

Professional profile

MBA courses Business School Netherlands

Henry Mintzberg, the author of "The Nature of Managerial Work", 1973 and "Managers, Not MBAs", 2004, among others, critiques MBA courses and provides an overview of the manager's roles. His ideas guide the professional profile and the content and structure of BSN's MBA courses.

Mintzberg identifies a total of ten roles for managers, which he divides into three groups: Interpersonal

roles:

1. Protocolary
2. Leader
3. Connector

Information roles:

4. Observer
5. Information distributor
6. Spokesperson

Decision roles:

7. Entrepreneur
8. "Fireman"
9. Distributor
10. Negotiator

Mintzberg's roles described

Interpersonal roles

These roles are indispensable for the proper performance of the informational and decision-making roles that will be discussed below. These are the ways in which the manager can interact with his superiors, colleagues, co-workers and people from outside the organisation. Mintzberg distinguishes three types of interpersonal roles:

1. Protocol role

The manager is the head of the organisation or department and as such must perform certain ceremonial duties. The managing director greets foreign dignitaries, the foreman goes to a machinist's wedding and the sales manager goes out to dinner somewhere with a customer. Mintzberg's research found that the average director spends 12% of his working time on ceremonial tasks. Many of these can be done on a routine basis and they require little serious communication or decision-making. Nevertheless, performing such tasks well is very important for the standing of the organisation or department.

2. Leadership role

His formal position always makes the manager responsible for the activities of his employees. He must therefore assume the role of manager. Here, Mintzberg distinguishes direct leadership from indirect leadership. In the first case, the manager decides, for instance, on the appointment of staff, on who should do what and when, or on which of his employees should undergo training. In indirect leadership, Mintzberg thinks more about motivating and encouraging employees. Furthermore, the manager will have to try to align their individual needs and desires with organisational goals. Mintzberg believes that the role of the manager is the most conspicuous role the manager can play in the organisation. His formal position forces him into this role whether he wants it or not, but also enables him to exercise power. How he fulfils his leadership role determines whether and to what extent he will realise this power.

3. Connection roller

the management literature mainly emphasises the manager's leadership role and especially the aspects related to motivation. The fact that every manager also plays a social connection role in an informal way is somewhat underemphasised. Managers have

of course, also contacts that do not result directly from their formal position within the organisation's hierarchical chain, such as with colleagues, people outside the organisation or department and chiefs (in the professional literature, this is often referred to as the liaison role of managers). As such, they are more than just managers or performers of ceremonial tasks.

Informational roles

Every manager plays informational roles in his organisation to a greater or lesser extent. As such, he constantly receives and seeks information from all kinds of possible sources inside and outside the organisation. By doing so, he hopes to make sense of the developments taking place in the environment or in the organisation itself. The manager sometimes also sets up information systems, hoping to use them to identify important changes or locate threats and opportunities.

In doing so, he is also tasked with conveying certain information to subordinates within his organisation and to all kinds of stakeholders outside the organisation. Consequently, the manager's informational roles involve all kinds of communicative aspects. Mintzberg distinguishes three informational roles:

4. Observer role

As an observer, the manager is constantly looking for information. He asks formal and informal contacts for information, but also receives unsolicited information. Building personal networks can be decisive here.

5. Role of information source

Being at the centre of a whole network of communication lines, the manager often knows more than his employees. These need (parts of) that information. As a result, the manager is constantly asked by subordinates for information relevant to them. The manager thus plays the role of information disseminator, deciding how much and what information to pass on;

6. Spokesperson role

The manager often functions as the mouthpiece of his organisation or department. People outside his area of responsibility also expect him to pass on parts of the information at his disposal. As a spokesperson, he must inform and keep superiors, stakeholders outside the organisation and other important people happy.

Decision-making roles

In his decision-making roles, the manager tries to turn the information available to him into planned action. Information gathering never serves an isolated purpose. Information is 'only' an indispensable tool for decision-making. In the decision-making system of an organisation or department, the manager is the main figure. He is the formal authority who has to decide on certain initiatives. As the hub of all kinds of communication lines, he usually has the data on the basis of which strategic decisions have to be taken. Mintzberg distinguishes four decision-making roles:

7. Entrepreneurial role

As an entrepreneur, the manager tries to push his organisation or department to satisfactory or improved results or to adapt to changed circumstances. As an observer, he is thereby constantly looking for good ideas, which he will try to implement through, for example, a development project. He may coordinate such a project himself, or he may delegate it to one of his employees, reserving to himself the right to approve or reject the final proposal.

8. 'Fireman'

As an entrepreneur, the manager initiates certain changes, and as a firefighter, he responds to the unforeseen situations that may arise in the process. These are situations that the manager can no longer influence. Like the fireman, he is forced to act, because delaying action will lead to a worsening of the situation.

9. Role of resource allocator

The third decision-making role is that of resource distributor. The manager has to decide which resources are given to whom in his organisation or department. Examples of resources are money, information and authority. But perhaps the most important resource is the manager's own time. He has to decide how much of his knowledge and expertise

he wishes to make available to those who are in the process of implementing a particular plan. If the manager actually gets involved in the implementation of a plan, it means that his employees have easy access to the hub where all lines of communication converge and where decisions are made. In his role as a distributor of resources, the manager exerts great influence on the decisions to be made prior to implementation.

10. Role of negotiator

The fourth and final decision-making role is that of negotiator. Management studies at all levels show that managers spend a significant amount of time negotiating. The manager is usually the only one who has the critical information needed for negotiations with third parties (buyers, new staff, unions, other organisations).

Mintzberg's roles within the Action Learning MBA

The extent to which a manager fulfils the roles depends on his position in the organisation and the type of organisation. Some roles will require 0% of his time, others more than 50%. Roles may also be less or more important over time.

In BSN's view, for managers with masters-level positions, all roles, but especially the leadership role and the entrepreneurial role, are important.

In his role as an entrepreneur and leader, the manager should monitor the quality of the decision-making process. The manager uses his knowledge, skills and attitude to make effective, efficient and ethically sound decisions and promote the implementation of those decisions.

In particular, these are decisions to be made to contribute in one of the following three areas;

- Creating and implementing a strategic plan for the organisation or department;
- developing and implementing a policy or annual plan;
- introducing or improving a work process.

In addition, the manager, in the role of entrepreneur, must be inspired to develop and grow the organisation by seeing and seizing opportunities.

A good knowledge of the "body of knowledge" is a prerequisite for this, as is the ability to turn insights into action.

By "body of knowledge" we mean the knowledge and insights as contained in the models and theories found in the literature. These include the disciplines of HRM, Marketing, Operations, Finance, ICT, Strategy and International Management.

In management practice, these knowledge and insights are applied in improvement projects that require, in addition to leadership skills, a particular focus on quality and acceptance.

In his leadership role, the manager is able to show situational and transactional leadership. The situational leader chooses the style appropriate to the employee's motivation and skill level. As a transactional leader, the manager is able to develop and implement a challenging strategy and inspiring vision together with his employees (AMBA criterion 6.4.1). The manager is not only responsible for good cooperation within the teams he works with, but also for the training and development of his employees (staff).

To perform the roles well, the manager has extensive knowledge and understanding of current management disciplines, HR, marketing, operations, finance, ICT, International management and strategy. He is up to date with the latest developments in these areas in order to make an inspiring, qualitative and ethical contribution to the development of the organisation. By consulting the professional field and subject experts from time to time about the important themes/topics/skills for today's manager, and by incorporating these topics in the programme's curriculum, final qualifications and learning objectives remain in line with the professional profile.

The masters-level manager has excellent communication skills to enhance cooperation with and between teams. Moreover, the manager's good inter-personal and presentation skills enable him/her to inspire and motivate others. Also, the manager is

expert in research methodology, as he should be able to assess research results and set up and conduct (or commission) his own research.

The modern manager is able to collect, analyse and use new relevant information in decision-making. He is willing and able to learn continuously. A "life-long learner", he integrates new knowledge and previous experiences to address complex unstructured management situations in a holistic, multidisciplinary manner. (AMBA criteria 6.4.2,4,5)

Understanding who the stakeholders are, what their role is and how their interests should be promoted is essential. The manager brings coherence to the short-term and long-term interests of different stakeholders. Focusing on the interests of only one of the stakeholders or on short-term goals is not desirable. In his decision-making, the modern manager takes into account sustainability aspects, which are important to society as a stakeholder (AMBA criterion 6.4.3).

In many cases, the manager faces issues that are international in nature either because the issues themselves are cross-border or because the partners are from different countries.

An entrepreneur or entrepreneurial manager, a leader, decisive, knowledgeable, communicatively strong, and willing to learn and self-reflect: these terms briefly summarise the BSN MBA professional profile of "the" manager. A hardworking leader of a small organisation, or inspiring as a manager working at 1st, 2nd or 3rd echelon in a very large organisation, a decisive person in whom people in a company can have confidence. A professional profile that fits well within a professional master (where the emphasis is on use/application of theory) and less within an academic MBA (where the emphasis is more on study and comparison of theories). The manager trained by BSN in the MBA usually manages HBO and master graduates, distinguishing them by taking initiative, ensuring proper planning and control, and taking and implementing broad-based decisions.

MBA alumni of BSN work at a wide variety of organisations. Their qualities are employed at multinationals, medium-sized companies, organisations within healthcare, government and consultancies. Graduates also work as self-employed entrepreneurs. The extent to which Mintzberg's aforementioned roles are important in a particular job also varies for this reason.

Examples of BSN graduates in different jobs and companies for illustration:

- head of information management ABP heerlen
- director/owner Emora balanced leadership
- sales director Content BV
- director BMC group
- ANWB road assistance manager
- corporate director HR Draka Holding
- publisher Het Parool
- director Hungary, ING bank
- sales manager Sara Lee/ DE
- Commander Navy Caribbean, Ministry of Defence
- Chairman Executive Board Centrum 45 Foundation
- head of bus division, RET
- Marketing and communications manager, RTV Utrecht