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Introduction

Management means guiding people and resources and work in an organisation, so it meets its goals. In today's world of business, it is very important. Companies face many changes like new technology, more competition, different customer needs and global changes like AI. To keep up, organisations need good managers. Managers help the organisation by doing things like planning what to do, organising how to do it, leading people to do it and controlling to check that things go as planned (Brigden, 2024).

When an organisation sets goals, it is not enough just to say, "we want to grow" or "we want to improve". There needs to be structure and clarity. Managers must create plans for the future, then they must arrange the people and resources so that the plan can happen. They must motivate and lead people, so they carry out the work. Also, they must check what is happening and compare it with what was planned, so everything stays on track (Indeed, 2025).

One part of this four-part management framework stands out which is controlling. The controlling function is about making sure the organisation does what it decided to do. Without it, even the best plan and strong leadership may go off track. If no one monitors progress or takes corrective action when things go wrong, goals may not be met, resources may be wasted, and this can cause chaos. According to (APU), controlling involves monitoring performance, comparing it with standards and taking corrective actions when it is needed.

In this essay I will first explain all four managerial functions which are planning, organising, leading and controlling. Then I will look in more detail at why controlling is essential in organisations of all types. Afterwards I will explore the challenges managers face when trying to control things. Finally, I will discuss how managers can reduce or overcome those challenges, with real business examples to make it clear.

Main Body

Identify and explain the managerial functions

Management can be defined as the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling organisational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently (Robbins and Coulter, 2022). Managers carry out many duties every day, but most of what they do can be grouped into four main functions. These are planning, organising, leading and controlling. Each function is important for success, and together they form the foundation of management in any organisation (APU). Without these functions organisations would lack structure, direction and coordination.

The first function is planning. Planning means deciding what goals the organisation wants to reach and how it will reach them. It is about looking ahead, setting priorities and preparing for possible problems. Planning gives direction to everyone in the organisation and reduces uncertainty (Benjamin, 2023). For example, Apple planned to increase services revenue because iPhone sales were slowing down in growth. This planning helped them shift focus and this led to services becoming a major revenue driver for the company. A clear plan helps everyone understand what to do and how their work fits into the bigger picture (Brigden, 2024).

The next function is organising. Once the plan is made, managers must organise people and resources so the plan can be carried out. This means assigning tasks, creating teams, setting up systems and arranging resources such as money, materials and time (Wrike, 2022). For example, Amazon organises its warehouse operations using a specific warehouse structure system that helps workers find products faster. This supports Amazon's ability to deliver products quickly at large scale. Good organisation helps workflow smoothly and makes it easier to monitor progress. It also ensures that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.

The third function is leading. Leading involves guiding, motivating and communicating with employees so they perform well (Indeed, 2025). For example, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella improved performance by using a positive leadership style focused on empathy, learning and trust. This helped culture improve and improved business outcomes at Microsoft (Harvard Business Review, 2023). Leadership also involves solving problems and making decisions that keep morale high and work productive (Lumen Learning, no date).

The final function is controlling. Controlling means checking if the organisation is meeting its goals and fixing problems when needed (LibreTexts, 2025). For example, a hotel manager may track guest satisfaction scores and take steps to improve service if the scores fall. Controlling ensures that plans are achieved and that the organisation learns from mistakes (Benjamin, no date).

Together, these four functions form a continuous process. Managers plan, organise, lead and control and then the cycle begins again. This helps organisations remain effective, adaptable, and successful in changing environments (Brigden, 2024).

Critically evaluate why controlling is essential in organizations of all types

Controlling is a vital part of management because it helps managers make sure that what they plan really happens. Without controlling, a plan may look good on paper but never become reality. The function of controlling involves setting performance standards, measuring actual performance, comparing the two and taking corrective action when needed (Adobe Workfront,

2025). This process links closely with planning because what is to be achieved needs monitoring (GeeksforGeeks, 2024). Controlling is not only important for organisations, but also because managers themselves use controlling to check if their decisions and strategies are working. This is why controlling is essential in every type of organisation, small or large, public or private.

Controlling must be seen as a managerial skill, not only an organisational system. Successful managers who use controlling in a clear and disciplined way often produce stronger results. A good example is Steve Jobs, who used strict controlling on the smallest product details to make sure Apple products reached extremely high performance and aesthetic standards. He constantly reviewed designs, prototypes, and corrections to ensure no weak detail was ignored. This supported Apple's quality reputation and helped Apple achieve global success (Isaacson, 2011). Another example is Jeff Bezos at Amazon who constantly used extremely detailed performance dashboards to monitor customer behaviour, delivery speed, complaints, sales conversion rates and click patterns. Bezos used this controlling information constantly before making decisions, which allowed Amazon to react to problems faster than competitors (Stone, 2013). These examples show that controlling is essential at the individual manager level because it improves decision making and makes plans more accurate.

Controlling support's goal achievement. Organisations set goals as part of planning, but if there is no check on progress, performance may drift. Controlling ensures that managers identify when performance goes off from plans and then intervene (GeeksforGeeks, 2024). For example, if a sales department is under performing against its target, controlling will highlight that gap so action can be taken. Without such checks, the organisation may fail to meet its objectives. Controlling also improves decision making by providing data, feedback and insight into how things are going (The Enterprise World, 2024). When managers have accurate information about deviations and trends, they can make timely choices rather than reacting late.

Secondly, controlling ensures efficient use of resources. Organisations have limited resources such as money, people and materials and need to use them well. Through controlling, managers monitor resource utilisation, detect waste and bottlenecks and correct them (AIU Blog, 2024). For instance, a manufacturing company may track machine downtime, material waste and labour productivity. Controls let it identify where waste is rising and address it. This leads to better performance and cost control.

Thirdly, controlling helps organisations adapt in changing environments. Today's business world changes quickly such as new technologies, regulation shifts, supply-chain disruptions and global competition. Controlling provides the mechanism to monitor not just internal performance but external signals and to adjust accordingly (The Enterprise World, 2024). A company may detect early signs that a competitor is gaining market share; controlling can trigger a review of strategy or operations to respond. Also, controlling provides discipline and order in operations, it creates accountability, coordination and standard setting across

functions (GeeksforGeeks, 2024). When employees know their performance will be measured, it often increases motivation and alignment with organisational goals.

Furthermore, controlling also builds credibility and external confidence. For example, public companies are required to have controls to protect stakeholders and show transparency. Even small businesses benefit from controls to understand what happened and to prepare for what might happen (Lumen Learning, no date). With good control systems, organisations can raise funds, win trust of investors or customers and show that they manage reliably. A firm like Toyota became known for rigorous control systems measuring everything from door-closing noise to brake reliability to maintain quality and safety standards. This shows how controlling can be a competitive advantage as much as a safeguard.

Discuss the challenges associated with controlling

Controlling in organisations faces several real difficulties. One challenge is setting the right standards. If the standards that managers use to measure performance are unclear, too high, too low or unrealistic then it becomes hard to decide what counts as “on track” and what needs a fix. For example, if a customer service department is told to reduce response time but no clear target is given, employees may not know what is expected (GeeksforGeeks, 2024). Also, faulty standards may wrongly mark good work as bad or fail to catch poor performance.

A second challenge is timing and information lag. Controlling requires that managers get data about performance, compare it to the standard and act quickly when things go off track. But often the feedback comes too late or is out-of-date by the time it arrives, making the corrective action less effective. For example, a manufacturing line report that is sent weekly may show a problem only after the damage is done. A real industry example is Boeing. When Boeing had quality control failures during the 737 MAX production period, managers were not always informed of safety deviations in time. This delay resulted in major long-term consequences and higher cost because corrective action was too late (NY Times, 2023). This shows how feedback delays blunt the value of control.

Third, resistance from people is a big obstacle. Employees may view control systems as a distrust tool, or as micromanagement. They may resist reporting, hide data or feel demotivated. This means the controlling process does not work smoothly. For example, when new performance tracking is introduced without explaining “why”, staff may push back.

Fourth, external and changing factors make control difficult. Organisations operate in dynamic environments with new technologies, new regulations, shifting consumer demands, global competition. Many of these factors are outside the organisations direct control and may undermine the standard or plan that the control system is based on. So, controlling becomes harder. Fifth, cost and resource demands of control systems can strain organisations. Establishing monitoring systems, collecting data, analysing it and responding takes money, time and skilled people. Smaller organisations especially may struggle to bear the cost. Finally, difficulty in measuring intangible performance is a challenge. Some important aspects of

organisational performance such as creativity, employee morale or brand reputation are hard to quantify. If you control only what you can measure, important but less measurable areas may be ignored or undervalued.

How can managers mitigate these challenges

Although controlling faces many challenges, managers can take practical steps to reduce these problems and make control systems more effective. The first step is to set clear and realistic standards. Goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART). When standards are simple and realistic, employees understand what is expected and can work toward it confidently (Indeed, 2024). For example, instead of saying “improve sales”, a manager can set a target like “increase online sales by 8% within three months”. Clear standards reduce confusion and make performance easier to measure (GeeksforGeeks, 2024).

Another way to improve control is through timely and accurate feedback. Managers should use real-time information systems so they can see problems early and fix them quickly (MBA Knowledge Base, no date). For example, a logistics company can track deliveries through digital dashboards to spot delays as they happen. Using technology such as data analytics, sensors, and dashboards helps control become continuous rather than delayed.

Managers also need to communicate well and build trust. Many control systems fail because employees see them as tools of punishment rather than improvement. Managers should explain why control is important and involve employees in designing control measures (The Enterprise World, 2024). Participation helps workers feel ownership and reduces resistance.

Another important step is to train staff and managers. Training improves understanding of how to collect, analyse, and use control data. It also ensures that everyone has the skills to interpret results and make the right corrections (BYJU’S, no date). Without training, employees might misuse control tools or ignore valuable feedback.

To handle external changes, managers should make control systems flexible. They can review and update standards regularly to match the current environment (Lumen Learning, no date). For example, when inflation or new laws change costs, managers can revise budget targets instead of sticking to outdated ones. Flexible control systems keep organisations adaptable and resilient.

Managers can focus on both quantitative and qualitative measures. Not all-important results are numbers. Tracking employee satisfaction, creativity and customer feedback helps create a full picture of performance (AIU Blog, 2024). Balanced scorecards that combine financial and non-financial measures are one effective tool (Adobe Workfront, 2025).

Conclusion

Controlling is one of the most important functions of management because it ensures that plans are carried out properly and that goals are met. It connects closely with the other management functions of planning, organising, and leading. Without control, even the best plans and strong leadership may fail because there is no way to check if work is done correctly or on time. Controlling helps managers measure progress, find problems early, and take quick action to correct them (BYJU'S, no date). It also improves the use of resources, supports good decision-making and helps organisations stay efficient and competitive (GeeksforGeeks, 2024).

However, controlling also has challenges such as unclear standards, lack of accurate information, resistance from employees and changes in the business environment. Managers can deal with these issues by setting clear and realistic goals, improving communication, using technology and keeping systems flexible (Adobe Workfront, 2025). When control is fair and supportive rather than strict or punishing, employees cooperate and performance improves.

Overall, controlling ensures that planning turns into real results and that organisations can survive and grow in a changing world. It turns vision into action and keeps the organisation moving in the right direction (AIU Blog, 2024).

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