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| ***Assignment*** | ***One*** |

***MODULE ONE ASSIGNMENTS***

1. What are the four basic functions that comprise the management process? Explain briefly

how they are related to each other

2. Identify the three different kinds of managers by both level and area in an organization

3. Identify the different important skills that help managers succeed giving relevant

examples for each category

4. What is planning? Explain the objectives and principles of planning.

5. Explain the planning process

6. What are the different types of plans? Explain them.

7. “Failure to plan is planning to fail”. Discuss.

8. Take any two international companies and examine how they have succeeded or failed

due to poor strategic planning.

**Answers to the questions.**

1. Management is the art of getting things done through people where mangers use the resources of the organization, both physical as well as human, to achieve the goals. It has the four basic functions as followed:-
2. **Planning and Decision making.**

Planning and decision making in combination, means setting of goals for organization and deciding how best to achieve them by selecting a course of action from a set of alternatives. Planning and decision making help maintain managerial effectiveness by serving as guides for future activities.

1. **Organizing.**

This is a determination of activities required to achieve goals. It involves determining how activities and resources are to be grouped.

1. **Leading.**

This is the set of processes used to get people to work together to advance the interest of the organization.

1. **Controlling.**

Controlling is monitoring the progress of organization to ensure that there is performance so as to arrive at its destination at the appointed time. Planning and controlling are interrelated in that while plans specify the objectives to be achieved, control as a managerial functions facilitate to know whether the actual performance is in conformity with planned one.

1. The following are the three kinds of managers.
2. **Front line or Supervisory Manager.**

This is a type of manager who is at the entry position into the management profession. A manager at this level directs the operating employees (workers). In other words, such managers are close to the action for their job involves supervising the activities of operatives.

1. **Middle level Managers.**

These types of Managers are the managers who work at levels between the lower and top levels. Examples of these include Departmental heads, Regional managers, Zonal managers and so on. The principal responsibilities are to direct the activities of lower level managers who implement the organization’s policies.

1. **Top level Managers.**

These managers constitute the ones at the highest level in the management hierarchy. Basically, the Managers here are at the policy making level of the Organization. Top level Managers are officials like Board Directors, chairmen, Managing Directors and top functional heads such as CODO, CIO and such other C-suite Managers. Top managers are responsible for the overall management of the organization. They decide the enterprise objectives, policies, and strategies to be pursued to achieve the objectives. They also provide direction to the organization by guiding its interactions with the environment.

1. Important skills that help managers succeed.
2. **Technical skills.**

Technical skills are the skills necessary to accomplish and understand the specific kind of work being done in an organization. Technical skills are especially important for the first- line managers since most of these managers spend much of their time training subordinates and answering question about work- related problems.

1. **Interpersonal Skills.**

This is ability by a manager to communicate effectively with understanding and motivate individuals and groups. It helps managers to spend considerable time interacting with people both inside and out the organization.

1. **Conceptual skills.**

Conceptual skill is the ability of the manager to think in the abstract. In other words, a manager needs to have mental capacity to understand the overall workings of the organization and its environment, to grasp how all parts of the organization fit together and to view organization in a holistic manner.

1. **Diagnostic skill.**

A diagnostic skill is that which helps a manager to visualize the most appropriate response to a situation. Using this skill, a manager can diagnose and analyze a problem in the organization by studying its symptoms and then developing a solution.

1. **Communication skills.**

These skills are abilities by managers to both effectively convey ideas and information to others and effectively receive ideas and information from others. At the same time, these skills enable the managers to transmit ideas to subordinates so that they know what is expected, to coordinate work with peers and colleagues so that they work well together properly, and keep higher- level managers informed about what is going on.

1. **Decision- Making skills.**

This is the ability of the manager to correctly recognize and define problems and opportunities and to then select an appropriate course of action to solve problems and capitalize on opportunities.

1. **Time- Management skills.**

Time- management skills refer to abilities by managers to prioritize work, to work efficiently and delegate appropriately.

1. Planning means preparing for the future by outlining a future course of action and putting it in a logical way.

Therefore, the following are the objectives of planning;

* **To achieve objectives:** Objectives are the ends sought to be achieved by the organizations. Therefore, since one of the overall objectives of the planning is to achieve the objectives itself, it puts organization managers to be clear about the objectives, the time frame required to achieve them and the resources required.
* **Plans make things happen:** effective managers anticipate future and prepare themselves to meet the challenges of the future. They are rather proactive, and therefore influence the outcome of the events in a significant way.
* **Plan helps to cope with change:** Since organizations are products of the environment, planning makes the Organizations deal with the environment and therefore, enable them to survive despite other weaknesses. Otherwise, Organizations which fail to adapt would eventually fall on the way side.
* **Plans doubles up as tools to control events:** Planning also make the event to happen in a particular way as it provides mechanism to know whether the events are happening in the way expected.

However, the following are principles of Planning;

* **Take time to plan:** Plan as a future course of action, specifies the sequence of events to be performed. This involves commitment of the organizational resources in a particular way. So, if a plan is not conceive well, the resources would be put to wrong use and whole exercise becomes wasteful, hence resulting in agony and frustration. Therefore, to avoid such unpleasant outcomes, there has to be a very thorough planning.
* **Planning can be top down and bottom up:** Planning can be a two way approach; top down and bottom up. Where it is top down, the plans are wider in scope and provide direction to the whole organization. They spell out what the organization wants to achieve over the years. The overall plan thus formulated by the top management is split into departmental plans. On the other hands, bottom –up approach involves information emanating from the lower levels- that is, top management collects information from lower levels. On the basis of such information, plans are formulated. In this approach, initiative for planning comes from the lower levels in the organization which makes use of the rich experience of the subordinates. It also helps to motivate the people and elicit commitment from them.
* **Planning involve and communicate with all those concerned:** Because of the complexity of modern organizations, various operations are highly interrelated. Such interrelation of activities requires the involvement of all the people concerned with the achievement of goals.
* **Planning must be flexible and dynamic:** Because of unexpected changes in the environment which may cause dilemma to managers, there is need to build adequate flexibility into the plan.
* **Evaluate and revise:** Evaluation and revision of the plan at the regular intervals is necessary to make sure that it is contributing to the objectives. Such an exercise enables to initiate the corrective measures at the right time before it is too late.

1. Planning processes. The followings are the planning processes;

* **Setting of goals:** Planning begins with decisions about what the organizations wants to achieve during a specified period. The goals of an Organization and various subunits have to be decided and spelt out in clear terms.
* **Outlining Planning premises:** Planning premises or assumptions are assumptions which provide basic frame work in which plans operate. Always, they are on various aspects of environment- both internal and external to the Organization. Whereas the internal premises are assumptions which include sales forecasts and internal policies of the Organization. Each one of these elements is a critical success factor. The external premises relate to all those factors in the environment outside the organization. They include issues related to technology, general economic conditions, government policies and attitude towards business, demographic trends, socio-cultural changes in the society, political stability, degree of competition in the market, availability of various resources and so on.
* **Decide the planning period:** How far in the future should a plan be made is another pertinent question in the process of planning. Businesses vary in their planning periods. Some are made for a short and others for longer. Again, depending on the concepts, some can be operational planning while others strategic planning.
* **Develop alternatives and select the course of action:** Planning also involves development of various alternatives courses of action, evaluating these alternatives and choosing the most suitable alternative. Objectives may be achieved by different courses of action (alternatives). Indeed, the alternative courses are evaluated in the light of the premises and the overall goals of the Organization.
* **Derivative Plans:** These are plans developed for the various levels down the Organization for easy and efficient operation. After a thorough analysis of various alternatives courses of action, various operational units within the departments have to be formulated.
* **Review periodically:** success of the plan is measured by the results and the ease with which it is implemented. Provision for adequate follow-up to determine compliance should be included in the planning work. Therefore, to make sure that the plan is contributing for the results, its review at regular intervals is essential. Such a review helps in taking corrective action, when the plan is in force.

1. Types of plans. These are future courses of action which an organization developed and pursue them one after another or all at the same time. They are as followed;

* **Mission or purpose:** Mission is a statement which defines the roles that an Organization plays in the society. The statement includes the organization philosophy and basic purpose for which it exists. The mission or purpose establishes the values, beliefs, and guides lines that the organization holds in high esteem. Also, mission statement suggests how an organization is going to conduct its business. Generally, definition of the mission or purpose is necessary to formulate meaningful objectives.
* **Policies:** A policy is a general statement of understanding which guides the thinking and action in decision making. Since policies provide the framework within which managers operate, they exist at all level. Some may be major policies affecting the whole organization, while others may be minor or derivative policies affecting the functioning of departments or sections within the department. Policies are laid down by the management for all the important functional areas. In these cases, there are production policies, financial policies, marketing policies and personnel policies.
* **Procedures:** A procedure is a series of related steps or tasks to be performed in a sequential way. A procedure ensures order in the performance of operations.
* **Rules:** A rule is a prescribed course of action that explicitly states what is to be done under a given set of circumstances. Rules are plans in that they suggest the required actions. A rule requires that a definite action has to be taken in a particular way with respect to a situation. Rules associate some definiteness with it.
* **Programs:** A program is a comprehensive plan that includes future use of different resources in an integrated pattern and establishes a sequence of required time schedules for each in order to achieve stated objectives. Therefore, a program include; objectives, policies, rules, procedures, methods, standard and budgets. A program can be a major or minor.
* **Budgets:** Budgets are plan statement for a given period of time in future expressed in financial or physical units. In other words, a budget is a quantitative expression of a plan which contains expected results in numerical terms. Budgets also vary in scope.

1. ‘’Failure to plan is planning to fail’’. There are several factors which make a manager to fail even when planning. The followings are some of them:-

* **Cost and time:** since planning is quite a costly and time consuming process. A failed manager might have spent limited amount of time on forecasting, evaluating alternatives. By the time a plan is established, the environment might have changed and this requires a complete revision of the plan which may turn too big to be achieved at all, hence failure.
* **Validity of the forecasts:** Because planning is future oriented activity based on forecasts, it requires doing planning with repeated revision to make sure it’s valid. Otherwise, if the planning period increases, the accuracy of the forecasting may diminish, therefore making planning losing its value if reliable and adequate data is not available.
* **Inflexibility:** Planning becomes rigid at times because of internal inflexibilities within the organization. As a result, it reduces individual’s initiative and causes delay in decision making. Internal inflexibilities like rigid policies and procedures and limited resources affect planning process.
* **Influence of external factors:** External factors beyond the control of an organization affect the effectiveness of planning. These are very difficult to predict and make execution of plans very difficult. External factors like government control, technological changes and trade unions affect the planning if the manger does not good care.
* **Resistance to change:** Resistance to change is another factor which causes planning to fail. This is when the human element in an organization always resists change. Some people turn to be more concerned about the present rather than the future which is uncertain. Therefore, planning being forward looking is always affected by this resistance to change.
* **Unrealistic plans:** The entire planning process may fail if people involved in it do not formulate correct plans. The reasons for failure of people in planning may be due to a number of reasons like lack of commitment to planning, lack of delegation of authority, excessive reliance on past experience, tendency to overlook premises.

1. The two international companies that failed due to poor strategic planning are **Innovative Mattress Solutions** and **SEARS**. The followings are the reasons for failing:-

* Setting of unrealistic and unachievable goals.
* Poor understanding of the assumptions or premises on which plans are formulated.
* Lack of encouragement to make people participate in the planning program so as to ensure the right commitment of others.
* Lack of proper coordination between the short term and long term plans.
* There was no proper payment of attention to the resource positioning of the organization so as to ensure the availability as when required.