

Pathways to Management and Leadership

Level 3: First Line Management

Unit 3017V1

Introduction to First Line Management

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Introduction to First Line Management

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SAMPLE MATERIAL

About this workbook

The unit

The main purpose of this workbook is to support you as you study for the Chartered Management Institute Level 3 in First Line Management – specifically, it focuses on the content relevant to Unit 3017V1 *Introduction to First Line Management*. This is about guiding you into the role of a first line manager by exploring the role, skills and knowledge needed, and the importance of building and maintaining effective relationships with stakeholders and your team.

This workbook provides underpinning knowledge and develops understanding to improve your skills as well as to prepare for future assessment. If you're studying towards one of the Level 3 qualifications, then you'll be assessed by your approved centre on 'your knowledge and understanding of' the following learning outcomes:

1. Understand the role of the first line manager
2. Be able to construct a personal development plan
3. Understand stakeholders and their needs
4. Be able to plan to meet those needs
5. Understand the need to develop and maintain working relationships
6. Be able to manage team performance.

The aims of this workbook

This workbook aims to help you learn about:

- the role, responsibilities, skills and knowledge needed of a first line manager
- stakeholders, their needs and how these might be met by a first line manager
- the importance of effective working relationships, especially within your team, to support effective performance.

Syllabus coverage

The table below shows which sections of the workbook address each assessment criteria of the qualification syllabus.

Unit 3017V1: Introduction to First Line Management Syllabus coverage	Addressed within section
1.1 Describe the role and responsibilities of the first line manager	1
1.2 Explain the skills and knowledge required of the first line manager	1
1.3 Compare own existing skills and knowledge with those required	1
2.1 Construct a personal development plan that supports and develops existing and required skills and knowledge	1
3.1 Identify the first line manager's immediate stakeholders and their needs	2
3.2 Describe the data and information available to the first line manager on stakeholder needs	2
4.1 Develop a plan to meet existing and potential stakeholder needs	2
5.1 Explain methods to develop and maintain working relationships	3
6.1 Describe methods of identifying and supporting the performance of team members	3

Getting started

In the workplace everyone needs guidance and support from a manager. For many staff, it's the first line manager who provides this essential role. Although the workplace is designed for the purpose of achieving the required organisational outputs, it's the people in the teams that make this happen. The role of the leader is to look after the people in the team and provide them with the support and motivation that will facilitate excellence in team working, as well as excellence in meeting the organisational goals. This workbook sets out to explore some of the issues for those within or starting out on a first line manager position, to facilitate increased effectiveness in the role.

How to use the workbooks

The workbooks provide ideas from writers and thinkers in the management and leadership field. They offer opportunities for you to investigate and apply these ideas within your working environment and job role.

Structure

Each workbook is divided into sections that together cover the knowledge and understanding required for that unit of the Level 3 in First Line Management. Each section starts with a clear set of objectives that identify the background knowledge to be covered, and the management skills in the workplace that enable you to demonstrate this knowledge. You don't have to complete the sections in the order they appear in the workbook, but you should try to cover them all to make sure that your work on the unit is complete. There are self-assessment questions at the end of each section that allow you to check your progress. You may want to discuss your answers to the self-assessment questions with your line manager or a colleague.

Activities

Throughout the workbooks there are activities for you to complete. These activities are designed to help you to develop yourself as a manager. Space is provided within the activities for you to enter your own thoughts or findings. Feedback is then provided to confirm your input or to offer more ideas for you to consider.

To get the best from the workbooks, you should try to complete each activity fully before moving on. However, if the answer is obvious to you because the issue is one you've encountered previously, then you might just note some bullet points that you can then compare quickly against the feedback. You may sometimes find it difficult to write your complete response to an activity in the space provided. Don't worry about this – just keep a separate notebook handy, which you can use and refer to as needed.

Try not to look at the feedback section before completing an activity. You might like to cover up the feedback with a postcard or piece of paper while you're working through an activity.

Timings

Timings are suggested for each section and activity, although it's important that you decide how much time to spend on an activity. Some activities may occupy only a few moments' thought, while others may be of particular interest and so you might decide to spend half an hour or more exploring the issues. This is fine – the purpose of the activities is to help you reflect on what you're doing, and to help you identify ways of enhancing your effectiveness. It's always worth writing something though, even if it's brief. The act of writing will reinforce your learning much more effectively than just referring to the feedback.

Scenarios

There are scenarios and examples throughout each workbook to illustrate key points in real workplace settings. The scenarios cover a wide range of employment sectors. As you work through, you might like to think of similar examples from your own experience.

Planning your work

The reading and reflection, scenarios and activities in each section of the workbooks are designed to take around two hours to complete (although some may take longer). This is a useful indicator of the minimum length of time that you should aim to set aside for a study session. Try to find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted and where you can keep your workbooks, notes and papers reasonably tidy. You may also like to think about the time of day when you work best. Are you a 'morning person' who likes to get things done at the start of the day, or do you work better in the evening when there may be fewer disturbances?

Preparing for assessment

Further information on assessment is available in the *Student Guide* produced as part of the *Pathways to Management and Leadership* series. If you have any further questions about assessment procedures, it's important that you resolve these with your tutor or centre coordinator as soon as possible.

Further reading

Suggestions for further reading and links to management information are available via ManagementDirect through the Study Support section of the Institute's website at <http://mde.managers.org.uk/members>. Alternatively, email ask@managers.org.uk or telephone 01536 207400. You will also find titles for further reading in the Bibliography at the end of this workbook.

The CMI Management Library holds an extensive range of books and pamphlets for loan to members. A postal loan service is offered to members in the UK only. You will only pay your return postal charges. Go to www.managers.org.uk/library to review the collection and to place your requests.

Section 1 Role of a first line manager

Learning outcome

(about 2 hours)

By the end of this section you will understand the role of the first line manager and construct a personal development plan. You will be able to:

- 1.1 Describe the role and responsibilities of the first line manager
- 1.2 Explain the skills and knowledge required of the first line manager
- 1.3 Compare own existing skills and knowledge with those required
- 2.1 Construct a personal development plan that supports and develops existing and required skills and knowledge.

In this section you will start by exploring key aspects of the role and responsibilities of a first line manager and the skills and knowledge that are required to undertake the role effectively. It's not simply a case of understanding the principles involved, and so once you have examined these, you will consider your own skills and knowledge and identify the strengths that you already have, and areas where some further development might be helpful to you in undertaking a first line management role. Once you have identified areas for development there are some suggestions as to how you might develop a personal development plan to address these issues. These might be skills or knowledge, minor areas where you might need just a 'top-up' or issues needing more significant attention.

What is a first line manager?

First, you need to look at what being a manager means.

Activity

Activity 1.1

(about 5 minutes)

What do you think being a manager means? What responsibilities are there and what issues might there be?

Feedback

You probably thought about managers as being responsible for people, resources and activities.

Issues include:

- *coordination of current operations – what is happening now*
- *organising and planning future activities and resource use*
- *negotiating and influencing others – suppliers, stakeholders, staff, senior managers*
- *time allocation and management – for example, of components of the job, supplies and materials ordering, sales order processing, product or service delivery, staff breaks, holidays*
- *resource prioritising and planning – for example, which jobs are allocated which resources*
- *objective setting – for the team as a whole and personally for individuals within the team*
- *legal compliance and monitoring – for example, health and safety, data protection, employment terms and conditions of service.*

Managers have to juggle the achievement of the task with the development of individuals and the team. This is a key part of their role.

The action-centred leadership model is an idea first published by John Adair, way back in 1973. It has become a classic. He spotted three main areas that leaders have to manage – and none of them is optional (see the figure below).

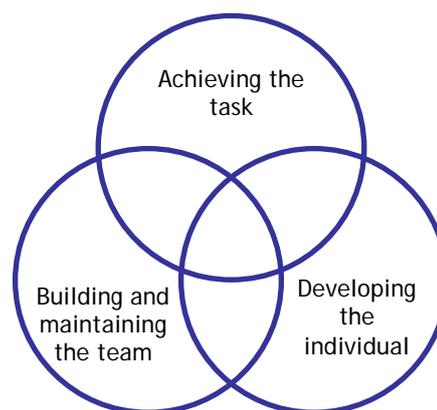


Fig. 1.1: Action-centred leadership (Source: Adair, 1973)

The overlapping circles in the figure offer a useful way of looking at the need to manage all three aspects, and how each cannot stand alone. The high-performing manager develops effective team spirit, sets good measurable targets and is committed to getting the best out of every individual.

Have you ever seen the people at the circus who spin plates on the ends of poles? You might like to think of each of Adair's circles as a plate, and yourself as the person who has to keep all three plates spinning. If you can achieve this, you'll have a successful act. However, pay too much attention to any one plate and the others might fall ... then the whole show will be spoiled. It's amazing how many managers seem to focus on the 'Achieving the task' plate, and then wonder why the other two come crashing down around them and ultimately the task then fails!

Achieving the task

This part of Adair's model involves planning, controlling and running things. The focus is on the output of the department or organisation delivering the products and services you provide. This is important, and is the main focus from the organisational point of view.

Building and maintaining the team

It's the team that achieves the work, and the role of its leader (you) is to motivate, build and work with and through the team. There are a number of skills associated with this. The successful building and maintenance of the team is crucial to achieving the task – an unhappy team is not usually very productive or effective.

Developing the individual

Individuals make up the team, so leaders should take a personal interest in their people and work tirelessly to:

- value and understand the individual contribution they make
- develop them
- empower them
- help them to do their best.

Behind the action-centred leadership model is the idea that, as a leader, you have to fulfil all three sets of needs:

- the need to get the task finished
- the needs a team has if it is to work properly
- the needs of individuals for support and direction.

However, if we look at Adair's idea from the perspective of the twenty-first century, there are a number of issues that are important today that don't appear to be really considered within the three circles model.

Activity**Activity 1.2****(about 5 minutes)**

What might usefully be added to Adair's model to bring it up to date? Think of two or three new aspects.

Feedback

You probably thought about a number of aspects, such as:

- *the importance of knowledge and information*
- *the essential issue of communication*
- *the context in which tasks, teams and individuals work.*

In a study in China, Qiao and Wang (2009) identified five key focal points for middle management activity that appear to build upon the ideas of Adair:

- team building (creating a coherent and synergistic team from a group of individuals)
- coordination (of the task – planning, preparation, integration and dovetailing of activities)
- execution (of the task – implementation, monitoring and control)
- communication (information flows between team members, and between team members and others)
- continual learning (review and analysis, to maximise efforts in future).

The study seems to confirm that Adair's idea is still sound, but some wider attention is needed for true effectiveness in the modern world.

Building upon Adair might produce a model that more closely reflects your experience today. In the centre, to oil the wheels of the organisation, you might place 'Knowledge, information and communication', and around the whole, perhaps an additional circle to represent the internal and external context in which you operate. The figure below shows how this would look.

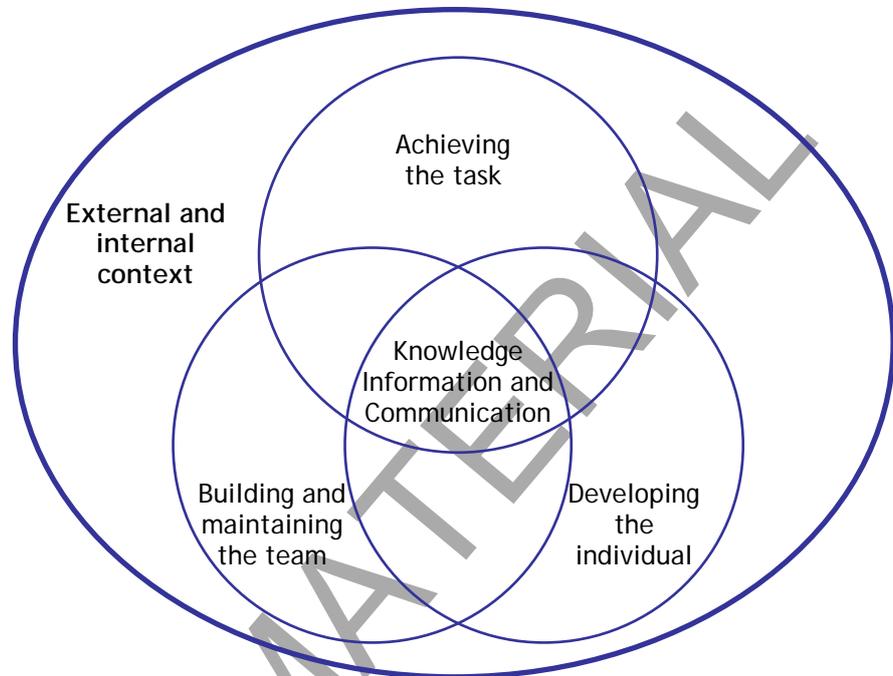


Fig. 1.2: After Adair (1989)

One aspect that does sometimes arise when people look at the role of a first line manager is clarifying the differences between a manager's role and that of a supervisor.

Activity

Activity 1.3

(about 5 minutes)

What are your thoughts as to the differences between the role of a manager and that of a supervisor? You might like to make two lists: one of the main aspects of a manager's role and another for a supervisor's role.



Feedback

Again there are no right or wrong answers. You might have noted some of the aspects as shown in the table below.

Some key aspects of Supervision	Some key aspects of First Line Management
Overseeing specific tasks and activities	Determining task priorities, and which activities should be undertaken when
Allocating resources	Making sure resources are available
Allocating staff to duties	Ensuring that there are sufficient staff available
Instructing staff in completion of tasks	Ensuring staff are trained so they can undertake the tasks
Assisting staff with task achievement where needed	Coaching staff to improve their effectiveness
Highlighting staff performance issues, referring upwards where needed	Resolving staff performance issues as they arise
Handling task and resource problems as they arise	Resolving task and resource issues as they arise
Current staff and activity focus	Current and future staff and activity focus

You will probably notice that actually there are a great many overlaps between supervision and management – both are needed to get the job done and to look after the individuals and the team. One key difference might be the main focus, with supervision having a current focus, and management having an additional eye on the future.

At this point it might be useful for you to think about your current job role, and how you might be able to broaden it to encompass both the supervisory and the management focal points.

Activity

Activity 1.4

(about 5 minutes)

Using your own lists and the table above, consider your own job role. Make a note here of the areas or activities where you might be able to broaden your focus.

Feedback

Your response will be personal to your own circumstances, but you may have been able to spot one or two issues where you have an opportunity.

A further point of interest here is the notion of power and authority.

Handy (1993) identifies five sources of power and authority commonly found in organisations. O'Connor (2002) appears to agree with Handy's ideas, but mentions only four types of power. Both writers note that all are important and contribute to successful leadership.

Handy (1993)	O'Connor (2002)
Position	Designated
Expert	Expert
Resource	Information
Personal	Charismatic
Physical	

Position/Designated power is the type of power that a manager holds because of their formal position. It is a formal power which comes with the job role. The strength and nature of that power depends on the type of job and its position in the organisational hierarchy.

Expert power is held by those who are known to have skills, knowledge or experience that is of a high level. When they speak they do so from a well informed stance, and this carries weight because they are known to have expertise in that field.

Resource/Information power is available to those who control or administer resources (for example physical, financial, staff effort), or those who hold or distribute information. Often this power source will be a feature of a job role, but the power is really based upon the ability to control resource and information that others receive.

Personal/Charismatic power is the strong influence that an individual has because of who they are as a person, and the respect, trust and standing that they command because of their personal characteristics.

Physical power is simply the power that individuals have because of their muscle strength or stamina. Although this sounds as if it may not relate to organisational life, in some areas of business or professions it's a very important issue (such as the fire service, military, or some aspects of the warehousing or construction industries).

All types of power can be used positively (for organisational, team and individual benefit), or negatively (usually destructive and blocking in nature).

Scenario

Scenario:

Ted was a senior manager of a 24/7 utilities operational control room in central London. He sat comfortably in his office during the dayshift, sorting out operational plans for special events, contingencies and for the day-to-day staffing within the regular shift patterns agreed with the staff association. There were four shifts to cover operations throughout the day, night and weekends. Each shift had four supervisors and about 35 other staff of various levels, and this enabled the operation to cover days, evenings, nights, weekends and bank holidays satisfactorily. As staff knew their individual shift patterns well in advance, many lived at quite a distance from the site, travelling usually by train to report for duty. They all took pride in their work and regularly arrived early to ensure an effective handover from their colleague and allow them to go home a little early. Where trains were not available – some weekends and often at Bank Holidays – most staff used their own car, even though parking and fuel expenses were not covered by the company. Historically, over the Christmas period, trains were often not available, and so the company policy was to reimburse staff for the mileage costs, as a way to encourage them to use their own cars to report for duty. Where a member of staff did not have a car, or was unable to use it, a taxi was provided, but most Christmases there were almost no taxis needed.

When Ted took over as senior manager he was fastidious in checking all leave arrangements and mileage claims, to ensure that the company was not spending more money than absolutely