The Accountability / Organizational Chart

Everyone is familiar with an Organizational chart and while it can be a useful tool, you run the risk of leaving too many open questions and not enough useful information. What’s more helpful is the concept of an Accountability Chart, especially in the context of business growth over the next six to twelve months. Your business and the context it operates in can change fast; therefore, the structure and responsibilities within your business need to keep up.

A crucial component to make tool both useful and practical is to keep it simple. If your company has twenty employees, you don’t need to create a chart with twenty boxes. This is a strategic planning tool and has to be streamlined and straightforward.

To that end, the starting point should be dividing your business up into three major functions.

**FIND**
Sales/Marketing

**GRIND**
Operations/Delivery

**MIND**
Support/Admin

These three functions can represent any business:

- **Sales and Marketing** represent activities that are used to generate business.
- **Operations and Delivery** provide the product or service and take care of the customer.
- **Support** covers all of the finance and infrastructure components.

In order to have a strong business, all three of these functions need to be strong at a strategic level as well. It makes sense if you think about it... if you have great Sales and Marketing but poor Operations and Delivery, you are going to lose a lot of customers and have a hard time finding new ones. If you have weak Sales and Marketing, then it almost doesn’t matter what else you do, because you aren’t generating enough new business. And if you have weak support you are probably leaking money like a sieve and reducing your bottom line.
The Accountability Part of Things

Knowing that you need to be strong in all aspects of your business, the next steps are to layout your organization and determine who is accountable for keeping those functions strong. Here’s one of the keys to making this work effectively:

There can only be one person ultimately accountable for each area!

When more than one person is accountable, then no one is accountable. Leadership and accountability are ultimately how issues get solved, things get done and businesses grow.

The Visionary: Leading the Way

The visionary’s responsibility is to constantly challenge the organization with new ideas and lead them down a path (or paths) toward growth. The visionary solves the big problems that require revolutionary thinking or change. The visionary is not likely to be effective in terms of day-to-day management or operations over a sustained period of time. He/she is tuned into the creative heartbeat and values of the organization. Often, this is the founder of the company and they will set the tone for the overall culture.

The Integrator: Bringing It All Together

In addition to all three functions being strong, they have to work in harmony with each other. This unity increases your chances of success. It’s critical that what you are marketing and selling matches up with what’s being delivered and ultimately also matches up with the money that’s being charged and the profits that are being made.

When you have strong functions, they are naturally going to drive issues and create friction. The Sales and Marketing function will always be pushing the envelope. The Operations and Support functions will often act as moderators. Both aspects are healthy, but obviously opposed to each other.

That’s why you also need an Integrator on your Accountability Organizational chart. The integrator is the CEO or President role whose primary responsibility is to run the overall organization and make sure all of the functions continue to work harmoniously. This is a challenging role, but if it’s done correctly it can have a multiplying effect on the rest of the organization.

Integrators are great at managing people and processes, holding people accountable and focusing on delivery of results. They take the plan and the vision and they make it real. They help it “come alive.”
The Big Picture

Realistically you will need to break your chart down into more detail than just the three main functions; however it’s important to keep it simple. Generally you want to keep it to less than ten functions if possible.

Assigning Responsibilities

What really makes the Accountability chart useful is the clear delineation of responsibilities as defined by five major roles within each function. As an example, the Visionary’s roles might be the following:

- New Ideas / Products
- Creative Problem-Solving
- Strategic Relationships
- The “Face” of the business (speaking, writing, publishing)
- Selling

As you can see, the Visionary doesn’t have a role of managing (people or processes) in this example. They aren’t accountable for the day-to-day responsibilities but they still add tremendous value.
Here’s an example of the five roles for the Integrator:

- Leadership, Management and Accountability for the organization
- Profit and Loss – driving the business plan
- Remove obstacles and barriers
- Special Projects
- Ongoing relationships

Here’s an example of the five roles for Sales/Marketing:

- Leadership, Management and Accountability for Sales/Marketing
- Sales and Revenue Goals (setting and meeting)
- Selling
- Marketing Strategies
- Sales and Marketing Processes

Here’s an example of the five roles for Operations/Delivery:

- Leadership, Management and Accountability for Operations/Delivery
- Customer Service Metrics
- Process Management and Improvement for Operations/Delivery
- Operational Metrics (setting and meeting)
- Supporting the delivery with the customer

And finally, here’s an example of the five roles for Support:

- Leadership, Management and Accountability for Support
- Accounts Receivables and Accounts Payable
- Budgeting and Reporting
- Hiring and Admin
- Office Management and IT support
Assuming you’ve created the top line of your chart with more specificity, then the above examples would change accordingly.

As a general rule, the five roles are the primary points of accountability. There will be other roles and responsibilities that fall under the various functions, but it’s critical to narrow it down to the five most important areas and to keep it streamlined.

Once you’ve got the primary functions broken out, then each function would break out additional positions below that, with each of those positions having no more than five major roles. At some point you will reach a position that actually encompasses multiple individuals. For example, the members of the Sales Team will all have the same major roles and can be represented by a single position.

Create Your Accountability Organizational Chart

The next step is to create an accountability chart for your organization as it will look over the next six to twelve months.