FOR BORN LEADERS & Other Decisive Types

You're a leader, not a follower—the driver, not a passenger. Your talent, skill, and motivation to succeed will take you far in life, and this book will help you get started. Inside, you'll meet other born leaders who have worked their way to the top in a wide variety of fields, including education, finance, marketing, and health care. Begin your climb to the top right here, right now—with Careers for Born Leaders.

Blythe Camenson

VGM Careers for You Series



Blythe Camenson



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Examining the Options

ou're a leader, not a follower; you're the driver, not a passenger. And though you know reaching the top rung on the ladder might take years of work, you're willing to prepare yourself for that climb.

No matter the setting—financial institutions, the government, corporations, educational facilities, or scores of others—there are certain skills and qualifications you'll need to get to the top. Careers for Born Leaders will give you a glance at what it's like in a leadership role and tell you how to get there.

What Makes a Born Leader

Effective executives, administrators, managers, and others in supervisory roles might come from a variety of backgrounds with different experiences and personalities, but they all share some similar attributes.

Persons interested in becoming general managers and top executives must have highly developed personal skills. An analytical mind able to quickly assess large amounts of information and data is also very important. Add to the list the ability to consider and evaluate the interrelationships of numerous factors and to select the best course of action. In the absence of sufficient information, sound intuitive judgment is crucial to reaching favorable decisions. General managers and top executives also must be able to communicate clearly and persuasively with customers, subordinates, and other managers in their

firms. They must be confident, motivated, able to motivate others, decisive, and—probably most important—flexible.

Jobs for Born Leaders

General managers and top executives hold more than three million jobs in the United States and Canada. They are found in government and in every industry imaginable. The whole-sale and retail trade and services industries employ over six out of ten general managers and top executives.

Senators and representatives, chief executive officers, executive vice presidents for marketing, corporate in-house counsel, department store managers, financial institution vice presidents, brokerage office managers, college deans, school superintendents, hospital administrators, and fire chiefs are examples of general managers and top executives who, at the upper end of the management hierarchy, formulate the policies and direct the operations of the nation's private firms and government agencies.

Most general manager and top executive positions are filled by promoting experienced, lower-level managers. Some companies prefer that their top executives have specialized backgrounds—in finance or marketing, for example. In small firms, where the number of positions is limited, advancement to a higher management position may come slowly. In large firms, promotions may occur more quickly.

General managers may advance to top executive positions, such as executive or administrative vice president, in their own firms or to corresponding general manager positions in larger firms. Similarly, top-level managers may advance to the peak corporate positions of chief operating officer and, finally, chief executive officer. Chief executive officers and other top executives may also become members of the board of directors of one or more firms. Some general managers and top executives with

sufficient capital and experience establish their own firms or become independent consultants.

You can accelerate your chances for advancement by participating in company training programs to broaden your knowledge of company policy and operations. Attendance at national or local training programs sponsored by numerous industry and trade associations and continuing education in colleges and universities, normally at company expense, can familiarize managers with the latest developments in management techniques.

Every year, thousands of senior managers, who often have some experience in a particular field such as accounting, engineering, or science, attend executive development programs to facilitate their promotion from functional specialists to general managers. In addition, participation in interdisciplinary conferences and seminars can expand knowledge of national and international issues influencing the managers' firms.

Born Leaders on the Job

The fundamental objective of private organizations is to maintain efficiency and profitability in the face of shifting consumer tastes and needs, accelerating technological complexity, economic interdependence, and domestic and foreign competition. Similarly, nonprofit organizations and government agencies must effectively implement programs subject to budgetary constraints and shifting public preferences. General managers and top executives try to ensure that their organizations meet these objectives.

An organization's general goals and policies are established by the chief executive officer in collaboration with other top executives, usually executive vice presidents, and often with a board of directors. In a large corporation, a chief executive officer may frequently meet with top executives of other

corporations, domestic or foreign governments, or outside consultants to discuss matters affecting the organization's policies. Although the chief executive officer retains ultimate authority and responsibility, the chief operating officer may be delegated the authority to oversee executive vice presidents who direct the activities of various departments and are responsible for implementing the organization's policies in these departments.

The scope of executive vice presidents' responsibility depends greatly upon the size of the organization. In large corporations, their duties may be highly specialized. For example, they may oversee general managers of marketing, sales promotion, purchasing, finance, personnel, training, industrial relations, administrative services, electronic data processing, property management, transportation, or legal services departments. In smaller firms, an executive vice president might be responsible for a number of these departments.

General managers, in turn, direct their individual department's activities within the framework of the organization's overall plan. With the help of supervisory managers and their staffs, general managers oversee and strive to motivate workers to achieve their department's goals as rapidly and economically as possible. In smaller organizations, such as independent retail stores or small manufacturers, a general manager may be responsible for purchasing, hiring, training, quality control, and all other day-to-day supervisory duties.

General managers in large firms or government agencies are provided with offices close to the departments they direct and to the top executives to whom they report. Top executives may be provided with spacious offices. Long hours, including evenings and weekends, are the rule for most top executives and general managers, though their schedules may be flexible.

Though still uncommon, more executives are accepting temporary positions, sometimes only working for the duration of one project or several months.

Substantial travel is often required. General managers may travel between national, regional, and local offices to monitor operations and meet with other executives. Top executives may travel to meet with their counterparts in other corporations in the country or overseas. Many attend meetings and conferences that are sponsored by industries and associations and provide invaluable opportunities to meet with peers and keep abreast of technological and other developments. Perks such as reimbursement of an accompanying spouse's travel expenses may help executives cope with frequent or extended periods away from home.

In large corporations, job transfers between the parent company and its local offices or subsidiaries, here or abroad, are common. With increasing domestic and international competition, general managers and top executives are under intense pressure to attain, for example, ever higher production and marketing goals. Executives in charge of poorly performing companies or departments often find that their jobs are in jeopardy.

Training for Born Leaders

The educational background of managers and top executives varies as widely as the nature of their diverse responsibilities. Many general managers and top executives have bachelor's degrees in liberal arts or business administration. Their majors often are related to the departments they direct—for example, accounting for a general manager of finance or computer science for a general manager of information systems.

Graduate and professional degrees are common among top executives. Many managers in administrative, marketing, financial, and manufacturing activities have master's degrees in business administration. Managers in highly technical

manufacturing and research activities often have master's or doctoral degrees in engineering or scientific disciplines.

Law degrees are mandatory for general managers of corporate legal departments, and hospital administrators generally have master's degrees in health services administration or business administration. College presidents and school superintendents generally have doctorates, often in education administration; some have law degrees. On the other hand, in some industries, such as retail trade, competent individuals without college degrees may become general managers.

Many general managers in the public sector have liberal arts degrees in public administration or in one of the social sciences, such as economics, psychology, sociology, or urban studies. For others, experience is still the primary qualification. For park superintendents, liberal arts degrees also provide suitable background. Police and fire chiefs are graduates of their respective academies, and degrees in police or fire science or related fields are increasingly important.

The Road Ahead

Employment of general managers and top executives is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through the year 2005 as companies restructure managerial hierarchies in an effort to cut costs. General managers and top executives may be more affected by these cost-cutting strategies than in the past, thus moderating employment growth.

Although this is a large field, and many openings will occur each year as executives transfer to other positions, start their own businesses, or retire, competition for top managerial jobs will be keen. Many executives who leave their jobs transfer to other executive or managerial positions, limiting openings for new entrants, and large numbers of layoffs resulting from downsizing and restructuring will lead to an ample supply of competent managers. Moreover, the aging of the workforce will result in more senior middle managers vying for a limited number of top executive positions.

Projected employment growth of general managers and top executives varies widely among industries. For example, employment growth is expected to be faster than average in all services industries combined but slower than average in all finance, insurance, and real estate industries. Employment of general managers and top executives is projected to decline in manufacturing industries overall.

Managers whose accomplishments reflect strong leadership qualities and the ability to improve the efficiency or competitive positions of their organizations will have the best opportunities in all industries. In an increasingly global economy, certain types of experience, such as international economics, marketing, or information systems, or knowledge of several disciplines, will also be advantageous.

Top Salaries for Born Leaders

General managers and top executives are among the highest paid workers in the nation. However, salary levels vary substantially depending upon the level of managerial responsibility and length of service as well as the type, size, and location of the firm.

At the highest level, chief executive officers (CEOs) are extremely well paid. According to various surveys, CEOs at top companies can average more than three million dollars annually—including bonuses and stock awards, which are often tied to performance. Salaries are related to the size of the corporation. A top manager in a very large corporation can earn significantly more than a counterpart in a small firm.

Salaries also vary substantially by industry and by type and level of responsibility. Senior vice presidents of lending in

banks with \$1 billion and higher in assets earned about \$200,000 in 1995. The average base salary for top human resources managers was about \$136,000. Upper-level computer network managers—including chief information officers, vice presidents, and directors—averaged \$83,900. Midlevel managers—including network, data communications, telecommunications, and technical support managers—averaged \$59,400. Among top network managers, those in the health care industry were the highest paid, averaging \$142,500, while those in wholesale and retail trade were the lowest paid, averaging \$56,000. In other industries, top network managers in manufacturing, finance, and utilities were among the highest paid, while those in education and government were among the lowest paid.

Company-paid insurance premiums, physical examinations, executive dining rooms, use of company cars, paid country club memberships, and expense allowances are among the benefits some general managers and top executives in private industry enjoy.

Government Bigwigs

o to school. Pay your taxes. Register for the draft. Stop at the stop sign. It seems as though the government is always telling us what to do. Who, then, tells the government what to do? Chief executives and legislators at the federal, state, and local levels do the telling. They are elected or appointed officials who strive to meet the needs of their constituents with an effective and efficient government.

Chief executives are officials who run governmental units that help formulate, carry out, and enforce laws. These officials include the president and vice president of the United States, senators and representatives, state governors and lieutenant governors, county executives, town and township officials, mayors, and managers of cities, counties, towns, and townships. All are elected officials, except local government managers, who are appointed by the local government council or commission.

Government chief executives, such as corporation presidents and other chief executives, have overall responsibility for how their organizations perform. In coordination with legislators, they establish goals and objectives and then organize programs and form policies to attain these goals. They appoint people to head departments, such as highway, health, police, park and recreation, economic development, and finance. Through these department heads, chief executives oversee the work of civil servants, who carry out programs and enforce laws enacted by the legislative bodies. They prepare budgets, specifying how government resources will be used. They ensure that their

government uses resources properly and carries out programs as planned by holding staff conferences, requiring work schedules and periodic performance reports, and conducting personal inspections.

Chief executives meet with legislators and constituents to solicit their ideas, discuss programs, and encourage their support. They also may confer with leaders of other governments to solve mutual problems. Chief executives nominate citizens for government boards and commissions to oversee government activities or examine and help the government solve problems such as drug abuse, crime, deteriorating roads, and inadequate public education.

They also solicit bids from and select contractors to do work for the government, encourage business investment and economic development in their jurisdictions, and seek federal or state funds.

Chief executives of large jurisdictions rely on a staff of aides and assistants, but those in small ones often do much of the work themselves. City, county, town, and other managers, although appointed officials, may act as, and refer to themselves as, chief executives.

Legislators are the elected officials who make laws or amend existing ones in order to remedy problems or to promote certain activities. They include U.S. senators and representatives, state senators and representatives (called assemblymen and assemblywomen, or delegates in some states), county legislators (called supervisors, commissioners, councillors, council members, or freeholders in some states), and city and town council members (called aldermen and alderwomen, trustees, clerks, supervisors, magistrates, and commissioners, among other titles).

Legislators introduce bills to the legislative body and examine and vote on bills introduced by other legislators. In preparing legislation, they read reports and work with constituents, representatives of interest groups, members of boards and commissions, the chief executive and department heads, consultants, and legislators in other units of government. They also approve budgets and the appointments of department heads and commission members submitted by the chief executive. In some jurisdictions, the legislative body appoints a city, town, or county manager. Many legislators, especially at the state and federal levels, have a staff to help do research, prepare legislation, and resolve constituents' problems.

In some units of government, the line between legislative and executive functions blurs. For example, mayors and city managers may draft legislation and conduct council meetings, and council members may oversee the operation of departments.

Government Bigwigs on the Job

Working conditions of chief executives and legislators vary depending on the size of the governmental unit. Time spent at work ranges from meeting once a month for a local council member to sixty or more hours per week for a legislator. U.S. senators and representatives, governors and lieutenant governors, and chief executives and legislators in some large local jurisdictions work full-time year-round, as do almost all county and city managers.

Some city and town managers work for several small jurisdictions. Most state legislators work full-time while legislatures are in session (usually for a few months a year) and part-time the rest of the year. Local elected officials in most jurisdictions work part-time; however, even though the job is officially designated part-time, some incumbents actually work a full-time schedule.

In addition to their regular schedules, chief executives are on call at all hours to handle emergencies.