Wanted: Second and third line managers

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Second and third line managers have specific functions such as innovating the company's corporate identity and zealously implementing strategies and work practices. "The third line manager's role includes carrying out the policy set by the senior management. S/he also has to guide and advise the involve themselves into the implementation process. These managers also act as a link or communicators between the management and the junior level. Any middle level manager or employee's suggestion is important for an organisation as they are the ones who are more involved in day-to-day

working on projects and related activities. The second line managers train and mobilise the task at hand for ready execution while the third line managers are positioned to see the tasks to their successful and timely completion," explains Vinay Grover, CEO, Symbiosis Management Consultants. That's not all. "Flatter organisational structures may require more from their third line managers such as leadership capability, strategic thinking, change management, ambassadorship, sales techniques and other management competencies to complement their technical expertise. It is thus frequently observed that second and third line managers undertake a job with numerous and complex network of roles contributing to the performance and success ratio of an organisation. The mutual co-operation between the second and third line managers creates a healthy work environment," suggests Grover.

The intermediary role
Those in the intermediary position between the top and bottom echelons of an organisational hierarchy always have an additional onus. "It is the middle level managers who are the backbone of an organisation. They are responsible for carrying out the goals set by top management. They not only set goals for their departments but also

valuable information," agrees Yogesh Bansal, founder and CEO, ApnaCircle.com. Advising organisations to focus sufficient attention on second and third line managers, Ronesh Puri, managing director, Executive Access says, "Very often, the organisation concentrates on senior level management but neglects the middle level managers. This is not right because a lot of the future leaders would actually come from second and third line managers. They play an exceedingly vital role because they are closer to the customers and therefore have a good feel of the pulse of the market. They also provide feedback as well as indicate the top management on the changing expectations of customers. Customers' needs and expectations are never static. So, the quicker the top management is aware, the faster they can provide the solution. In some cases they can actually fine tune their business model also. In my opinion organisations of tomorrow should have high quality, committed, passionate and responsible second and third line managers."

In conclusion
To conclude, Grover sums it up, "While the third line managers are responsible for taking the second line manager's feedback to the next level, they also emphasise the prioritising of certain tasks and messages that come from

senior management. They play a pivotal role in translating the motive and policies of the senior management and interpreting them to create an atmosphere of effective team functioning. In turn, the second line managers are responsible for reaching immediate performance targets. Often, problem solving and conflict resolution is handled at the intermediary level of an organisation before they escalate into full blown management hassles. It becomes difficult for intermediary managers to be committed to the learning and development of their staff if their seniors doubt their capability and in such a scenario the organisational structure collapse."

- Ankita Shreeram