

**Some Possible Responses to the Question—
“How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?”**

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“A day without laughter is a day wasted.”

---Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)

The following is a light-hearted attempt at approaching the seven key functions of management with the classic question, “How many managers does it take to change a light bulb?”

Key Function of Management	Sub-Function	Possible Management Response to the Question...
<i>Planning</i>	Strategic Thinking	“Do we understand the environmental complexity and organizational change associated with changing light-bulbs?”
	Strategic Formulation	“How can we avoid changing light-bulbs as frequently in the future?”
	Strategic Implementation	“We have allocated sufficient resources and implemented an evaluation system for light-bulb changing.”
	Vision and Mission	“If it is profitable, should we be in the light-bulb changing business at all?”
	Objectives and Goals	“The Facilities and Plant Dept. will reduce the response time to fix broken light-bulbs by 10% by the end of this fiscal year.”
<i>Organizing</i>	Culture	“Is changing a light-bulb normally done when noticed or is it mandated top-down?”
	Globalization	“Where was the new light-bulb designed and/or manufactured and why?”
	Structure	“Should there be a permanent Department of Light-Bulb Changing?”
<i>Staffing</i>	Role Conflict	“Should managers be changing light-bulbs?”
	Human Resources	“With respect to light-bulb changing, has the appropriate individual been identified, hired, trained, supervised, and evaluated?”
	Project Management	“We need one manager for each part of the light-bulb changing project—integration, scope, time, cost, quality, HR, communications, risk, and procurement.”

<i>Coordinating</i>	Best Practices	“How did others change light-bulbs in the past?”
	Communication	“Exactly which light-bulb needs changing and what time should we meet together to change it?”
	Groups and Teams	“It takes exactly four people to change a light-bulb—one to climb the ladder, one to hold the ladder, one to supervise the work, and one to handle the paperwork.”
<i>Motivating</i>	Alignment	“I still have one manager who says, ‘ <i>Real</i> managers don’t change light bulbs!’”
	Rewards and Incentives	“I’ll pay you overtime to change a light-bulb after closing hours.”
<i>Leading</i>	Decision-Making	“‘How many managers does it take to change a light-bulb?’ is not the correct question.”
	Social Responsibility	“Was any child labor used in the manufacturing, distribution, or procurement of the replacement light-bulb?”
	Change Management	“How do we move from using incandescent light-bulbs to using fluorescent light-bulbs?”
	Operational Effectiveness	“The light-bulb in question was already changed proactively by the trained engineering staff supported by the cohesive management team.”
<i>Controlling</i>	Budgeting	“What are the resources—allocated at a full cost burden—normally needed take to change a standard light-bulb?”
	Knowledge Management	“We need to document the light-bulb changing process much more explicitly.”
	Continuous Improvement	“We need to determine how to have the optimal number of light-bulbs on premises to minimize costs and downtime.”