

Characteristics, implications of the managerial job and contributions of Ignatian Spirituality

FROM THEORY TO REALITY

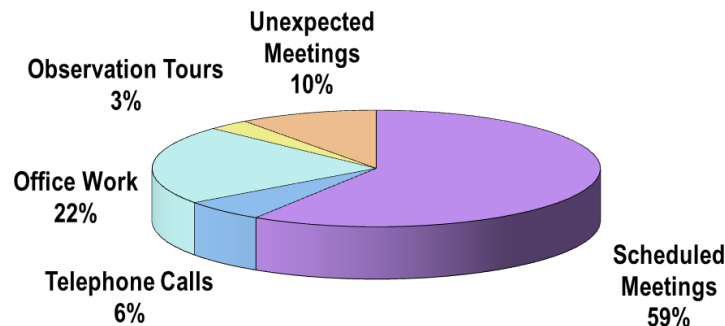
What is the reality of the manager's work? Let's move away one second from what "gurus" tell us that they should do and analyse what the characteristics of what they really do:

1. Requires a lot of working hours: In number of hours per week researchers found:

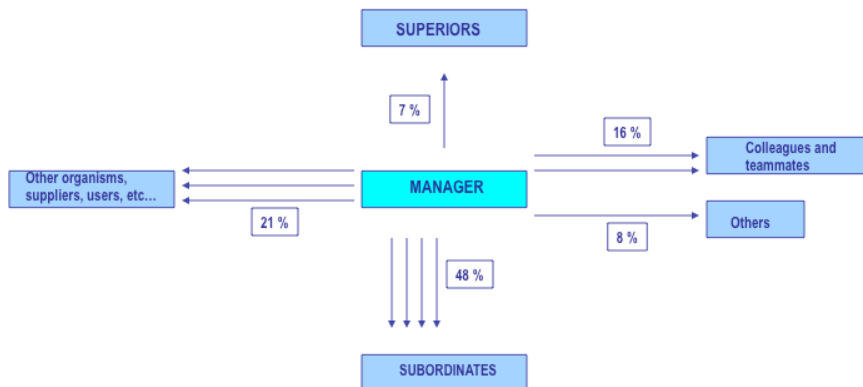
Nolting (1942) – 54 hours
Burns (1954:81) – 40 to 45 hours
Horn & Lupton (1965) – around 44 hours
Mintzberg (1973) – more than 45 hours
Kurke & Aldrich (1983) – 44 hours
Stewart (1988:16) – 50 hours
Boisot et. Al. (1991) – 48 hours
Ammons (1989) – 56,8 hours
Deutschman (1992) – 45 to 50 hours
Losada (2003) – 45 to 65 hours

- 2. Hectic pace and brevity of the tasks:** "Guest" identified an exceptional rhythm in first line managers – 48 seconds per activity while "Steward" mentions that managers only have 30 minutes without interruptions once every two days. Mintzberg observed that 49% of the activities lasted less than 9 minutes, Kurke and Aldrich raise this percentage up to 63%
- 3. Fragmentation and interruptions:** Mintzberg (2010) found that of every 14 meetings, 13 of them are ad hoc. Also, there is evidence that the number of self-interruptions are increasing with time to make phone calls, answer emails, etc. There is a tension between Concentration and Specialisation vs. Dispersion and Variety
- 4. Without end (Open-ended):** The work of managers can take as much time as one can dedicate to it since it is open-ended by nature. You will never have the feeling of not having anything else pending, there will always be something to be done or that could be done.
- 5. Strong orientation to action:** environment where the relation stimulus-response is very intense. Hannaway (1989:52) concludes that others initiate 68% of the activities. There is a tendency towards activities that produce change, that are tangible and not in the daily routine
- 6. Intensive in personal relations and oral communication:** although the increasing use of email is undeniable, managers tend to prioritise oral communication (60%-90% of the time). Here is a typical distribution of hours according to Mintzberg (1973:2009)

Distribution of hours



7. **Involves hierarchical and lateral relations:** The manager tends to become the centre of the information flow and contrary to what others may think, they spend quite a long time dealing other people and institutions not only their own team. Here is an average of what percentage of the time they tend to dedicate to other figures:



IMPLICATIONS OF THIS REALITY

The reality we have just described has a clear effect on who we are and in how we do the things we do. When managers were shown the reality of their work and asked about what implications they had in their day-to-day, a set of ideas emerged. Here is list with some of them:

- Risk of superficiality
- Prioritizing is not guaranteed: the critical 80/20 recommended by experts is not guaranteed
- Reflection is pushed away since the work tends to be more reactive
- Interpersonal abilities are more required than before
- Affective abilities (Boyatzis) are also relevant for the day to day
- Avoiding that the criteria becomes another one (e.g. internal automatisms)
- When accessing the position: ambiguity and insecurity
- Risk aversion increases
- Fear of failure, despondency, neglecting, not innovating, not progressing, deceiving yourself
- Disproportionate ambition
- Distancing yourself from reality
- Risk of putting yourself aside
- Time management as critical factor: being a slave or master of the agenda
- Control of the situation and comfort. Staying in the comfort zone and not leaving it, living more in the past rather than the future, not putting in question past work, professional obsolescence and opposition to any type of change. Prioritizing security (new idol that enslaves us)
- Repeated successes. Vanity, disconnecting from reality, not listening / mistaking in filtering opinions, losing criteria and judgement
- Context of power and/or riches
- Importance of intellectual abilities
- Taking care of internal equilibrium
- ...

We can even find other deeper implications that have to do with the psychological dimension of the human person. We would like to show you this short list of relevant historical figures that have suffered this reality:

- Winston Churchill – Long bouts of depression. [LINK](#)
- Abraham Lincoln – Bouts of depression. [LINK](#)
- Princess Diana – Depression. [LINK](#)
- Dr. Martin Luther King – Attempted suicide twice (as a teenager). [LINK](#)
- Mahatma Gandhi – Attempted suicide. [LINK](#)
- Adolf Hitler – Bipolar Disorder. [LINK](#)
- Josef Stalin – Paranoia. [LINK](#)
- JF Kennedy – Depression and Manic episodes. [LINK](#)

Unfortunately the list of relevant figures in our societies who have had psychological disorders or deep suffering does not stop here. Many leaders suffer these types of problems, they clearly have tendency towards them but the the nature of the job tends to become an activator.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

We are lucky to have at our disposition a rich source of “helps” to address the challenges that are consequence of the managerial job. These help come from Ignatian Spirituality.

In 2009, Dario Mollá SJ, produced a small booklet called Horizontes de Vida (Vivir a la Ignaciana) for Cristianisme i Justícia . In this booklet Mollá mentioned 5 verbs that Ignatius used a lot in his writings, these were “Ayudar” (Helping), “Agradecer” (Being grateful), “Contemplar” (Contemplating), “Elegir” (Choosing), and “Resistir” (Resisting).

We have put the implications and challenges of the managerial work in a table and divided them amongst the verbs mentioned by Mollá, from there we went to the ignatian resources to try and gather several of the teachings Saint Ignatius left us that might help us address them.

In the following page you will find a summary table with this information.

Main idea	Challenges	Ignatian Contribution
Purpose - Helping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of superficiality • Prioritizing is not guaranteed: the 80/20 critical is not guaranteed • Reflection is pushed away • Interpersonal abilities • Affective abilities (Boyatzis) • Avoiding that the criteria becomes another one: internal automatisms... • Accessing the position: ambiguity and insecurity • Risk aversion • Fear of failure, despondency, neglecting, not innovating, not progressing • Disproportionate ambition... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring/Loving others • Being a person with/for the others • Meaning of life and work... with purpose • 2nd week: Contemplation and following Jesus Christ • “Helping the souls” • “... WHAT am I going to?” • “In all things to love and serve”
Contemplate reality –Seeing, let yourself be touched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distancing from reality • Risk of putting yourself aside • Time management as critical factor: being a slave or master of the agenda • Prioritizing is not guaranteed: the 80/20 critical is not guaranteed • Reflection is pushed away • Control of the situation and comfort. Staying in the comfort zone and not leaving it, living more in the past rather than the future, not putting in question past work, professional obsolescence and opposition to any type of change. Prioritizing security (new idol that enslaves us) • Repeated successes. Vanity, disconnecting from reality, not listening / mistaking in filtering opinions, losing criteria and judgement • Context of power and/or riches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profound knowledge of oneself • Inner honesty • Letting yourself be affected by inhumanity • Attitude of respect towards reality • Love towards reality • First week • See, judge, act • “WHERE am I going to?” • The person has been loved by God
Way of proceeding – Discerning and Choosing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of superficiality • Distancing from reality • Time management as critical factor: being a slave or master of the agenda • Prioritizing is not guaranteed: the 80/20 critical is not guaranteed • Reflection is pushed away • Importance of intellectual abilities • Interpersonal abilities • Affective abilities (Boyatzis) • Control of the situation and comfort. Staying in the comfort zone and not leaving it, living more in the past rather than the future, not putting in question past work, professional obsolescence and opposition to any type of change. Prioritizing security (new idol that enslaves us) • Risk aversion, fear feelings, embarrassment, remorse, fear of being criticised internally • Fear of failure, despondency, neglecting, not innovating, not progressing, deceiving yourself • Repeated successes. Vanity, disconnecting from reality, not listening / mistaking in filtering opinions, losing criteria and judgement • Context of power and/or riches • Disproportionate ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom from external factors and inner motions (pulsiones) in decision making • With finalist vision • Going to the causes • Continued formation • Anthropologic optimism • Discernment “What can I do for you” “In all things to love and serve” • Indifference / Distancing • Ordering the affections • Third degree of humility. Creature. Experience of Manresa • Magis • Living with the foot raised • Adaptability. “Whenever required” • Subsidiarity “You, Father, that are closer to reality, will know better than I”
Experience of God – Being grateful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of superficiality • Affective abilities (Boyatzis) • Taking care of internal equilibrium • Fear of failure, despondency, neglecting, not innovating, not progressing, deceiving yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being grateful for the source of energy • Everything is GIFT and everything is GRACE • Unconditional Love • Finding God in all things, experience of spiritual exercises • Contemplation of the Resurrection. Death is not the last word • Meditation to reach love • 3rd and 4th week • Examen • “Sanctuary” • CONTEMPLATIVE IN ACTION