

***What Gets You There Won't Keep You There:***  
**Managerial Behaviors Related to Effectiveness**  
**at the Bottom, Middle, and Top**

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presented in

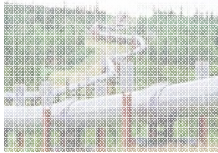
**Filling the Pipe I: Studying Management**  
**Development across the Hierarchy**

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**"I don't really know what it will take to succeed in this new role. But one thing is for sure: what got me here isn't going to keep me here."**

***Freshly minted executive  
and coaching client***

## OBJECTIVE

**To test the hypothesis that the behaviors related to managerial effectiveness are indeed different at the bottom, middle, and top of the hierarchy.**

- Lots of prior research
- Mostly *descriptive*; very little *predictive*
- No multivariate predictive studies simultaneously considering all levels across a wide range of industries

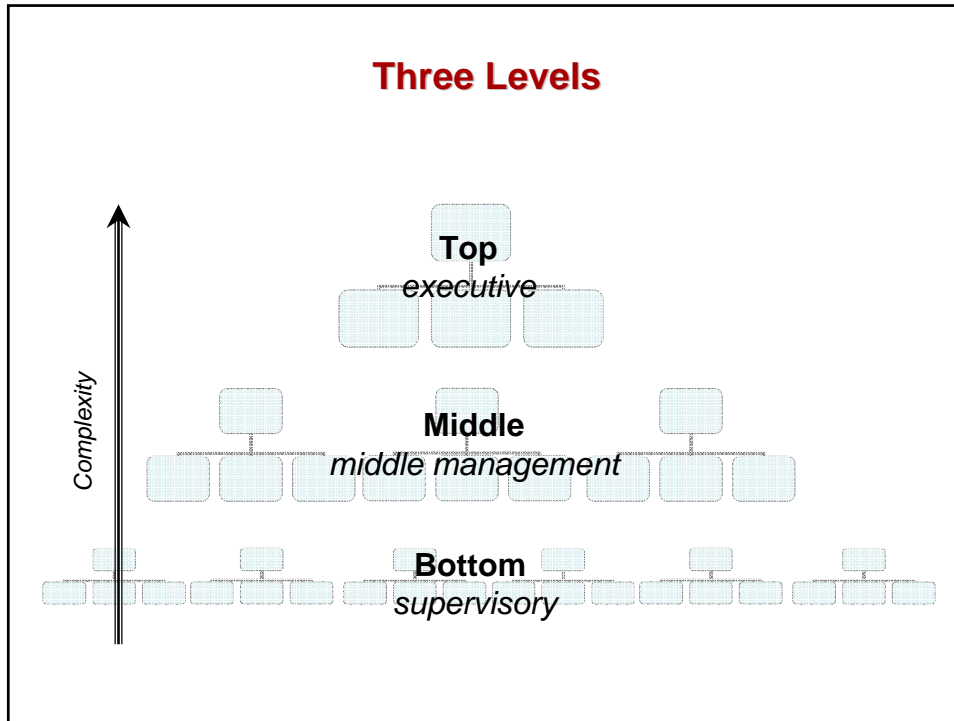
**Is the freshly minted executive alone?**

**Or are there dramatic normative changes in the success formula as you climb the corporate ladder?**

## Prior Research

### Three broad generalizations

- Three distinct levels
- Work at each level can be distinguished in terms of:
  - Time horizon*
  - Business responsibilities*
  - Functional activities*
  - Primary requisite skills*
- Quantum changes make level transitions difficult



### Distinct Requirements

<i>Level</i>	<i>Time span</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Functional Activities</i>	<i>Primary Skills</i>
<b>Top</b> <i>executive</i>	Long (10 to 20+ years)	Performance of a corporation or portfolio	Creation of structure – identify and develop consensus about future, set strategic direction, shape organizational culture to support strategy, coordinate internal and external environment, secure capital resources	Conceptual
<b>Middle</b> <i>middle management</i>	Medium (2 to 5 years)	Performance of multiple functional units or a division	Interpolation of structure – translate strategy and policy into operating goals and timelines, flesh out details of the "big picture," coordinate diverse functional units, serve as communication nexus throughout organization, allocate resources across functions	Interpersonal
<b>Bottom</b> <i>supervisory</i>	Short (two weeks to 2 years)	Performance of small group or team within a function	Application of structure – assign tasks, execute operating plans, supervise and direct day-to-day production or service work, distribute resources to individuals or teams	Technical

## **Navigating Transitions**

### **Success rate is low**

- About 50% of managers "fail"; 33% of high pots derail
- Most derail at key level transitions

### **Why do transitions do so many in?**

- Level differences underappreciated
- Promotion based more on track record – less on potential
- Require significant adaptive change

## **Hypotheses**

### **Goal: test predictive validity of descriptive research in large-scale, multivariate quantitative analysis.**

- Patterns of behavior associated with effectiveness will be different for supervisors, middle managers, and executives
- Discontinuities in how the behaviors associated with effectiveness will change across levels
- Level differences in behaviors related to effectiveness will be consistent with dominant themes in descriptive literature

## METHOD

### Subordinate ratings of behaviors Superior ratings of overall effectiveness

#### Sample

- 2,175 target managers (all U.S., 15 industries)
- 225 supervisors; 1,457 middle managers; 493 executives
- Targets rated by median of 5 subordinates and 2 superiors

#### Coding level

- Convergence on two separate forms asking about level
- Reported functional area consistent with level definitions
- Age, education, salary, sex, and race differences as expected

## Measures

Developed through EFA, content sort, CFA (independent samples)

Final model fit: CFI = .90, NNI = .91, NFI = .90, RMSEA = .05

	<i>k</i>	<i>α</i>
<i>Learning Orientation</i>	5	.85
<i>Work-Life Balance</i>	4	.82
<i>Decisive, Action Orientation</i>	12	.89
<i>Empowerment</i>	11	.89
<i>Interpersonal Warmth</i>	13	.93
<i>Abrasiveness*</i>	6	.80
<i>Lack of Follow Through</i>	4	.79
<i>Overall Effectiveness</i>	16	.93

\* CFA suggested Abrasiveness and Interpersonal Warmth form a bi-polar construct; we kept them separate for theoretical reasons.

## RESULTS

### Distribution differences by level

- Equality of variances
- Statistically significant, but practically small mean differences
  - multivariate  $\eta^2 = .09$*
  - biggest effect: overall effectiveness*

### Differential validity

- Predicted superior ratings of overall effectiveness from subordinate ratings on 7 behavior dimensions
  - tested interaction effects to directly address hypotheses*
  - interpreted results by running separate analyses by level*

## HLM Test for Interaction Effects

	$\Delta R^2$
<b>Step 1 – main effects</b>	
<i>Hierarchical level</i>	.09***
<i>7 Behaviors</i>	.21***
Model	.30***
<b>Step 2 – two-way interactions</b>	
<i>Level x Behaviors (7 effects)*</i>	.06***
Full Model	.36***

\* All interactions significant  $p < .01$ .

### Regression Models

	Supervisor $\beta$	Middle Manager $\beta$	Executive $\beta$
<i>Learning Orientation</i>	+.291***	+.193***	+.499***
<i>Work-Life Balance</i>	+.204***	+.015	-.195***
<i>Decisive, Action Orientation</i>	+.119	+.207***	-.188***
<i>Empowerment</i>	-.142	-.118***	+.214***
<i>Interpersonal Warmth</i>	-.335**	+.170***	+.052
<i>Abrasiveness</i>	-.518***	-.215***	+.026
<i>Lack of Follow Through</i>	+.124	+.064*	-.171***
<i>model R<sup>2</sup></i>	.237***	.245***	.388***

### Consistency with Literature

**In general, predictive results made sense vis-à-vis dominant themes in the descriptive literature**

*a caveat:* we didn't specify *a priori* how specific behaviors would be differentially related to effectiveness across levels

## **DISCUSSION**

### **General confirmation of descriptive literature**

- Success formula did vary across levels
- Discontinuities in how behaviors related to effectiveness
- Changes in success formula were consistent with dominant themes characterizing differences in the nature of work across levels

## **Profile of Effective Supervisor**

### **To rise up from the bottom:**

- aggressively seek out new knowledge, especially the technical details of your area
- don't let your job consume you; talented supervisors can get the work done and go home at a reasonable hour
- don't get too chummy with the rank-and-file
- but don't be a condescending jerk either!

## Profile of Effective Middle Manager

### To get ahead in the middle:

- keep your eyes and ears open; there's a lot to take in
- step up to the tough issues and make the call – when in doubt, act!
- keep functional managers on a short leash; focus them on the kingdom, not their separate fiefdoms
- getting along makes all the difference
- volunteer to help out and continually reach for more responsibility

## Profile of Effective Executive

### To succeed at the top:

- stay on that learning treadmill; you'll never know as much as you need to and learning matters more now than ever before
- be prepared to devote your life to the firm – the job is never done
- slow down and deliberate
- tap into the talent of people around you – involve them, empower them, develop them, and *get out of their way*
- keep your word – *the buck stops here*

## Implications

### Theory and research

- Meta-competencies: the "*Big Two*" of career success?  
*Learning*  
*Adaptability*

- Fate of careers vs Fate of firms

### Practice

- T&D  
*different needs for different levels*  
*RJPs in career planning*
- Selection  
*look for untested areas*  
*strengths can become liabilities*  
*preparation and support for stretch assignments*  
*hire for learning and adaptability – especially early on*

## Limitations

- Measures used based on convenience  
*did not exhaustively cover performance domain*  
*– no strategy, transf. leadership, technical skills, etc.*
- No a priori hypotheses about specific behaviors  
*post hoc comparisons*
- Only individual effectiveness criteria, need *organizational effectiveness* criteria too  
*Fate of careers vs Fate of firms*

## **CODA**

### **Update on the freshly minted executive, 3 years later**

- It wasn't just him – the successful formula does change
- He has made a successful transition
- Development plan: learn to empower, involve, and bring out the best in others; back off personal involvement and intensity
- Still working on development
- Has discovered that continuous learning is one constant he can count on