associate themselves with formal and informal networks (electronic, email, teleconferences, work teams)	■ Identify, develop and nurture networks and communities	■ Identify and develop strategies to encourage and enable collaborative working within the organization and with external partners
Knowledge sharing	■ Intentionally share their learning with others in ways that makes it easy for others to access and understand ■ Seek out a variety of mechanisms for sharing their knowledge	■ Promote knowledge sharing and capture to enable continuous learning and knowledge creation	■ Foster a knowledge and information rich culture
Coaching and developing others	■ Invest their time coaching and developing others	■ Develop and implement coaching and mentoring processes	■ 'Institutionalize' coaching and developing others as part of departmental practice
Continuous learning and development	■ Stay abreast of developments in their area of expertise ■ Adopt a learning approach in their day-to-day work ■ Seek out formal and informal opportunities to grow and develop themselves ■ Seek out developmental assignments	■ Promote the systems, processes and mechanisms that contribute to continuous learning and development	■ Attach the highest priority to continuous learning and development ■ Create space and time to enable this to happen ■ Identify the necessary resources

Managing people

Effective managers excel at managing people, bringing out the best in every member of their team.

	Middle managers *Manage people effectively*	**Senior managers** *Create an enabling environment*	**Organizational leaders** *Create a high performance culture*
Communication	■ Are accessible to others, easy to approach and to talk to ■ Share information with others ■ Hold regular, effective staff meetings ■ Are able to build rapport, relate well to people ■ Foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good	■ Devise mechanisms to share information with all levels of the department ■ Hold regular meetings with staff ■ Hold colleagues reporting to them accountable for sharing information ■ Negotiate effectively with individuals and groups	■ Are effective advocates of the department's mission and values ■ Regularly communicate with staff at all levels of the department, including administrative staff ■ Hold town hall meetings to share important information personally with all staff and to hear from them ■ Make themselves 'visible' to staff
Teamwork	■ Work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve results ■ Encourage staff to think and act co-operatively ■ Share credit for successes with the team	■ Create cross-functional linkages and processes ■ Themselves act as role models for co-operation and mutual support ■ Insure that leadership roles in team settings are fairly distributed ■ Develop mechanisms to assess team achievement	■ Champion teamwork and collaboration across the department and with other departments and partners ■ Build an effective team of senior managers
Motivation	■ Recognize both achievement & effort ■ Give staff autonomy in important areas of their work ■ Care about the well-being of staff ■ Lend their support to work/life policies	■ Promote a participative style of management ■ Treat all levels of staff as valued collaborators	■ Inspire and motivate staff at all levels ■ Take the time to meet with staff at all levels on an individual basis from time to time
Managing individual performance	■ Ensure that staff define results to be achieved ■ Ensure that roles, responsibilities and reporting lines are clear ■ Delegate the appropriate responsibility and decision-making authority ■ Review performance and provide ongoing helpful feedback ■ Address poor performance promptly ■ Appraise performance fairly ■ Support the career development of staff	■ Promote honest review of performance across the department ■ Put in place appropriate delegation mechanisms	■ Refuse to turn a blind eye to poor performance and to poor performance management, regardless of level, nationality or gender ■ Respect existing delegation and decentralization mechanisms

Managing action and change

Effective managers make things happen. They set organizational direction and take action to ensure results are achieved that meet the needs of clients and stakeholders.

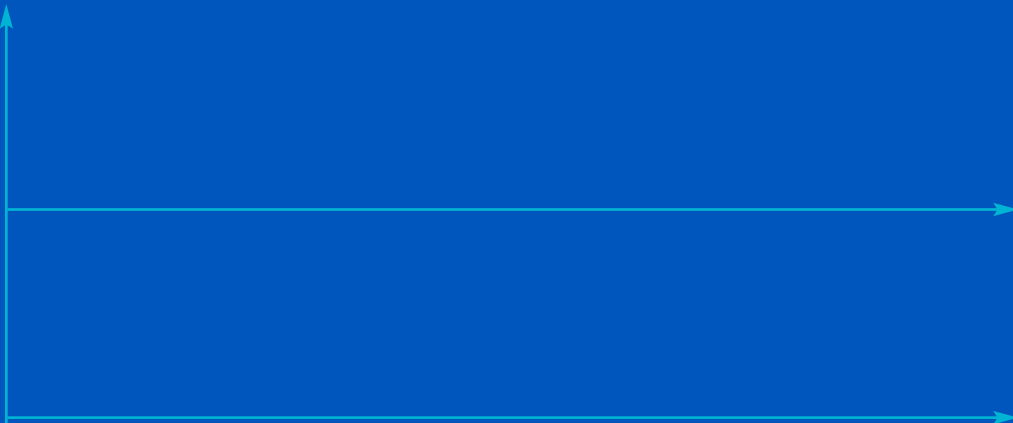|	**Middle managers** *Make things happen; support change*	**Senior managers** *Anticipate and lead change*	**Organizational leaders** *Drive for excellence*
Action and change management	■ Set a direction and a course of action to reach objectives ■ Make things happen and get things done ■ Cut through red tape when required in order to get results ■ Are effective at generating or finding resources and funding	■ Anticipate changing requirements ■ Remain focused while handling multiple crises & time-sensitive issues ■ Develop back-up strategies to deal with potentially negative outcomes ■ Have the courage to propose courses of action that others may hesitate to suggest	■ Personally lead organizational change ■ Set the agenda for their department and push for steady progress towards its achievement ■ Set a standard of excellence in their own performance and in their expectations of others
Decision-making	■ Make tough decisions when necessary ■ Are able to say 'no' ■ Consult with others before taking decisions ■ Make decisions in a timely manner ■ Take responsibility for faulty decisions	■ Steer decision making in the direction that will most effectively serve the organization and its stakeholders ■ Push others to take decisions in a timely manner ■ Act as role models for transparent and effective decision making	■ Create a culture in which decisions are taken, and information about them is communicated ■ Push down decisions which should be taken at a lower level ■ Hold others accountable for the decisions they make
Creativity and innovation	■ Actively seek to improve programmes or services ■ Take an interest in new ideas and new ways of doing things ■ Persuade others to consider new ideas ■ Encourage risk-taking and supports creativity and initiative	■ Demonstrate a willingness to question conventional means of achieving results ■ Champion creative and breakthrough approaches ■ Stimulate organization-wide dialogue around new and better ways of doing things	■ Champion creativity and innovation ■ Tap into internal and external sources of creativity
Client orientation[3]	■ Anticipate the needs of clients and other stakeholders ■ Take action to meet client needs ■ Seek feedback on the extent to which they are meeting client needs	■ Develop client oriented strategies and policies ■ Ensure that organizational systems and policies are designed to meet client and stakeholder needs	■ Ensure that meeting the needs of clients is stakeholders is a top priority ■ Promote a client-oriented mindset and approach
Results orientation	■ Steer all their effort and activity and that of the work unit to the achievement of clear, measurable results	■ Promote a mind-set of results orientation ■ Ensure that systems and processes support the achievement of results ■ Hold periodic reviews of results achieved	■ Encourage the department as a whole to deliver and measure results to its stakeholders

3. This includes an orientation to meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

Managing across organizational boundaries

Effective managers have a finely tuned understanding of the department's surface and deeper structures, allowing them to navigate effectively within the departmental boundaries and beyond—creating partnerships and alliances.

	Middle managers *Create linkages and networks*	**Senior managers** *Build cooperation and synergy*	**Organizational leaders** *Forge partnerships and alliances*
Organizational awareness	■ Demonstrate an understanding of formal and informal structure ■ Demonstrate sensitivities to the relationships between key players ■ Understand the chain of command, formal organizational authority, and how to respect it ■ Recognize unspoken organizational limitations—what is and is not possible at certain times or in certain positions	■ Understand the department in terms of structure, processes and key players ■ Understand the acknowledged and private agendas of key players inside and outside the department ■ Understand when to pursue an issue aggressively and when to cut their losses ■ Understand and address the long term reasons (internal/ external, formal/informal forces) for ongoing problems within the department	■ Understand the broader organizational context in which the department operates ■ Are sensitive to wider organizational priorities and different perspectives ■ Are able to build support for the department's goals with their SMG colleagues and others
Building networks and alliances	■ Participate in formal and informal networks within the department and outside of it ■ Cultivate their own networks	■ Develop communities of shared interests with diverse levels within the department, and stakeholders outside it ■ Maintain smooth, cooperative working relationships by showing consideration, concerns and respect for others ■ Encourage interaction between internal and external players	■ Develop networks and build alliances ■ Encourage cross-boundary activities ■ Use their networks to gain support for the achievement of the department's and the organization's goals ■ Identify and pursue opportunities to improve performance through partnerships
Influencing	■ Develop behind-the-scenes support for action ■ Use informal authority effectively ■ Understand departmental decision points, processes and how to influence them ■ Research and prepare the ground for agreement	■ Negotiate mutually acceptable solutions by trying to understand the positions, thoughts, concerns and feelings of others ■ Gain support for ideas through persuasion and assertiveness ■ Demonstrate the ability to deal with difficult and complex interpersonal situations, taking firm control in order to achieve results	■ Collaborate and find common ground with a wide range of stakeholders ■ Approach challenges and opportunities with a clear perception of the impact on others and aiming to create win-win situations

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