

Career Profile

A weekly series devoted to providing information on career exploration

Do You Like

- Performing for people or dealing directly with the public?
- Communicating with people outside the organization and representing the organization to customers, the public, government, and other external sources?
- Analyzing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems?
- Handling complaints, settling disputes, and resolving grievances and conflicts, or otherwise negotiating with others?

Then This Could Be The Career For You!

The Type of Work

- Direct and coordinate an organization's financial and budget activities to fund operations, maximize investments, and increase efficiency.
- Confer with board members, organization officials, and staff members to discuss issues, coordinate activities, and resolve problems.
- Analyze operations to evaluate performance of a company and its staff in meeting objectives, and to determine areas of potential cost reduction, program improvement, or policy change.
- Direct, plan, and implement policies, objectives, and activities of organizations or businesses to ensure continuing operations, to maximize returns on investments, and to increase productivity.
- Prepare budgets for approval, including those for funding and implementation of programs.
- Direct and coordinate activities of businesses or departments concerned with production, pricing, sales, or distribution of products.
- Negotiate or approve contracts and agreements with suppliers, distributors, federal and state agencies, and other organizational entities.
- Review reports submitted by staff members to recommend approval or to suggest changes.
- Appoint department heads or managers and assign or delegate responsibilities to them.
- Direct human resources activities, including the approval of human resource plans and activities, the selection of directors and other high-level staff, and establishment and organization of major departments.

Pathways to Success

Many top executives have a bachelor's or master's degree in business administration, liberal arts, or a more specialized discipline. The specific type and level of education required often depends on the type of organization for which top executives work. Some top executives in the public sector have a degree in public administration or liberal arts. Others might have a more specific educational background related to their jobs.

Many top executive positions are filled from within the organization by promoting experienced lower level managers when an opening arises. When hiring top executives from outside the organization, those doing the hiring often prefer managers with extensive managerial experience.

Top executives must have highly developed personal qualities and be able to communicate clearly and persuasively. An analytical mind, the ability to analyze large amounts of information and data quickly, and the ability to evaluate the relationships among numerous factors, also are important qualities. For managers to succeed, they need other important qualities as well, including leadership, self-confidence, motivation, decisiveness, flexibility, sound business judgment, and determination.

What Employers Look For

Individuals who possess knowledge of:

- Administration and Management - business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Economics and Accounting - economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking and the analysis and reporting of financial data.
- Law and Government - laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
- Customer and Personal Service - principles and processes for providing customer and personal services.
- English Language - structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Sales and Marketing - principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.
- Personnel and Human Resources - principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.
- Public Safety and Security - relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.

Job Outlook

Employment of top executives-including chief executives and general and operations managers-is expected to experience little to no change from 2008 to 2018. However, because these workers are essential to running companies and organizations, projected employment of top executives will vary by industry and will generally reflect the growth or decline of that industry. For example, job growth is expected in the fast-growing health services industry, while employment declines for top executives are projected for many manufacturing industries.

Employment of top executives also will be affected by the amount of consolidation occurring in a particular industry, because some management jobs typically are lost after a merger with another company. As a business grows, the number of top executives changes less than the number of employees. Therefore, top executives are not expected to experience as much employment growth as workers in the occupations they oversee.



CHIEF EXECUTIVES

DEFINITION: Determine and formulate policies and provide the overall direction of companies or private and public sector organizations within the guidelines set up by a board of directors or similar governing body. Plan, direct, or coordinate operational activities at the highest level of management with the help of subordinate executives and staff managers.

NAME: Paul Adams

JOB TITLE: Director

COMPANY: Lorain County Board Of Elections

LOCATION: Lorain

Q. How did you become interested in your particular field?

A. Interest in my neighborhood and various community organizations lead me to get involved in the political field just out of high school. Soon thereafter I decided to run for city council and that eventually lead to my further involvement in the election system.

Q. Who or what influenced your decision the most and why?

A. The community I grew up in, South Lorain, had numerous community leaders that inspired me to want to be involved. Their example lead my desire to enter public service.

Q. What is your educational background?

A. I am a 1999 graduate of Clearview High School and I have an Associate's degree from Lorain County Community College and a Bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University.

Q. How did you get to where you are today? What path did your employment journey take?

A. I have often times heard people say that in order to get ahead you have to be willing to take chances and that has been at the center of my career goals. When a full-time job opening was available at the Board of Elections I left a career in retail where I was training to become an assistant manager. I made the change in part because I knew I could be more involved in the community and political process, but it was a risk. A few years after that I left the Board of Elections to take a position in the Elections Division of the Ohio Secretary of State's office in Columbus. After serving in that capacity I gained experience and connections which enabled me to be a leading candidate for the position of Director of Elections in Lorain County when the position came open.

Q. What skills or certifications do you think are needed to be successful in this field?

A. In particular all election officials need three important skills: customer service, attention to detail, and the ability to work under pressure. Election officials interact with voters, poll workers, candidates, representatives from various government agencies and elected officials on a nearly constant basis. Providing proper customer service to this variety of individuals is a key part of our duty to the public. Attention to detail is something that touches every part of our work. Whether it be thousands of words of ballot language or auditing hundreds of pages of campaign finance reports attention to detail is important to ensuring honest and fair elections.

Q. What is the best part of your job?

A. The best part of my job is personal interaction with the voters themselves. While election officials can often get buried with work in the middle of an election season, I try to make time to meet and talk with the average voter about his or her experience. In my capacity voters are often numbers on a sheet, but it is important and fun to meet the people that those numbers represent.

Q. Do you have any words of advice for someone considering a career in your field?

A. As mentioned before, election officials have to be detail oriented and always ready to adjust to changes in law and voting procedures. Building a strong skill set to accomplish these requirements while working on customer service skills are key to succeeding in this field. Anyone interested in seeking a career in this field should call their local board of elections about serving as a poll worker. Lorain County hires over 1,000 poll workers for each major election and joining those ranks is a great way to begin work in this field.

Earnings Potential

Top executives are among the highest paid workers in the United States. However, salary levels vary substantially, depending on level of executive responsibility; length of service; and type, size, and location of the firm, organization, or government agency. For example, a top manager in a very large corporation can earn significantly more than the mayor of a small town. Therefore, we will not be quoting any salary figures on this page!

Sources: Occupational Information Network, O*Net Online, <http://online.onetcenter.org>; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco>