

The Role of an Operations Manager

An operations manager fills a pivotal role in a business, government or other organization. The precise tasks of an operations manager depend in large part upon the nature and size of the enterprise, but she needs a wide range of business and interpersonal skills to succeed. In general, an operations manager plans, oversees and smooths communication.

Management of Resources

Operations managers play a leading role in managing both raw materials and personnel. Oversight of inventory, purchasing and supplies is central to the job. Human resources tasks include determining needs, hiring employees, overseeing assignment of employees and planning staff development.

Financial Management

Operations managers play a key role in budgeting, controlling costs and keeping the organization on track financially. Their management of the supply chain and other resources helps minimize costs of production. They study business forecasts, sales reports and financial statements to find ways to maximize results. They use methods such as cost-benefit analysis to improve efficiency. Modern operations management even includes sustainability in the financial equation.

Goal-setting

Operations managers set goals and objectives and establish policies for various departments in the organization. For example, operations manager duties include sales forecasting and planning of sales promotions. In cooperation with other managers, they help establish procedures and put them into effect.

Communications

Operations managers need good communication and interpersonal skills to help the different parts of an organization work together. Their job includes creating a positive culture where the work can get done. They facilitate communication between employees and departments. At times, operation managers help resolve disputes or disagreements. Operations managers cooperate in high-level decision making with other top executives of an organization, such as the president, chief financial officer and chief executive.

Education and Outlook

Most operations managers have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in business, finance or another field relevant to the organization. Some have a master's in business administration or other advanced degree. The number of positions for operations managers will remain unchanged from 2008 to 2018, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As existing operations managers move to similar positions in different organizations, new applicants will face strong competition. Those with good leadership skills, a proven ability to get results and foreign language skills have the best chances of securing jobs