

Roles of people in organisations

Directors, Managers and Supervisors all have responsibilities in the workplace as do grass root operatives. Directors are individuals with legal responsibility to the businesses, customers, employees, suppliers and shareholders.

DirectorsThe Directors typically create the business plans. Directors sit on the board because they have specialist expertise in a particular line of business, or because they have generalist experience, or sometimes more importantly, good contacts.

The Managing directorThe Managing Director is the figurehead of the organisation. Managers have the job of organising and controlling resources. Their work is often described as 'getting things done with or through people'.

Senior managersSenior Managers make top level decisions concerning where an organisation operates and what it makes or does. These decisions require detailed analysis and skilled judgement.

Middle managersMiddle Managers organise and control the resource of an organisation within established guidelines.

Junior/supervisory managementJunior/supervisory management is usually concerned with short-term supervisory activities - making sure that orders get out on time, making sure that people and resources are where they should be, etc.

SupervisorsSupervisors are quite often the backbone of the organisation. They are people who know how things should be done at 'ground level'. They work with managers to put plans into action at operational level. They manage day-to-day resources including the supervision of staff.

OperativesOperatives are at the ground level but their work is still very important. It needs to be carried out with care and precision. In a supermarket the operatives will include the shelf stackers, and checkout operatives.

The formal roles of members of an organisation will usually be set out in an organisational chart which sets out the span of control of the various levels of supervision. The informal roles that people play are less easy to map out but are also very important.