



WE NEED MORE EXCELLENT MANAGERS...






...especially now!

This Quick Insight underscores the critical need for excellent managers, especially in times of upheaval. The article highlights the role of high-performing managerial leaders who exhibit a balanced blend of visionary leadership and disciplined management. These managers are essential for navigating crises effectively, maintaining clear communication, and fostering organizational adaptability. The article argues that the real issue is not the number of managers, but the scarcity of excellent ones who can create the right conditions for employees to excel and for organizations to become high-performing. This is a must-read for organizational leaders, HR professionals, and policymakers who are interested in understanding the qualities that make a manager truly excellent, particularly in navigating through crises and leading organizations to not just survive, but thrive.

This Quick Insight was previously published on MT.nl on May 14, 2020, in response to the corona pandemic, and has been slightly adapted for this Quick Insight to general crisis situations.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

-  **The Importance of Excellent Managers:** In times of crisis and disruption, excellent managers are essential. They are not only responsible for navigating through unexpected challenges but also for creating and maintaining a successful and adaptable organization.
-  **Balance of Leadership and Managerial Behavior:** High-performing managerial leaders exhibit a balanced combination of leadership and managerial behaviors. They are future-oriented and disciplined, communicate effectively, focus on continuous improvement, and base decisions on facts.
-  **Communication and Flexibility During Crisis:** The Corona pandemic illustrated the importance of clear communication and flexibility within an organization. Managers who stayed in touch with their employees and adapted quickly to new ways of working were able to navigate this crisis more effectively.
-  **The Need for More Excellent Managers:** Despite a trend towards dismissing managers as unnecessary, the article emphasizes that the real problem is not the number of managers but the lack of excellent ones. These managers create the right conditions for employees to excel and transform the organization into a high-performing one.
-  **Long-term Vision and Quick Decision Making:** Excellent managers are characterized by their ability to focus on the long-term vision of the organization while also making quick and decisive actions in the short term. This combination ensures that the organization not only survives crises but emerges from these stronger than ever before.



INTRODUCTION

Now that the Corona pandemic has largely subsided, many organizations are wondering: Could we have prepared for Corona? Could we have prepared better? Could we have done more? As organizations, we have become quite accustomed to megatrends over the past few decades, and we are not doing too badly with them. We also had time for this because megatrends, as Nashbitt described in 1982, are socio-economic and/or structural processes that are slowly taking shape, and that, once they occur, make themselves felt in various areas. Think of the ongoing developments in information and communication technology, globalization, environmental problems, or the (threatening) shortages of specialized professionals. These are trends that have been going on for a long time or that we have seen coming for a long time, so we could (have) prepare for them in principle. But Corona is not a megatrend; it is a disruptor: an unexpected event that prevents something, a system, process, or event, from continuing as usual. A disruptor, by definition, has a significant negative impact on the system, in this case on our daily lives and the organizations where we work. And that system must then respond adequately. In other words, in the case of an organization, we expect management to take the right steps to cope with the consequences of Corona. And what applied to Corona also applies to other disruptors (think of rapidly escalating conflicts, a massive cyber attack, natural disasters): organizations and their management must be able to act quickly to adequately address the crisis situation.

THE TREND IS “DISMISSING MANAGERS”

The question is whether it is realistic to ask this of managers? After all, in recent years, it has become 'common practice' to 'dismiss' the manager as useless and even detrimental to an organization. It is better to have fewer of them, or none at all, because they do not do anything useful and cost too much money anyway. If this is indeed the case, there seems to be little hope that our organizations will survive the coming crises and especially the economic consequences thereof. Fortunately, the situation is more nuanced. In fact, scientific research shows time and again that good managers are essential for creating and maintaining a successful organization. A successful organization is one that is flexible and agile, i.e., can deal well with the threats but also the opportunities that arise in the environment, even in times of crisis.



Now it is true that good managers are not abundant. In the management literature, percentages of 60 to 75 are even mentioned when it comes to incompetent and ineffective managers. So the problem is not that there are too many managers; the problem is that there are not enough excellent managers. Excellent managers are people who are very good at their job, and if that is the case, they help improve the performance of their organization. They create the right conditions in the organization to allow employees to excel. And then an organization can transform into a real high-performing organization, an HPO, characterized by great adaptability. Adaptability to continue to operate excellently in very challenging circumstances in a way that all stakeholders are very happy that this particular organization not only survives but even thrives.

From fifteen years of research by the HPO Center and through working with organizations that are busy transforming into an HPO, a clear picture emerged of the type of manager that makes this movement a success. And can therefore be labeled as an excellent manager. We have called this type of manager the high-performance managerial leader because it turned out that they alternately and complementarily exhibit two types of behavior:

1. Behavior that shows that they care about their employees, customers, and organization, that shows that they believe in a bright future for their organization, and that they use to paint an inspiring and attractive picture of the future of the organization. We call this leadership behavior.
2. Behavior that they use to achieve the desired result in a disciplined manner, and with which they inspire their employees and themselves to achieve extraordinary results by working together in various ways. We call this managerial behavior.

Balance between leadership and managerial behavior

We have seen that excellent performing managerial leaders do not exhibit these behaviors separately. They manage to strike a balance between the different types of behavior: each leadership behavior has a counterpart in managerial behavior and vice versa. For example, these managers are focused on the future and the long term (leadership behavior), while at the same time being steadfast and disciplined in achieving short-term results (managerial behavior). We call this combination of leadership behavior and managerial behavior the proven principles of high-performance managerial leadership (HPML).



Leadership behavior	&	Managerial behavior
Future-oriented	&	Steadfast and disciplined
Informing, communicating & dialoguing	&	Fast decision-making and action-taking
Improving self and others	&	High-performing in daily life
Externally focused	&	Internally focused
Creative improvement	&	Fact-based

The five principles of high-performance managerial leadership

SEVERAL CURRENT EXAMPLES

The operation of the HPML principles can be well illustrated in light of the most recent crisis that has befallen us: the Corona pandemic. Communication and dialogue have proven to be very important during this crisis: staying in touch with your people as management. These were therefore greatly intensified in both content and frequency. Managers began to organize a daily virtual stand-up with their employees. In these 'meetings,' the first concern was the health of those present, and then about the work and how that was going - mostly at home - and what might be progressing more slowly. In addition, there is a lot of virtual contact with each other during the day. This keeps employees informed and creates a lot of clarity, and unrest can be removed. Moreover, people stay well connected in this way, and the feeling arises "together we will get through this" (leadership behavior). At the same time, these stand-ups provide the opportunity to make quick and vigorous decisions. After all, the matters discussed do not have to wait until the next weekly or bi-weekly management team meeting to be decided, to then have to be discussed with employees again before finally being able to take action. If something has been discussed one day, a decision can already be made the next day during the stand-up. And because employees are involved, these decisions can be immediately converted into actions that are also supported by everyone because everyone has been able to contribute to them (managerial behavior).

It has also become apparent during the Corona crisis that organizations are quite flexible. There are plenty of examples where organizations, after getting over the initial shock, have come up with new ways of working and a new range of services and products. Forced by necessity, but still nice to see that apparently we can change if we have to (managerial



behavior). At the same time, these activities are guided and led by the answers to the big questions that have now become urgent, such as 'Who and what do we want to be as an organization?' 'Who are we doing what we do for?' Questions and dialogue that concern the long-term vision of the organization and that are of great importance right now. After all, if employees have a clear understanding of why they get out of bed every day to commit their time to the organization, and if customers know what they can gain from the organization and are even fans of it, that gives hope for the future (leadership behavior).


CONCLUSION


The conclusion can only be that we need more excellent managers right now because they make employees excel. The employees, in turn, ensure excellent business execution and service to customers, citizens, patients, and other stakeholders ... and this will ensure that organizations not only survive the coming crisis situations but will emerge from them stronger than ever before!




ARE YOU READY TO TRANSFORM YOUR ORGANIZATION INTO AN HPO?

Then insight is essential. Our **HPO diagnosis** (short validated questionnaire and in-depth interviews) provides you with this insight. You will get a clear picture of the current situation within your organization or department and receive practical improvement themes that managers and employees can tackle together. The HPO diagnosis is not just a mirror; it is a compass that guides you in taking crucial steps to achieve your strategic goals and become an HPO. Do you want to elevate your organization to a higher level? The HPO Center can support you in this. We combine over fifteen years of practical experience with hundreds of organizations worldwide with scientific research to provide you with the knowledge and focus that result in demonstrably better performance. HPO is not a project, but a mentality that makes your organization more resilient, flexible, and future-proof. It helps you identify the 'hard nuts' and provides a basis for measuring the effectiveness of the HPO transition. It also strengthens the solidarity within your organization (or part of it) by identifying and addressing shared, supported improvement themes.

 **Customer Focus:** An HPO is invaluable to its customers. The primary goal is to boost customer value and satisfaction.

 **Employee Engagement:** Aiming for high performance re-energizes your team. It leads to increased job satisfaction as HPOs concentrate on what genuinely drives organizational success. It's not a new project; it's a new mindset and approach to work.

 **Adaptability:** An HPO is designed to evolve. It thrives in our ever-changing, competitive world, making your organization more resilient and future-proof. This is achieved through ongoing adjustments, learning, and improvements.

Our Offer

- ✓ Customized **HPO Diagnoses**
- ✓ Interactive **Lectures and Workshops** on the HPO Framework
- ✓ Comprehensive Interviews, **Articles, Books**, and Networking Opportunities
- ✓ Guidance in Implementation Led by our **HPO Experts**



Why choose the HPO Center?



Experience & Credibility

With over 15 years of practical experience combined with rigorous scientific research, the HPO Center is at the global forefront of organizational improvement advice.



Global Knowledge Center

Based in the Netherlands, the HPO Center collaborates with partners, including in emerging markets, with the aim of fulfilling its mission to improve organizations worldwide.



Unmatched Expertise

HPO doesn't stop at diagnosing organizations. We also explore, investigate, and delve deeply into related topics such as High Performance Leadership, Silo-busting, Futurizing, Social Value Creation, and High Performance Business Ecosystems—evidence of our commitment to continually expand the HPO universe.



More than Just an Organization

With a passion for inspiring, stimulating, and networking, the HPO Center is not just an organization; it's a movement. Through scientific and professional publications (all freely available at hpocenter.com and www.hpocenter.nl), books, seminars, and roundtables, we continually disseminate the knowledge of the HPO Framework and unite professionals interested in continuous improvement and excellence.

Considering an HPO transformation?

The HPO Center is ready to support and guide you on your journey toward high performance. Contact us today for an inspiring conversation or to experience an HPO workshop. Together, we'll redefine your performance.



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