



Business Operations and Services

Business Operations and Services is the department responsible for overseeing goods and/or services, ensuring that the business operates and uses its resources efficiently and is effective in meeting the customer's needs. Specific areas in larger financial business such as a building society include business services, transformation (change) delivery and customer operations.

Business services covers a range of things such as managing the onsite facilities (including property management) to make sure the office functions as it should and that staff and all technology needed by the business are integrated into (part of) the business. This area also, includes working with other businesses that supply the office with services (e.g. utility suppliers such as gas and water, waste removers, etc.). Of increasing importance is the management of energy conservation and the overall sustainability of the business.

Transformation (change) delivery is the part of the business that manages business projects to ensure the main aims and objectives are met. This includes looking at the service provided to customers, what the business does and who it works with (e.g. key partners) and also how the internal processes operate (and should operate if there are suggested improvements). All of this helps to ensure the business is successful and as profitable as it can be.

Customer operations manages aspects of the business that work with and affect the customer. It includes a lot of different things which vary greatly depending on the type of business. An example of this role within a financial services company may include ensuring all customers receive information about the services their local building society branch offers.

Some of the main roles that fall under Business Operations and Services, include:

- Operations Manager
- Project Manager
- Support staff – these individuals support the entire business and are classed as a business service

There will be a number of **Operations Managers** within larger businesses, each focused on a different element of the business (e.g. facilities management or customer operations) and there may even be more than one manager for each. An Operations Manager will be in charge of a range of things and will work with other departments and external suppliers to gather feedback and ideas to help the business run more cost efficiently (i.e. cheaper) and effectively (providing the same service in the best possible way).

This role involves a lot of responsibility and will vary depending on the type of business and industry. For example, part of the role of an Operations Manager at a building society would be to make sure the cash machines (ATM's) are functioning properly.

Good GCSE's are important and other qualifications such as A-levels, a degree and professional qualifications would be beneficial in some roles and essential in others. Numeracy is another key skill as operations managers will be responsible for budgets, some of which may represent a large part of the whole company's revenue (income).

Salaries will vary a lot depending on the type of company, but can start at around £30,000 reaching up to £50,000 or more.

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Project Managers sit within a number of different departments in larger businesses but their overall duties falls within Business Operations and Services, in that the role is part of the transformation (change) aspect of a lot of larger companies.

Individual responsibilities will vary depending on the type of project being managed but typically a Project Manager will be responsible for setting the project objectives (what needs to be achieved); setting the timeline for each part of the project; ensuring that the project is completed within the agreed budget and managing any risks or complications that might occur (e.g. ensuring that each part of the project has a backup plan). Project managers will normally be in charge of a team and so they need to manage each of the individuals within the team to ensure the project is successful.

There are lots of professional qualifications available in project management such as the 'PRINCE2' qualification from the UK Office of Government Commerce. In order to obtain a professional qualification, candidates need to have been educated to degree level.

Salaries vary a lot depending on the type of business and the project details but can start at around £30,000 rising to £55,000 or more depending on the business and industry.

Support staff provide valuable services to the entire business helping to ensure it is running efficiently. Exact duties will vary according to the type of business, job title and department, but some of the main roles include secretaries; personal assistants; administrative assistants and mailroom staff. Other support staff such as security, maintenance, restaurant and retail (e.g. onsite shop staff) staff also help to keep the business running.

Formal qualifications may not be needed for all roles but a polite, friendly attitude is essential as support staff form part of larger teams. Salaries vary depending on job title, experience and qualifications.

Employability SKILLS

There are a number of skills needed to be able to work in Business Operations and Services, including:

- Teamwork
- Dedication and the ability to meet targets
- Great communication and numeracy skills
- Excellent managerial and people skills
- Good organisation and time management
- A positive attitude
- A good understanding of the needs of the business.

When working in Business Operations and Services, a key employability skill is teamwork; as you are always working with others both within your department, outside of it and outside of the business.