

**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 or light-bulb changing business?”
	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 or is it mandated?”
	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	“What is a manager?”
	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—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 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, including time, normally needed take to change a 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.”