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Topic:- Technical skills for Managers.

Subject:- Education.

Paper:- 304.

Semester:- III.

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Technical skills for Managers

A position in management requires a diverse range of skills, no matter the industry; however, your particular field will help determine knowledge-specific skills needed as a manager. In the 1970s, social psychologist Robert L. Katz identified three basic skillsets required for effective management: technical, human and conceptual. While all three types are important, a manager's technical skills include measurable concrete skills.

What Are Technical Skills?

Technical skills involve the use of company or industry-specific methods and processes, formal problem-solving techniques, technology systems and machinery and other tools. Furthermore, they involve specialized knowledge and typically must be taught, like the education offered in a business

administration program or at a vocational school. These are different from "soft skills" (what Katz would call "human" skills), which can be acquired and honed over time. Technical skills may involve performing a predetermined sequence of steps or carrying out a specific physical action. Thus, these skills can change depending on the particular processes, procedures and regulations that are standard in your industry.

Importance of Technical Skills for Managers

All three above skill types – technical, human, and conceptual – overlap and combine to create effective management. However, the position type and level of management you're in may dictate the degree to which you use technical skills in your day-to-day responsibilities.

For example, a line manager at a plant or an on-site construction manager may use technical skills directly on a daily basis and may be more mechanical and hands on. A project manager; however, may utilize technical skills to stay familiar with the work being done by his or her employees, but may not use these skills daily.

Important Technical Skills for Managers

Because technical skills are specific to the task(s) managers must complete or oversee on a daily basis, they can vary by industry and position. However, some common technical skills may be required across a number of industries, specifically within administrative and middle management positions.

Office Skills

Basic proficiency with office software like Microsoft Office, Adobe, Google Docs and any relevant industry-specific programs is essential for managers. Furthermore, depending on the industry, a proficiency with financial and accounting software, data entry, popular web publishing platforms and HR and scheduling programs may be required. have a working knowledge of programming or website maintenance, having an understanding of the basics is beneficial. This may include a general understanding of web design and Search Engine Optimization or training in HTML and CSS. For certain positions, a familiarity with industry-specific programs, such as Epic medical software for managers in the healthcare field, may be desired by employers.

Technical Writing

Managers may communicate goals and instructions to employees, create training materials, document important processes, generate product and service descriptions and relay department and project statuses to upper management. All require clear and concise professional writing abilities, as well as communicating complex processes and procedures in writing.

Information Technology

IT plays a significant role in many companies' operations today; therefore, having a working knowledge of IT basics may be helpful (even if your business has a dedicated IT department).

Project Management

Management may involve overseeing employees throughout multiple stages of one or more projects,

making the ability to coordinate activities and monitor progress toward specific goals useful. Even those not working directly in project management roles should understand the basic processes and resources required to plan and execute a long-term project.

Data Management and Analytics

A skilled manager should efficiently and accurately gather information relevant to the continued operations of a business, analyze the data for significant trends or potential issues and relay findings to upper management. Depending on the position and industry, managers may be expected to be familiar with specific data collection and analytics tools and software.

Communication

While not necessarily a technical skill, communication may require a proficiency in specific company systems or programs, such as those used to relay instructions or updates to and from front-line managers up the chain of command.