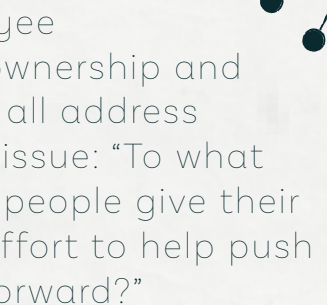# TIME TO REBUILD ALIGNMENT?

START HERE FIRST

Culture, employee engagement, ownership and accountability all address the same core issue: "To what degree will my people give their discretionary effort to help push this business forward?"

Even your most engaged employees can lose their enthusiasm in the face of fast growth and increased complexity. Discover why that's a symptom of a bigger problem and what to tackle first.

As leaders, we want to motivate and inspire those within our organizations to give their all. And in the early days of a business, this seems to happen naturally. But before long, the organization has grown and the dynamic suddenly changes. We find that we're no longer all moving in the same direction.

Most leaders assume that the problem is one of culture and alignment. But as you'll soon see, these can't be addressed successfully until a deeper underlying issue is resolved. We'll examine what that issue is and the three key areas you need to focus on to fix it so your organization can regain its momentum.
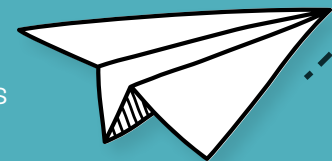
Culture, employee engagement, ownership and accountability all address the same core issue: "To what degree will my people give their discretionary effort to help push this business forward?"

When you're leading a young and fast-growing business, this ethos is usually inherent in the majority of your employees. If the coffee machine breaks, someone finds out how to fix it. When your sales numbers are down, everyone jumps in to try to help. When a customer changes the product spec at the last minute, your whole team is in over the weekend making the necessary adjustments.

As the business grows and complexity enters, however, the levels of ownership and accountability start to break. People retreat to their functional silos and start to pass blame and point fingers, rather than finding solutions.

The reason for this is simple. As an organization, you can no longer deliver consistent quality because of a newfound complexity in your business. An inability to deliver quality over a prolonged period causes individuals to seek to cover themselves, while looking for other people/things to blame.

And while the solution to this problem may seem obvious, it's actually trickier than it appears. Most people start in the wrong place, making a successful resolution even more difficult.

TREATING THE SYMPTOMS, NOT THE PROBLEM

At Predictable Success, we're asked all the time if we can come in to help "realign" a workforce around the organization's common goals. The hope is that if everybody gets excited and motivated, they'll return to the glory days of diving catches and stealing victory from the jaws of defeat.

But by starting there, an important point is missed: if you don't have the infrastructure in place to manage your organization's complexity, then the alignment exercise will only last as long as the post-event happy hour. When people return to their desks, the infighting begins again because nothing has really changed. Sure your people got a motivational shot in the arm, but on its own it's not sufficient.

Before you start working on alignment, empowerment or your culture, you must first repair the foundation upon which they are built. This ebook provides you with the precise steps you need to take to fix it and furnish the environment for your culture to improve.

FIXING THE FOUNDATION

The key infrastructure that needs repairing in order to support a return to high levels of accountability and ownership is the ability of the organization to consistently make and implement **high-quality team-based decisions.**

In order to achieve this, the organization must address these three areas: **Org Chart, Lateral Management** and **Cross Functionality.** We will examine each of these in turn.

ORG CHART

An effective org chart captures how information and communication flow, making it a machine for decision-making.
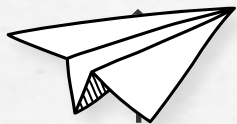
LATERAL MANAGEMENT

Leaders across the organization communicate and collaborate seamlessly, while also maintaining accountability.

CROSS FUNCTIONALITY

The ability to make and implement high-quality decisions exists at every level - it's encoded into the organization's DNA.

MAKE YOUR ORG CHART A MACHINE FOR DECISION-MAKING

In a smaller, fast-growing organization, the org chart is a hodgepodge of legacy titles, history and loyalty.

For example, you may have two "Director of Sales" - even though everyone really knows one reports to the other. Everyone's also unsure at what level of the organization different decisions are made. Issues are escalated more often than they should be, and it's just not clear how the decision-making process flows overall.

Essentially your org chart looks like this:

When information comes in, there's no clear route to a decision. One person sends an email, then a meeting gets set up, afterwards the 'real' meeting happens in the corridors, and a couple more emails get sent before finally a decision emerges.

When this is the case, there's no point trying to re-align people because the reality is they've lost faith that the organization is set up in a way that will allow them to achieve their goals. Or at least certainly not without friction and frustration.

So how do you go about resolving this? It begins with the executive team.

5 STEPS TO ORG CHART SUCCESS

To turn your org chart into a machine for decision-making, complete the following exercises as a senior team:

#1

Org Chart Review

Dust off your org chart and remove all the people from it (leaving only the roles). Ask yourself, is this org chart necessary and sufficient to run a complex business and build scalability? If not, plan out what changes need to happen now and what the progression will be over the next 1 - 3 years.

#2

Role Review

Starting with the executive team, redraft the roles and responsibilities for each role in the new org chart created in step 1. Define them in light of what the business needs from that role (the hat) versus what the current incumbent in the role does on a day-to-day basis (the head).
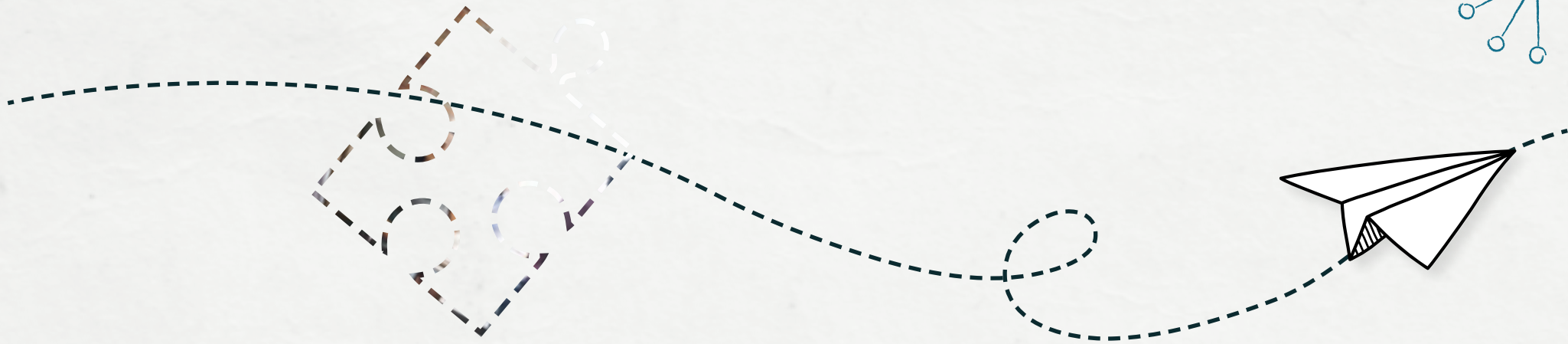
#3

Information Flow Review

As a team, review:
- What information do you currently get that you need?
- What information do you currently get that you don't need?
- What information do you not get but need in order to be able to do your job?

Your output will inform the discussions under team mandate in step 5.

#4

Decision-Making Fora Review

As a group, write down the key decision-making bodies within the organization.

- What areas does each executive team member currently have authority over?
- What areas should they have authority over?

#5

Team Mandate

Using the outputs from 3 and 4, draft a team mandate which explicitly lists areas of authority, meeting cadence and agendas, and expected behaviors for your interactions.

At the end of this exercise, create a communication plan for sharing the outputs with the rest of the organization in an appropriate time and chronology.

At this point, your org chart will now reflect this much more:

info ⟶ decision

Information comes in and we have clarity on how to move that to action.

LET AN EXPERT GUIDE YOU TO ORG CHART SUCCESS

CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED!

BUILDING LATERAL MANAGEMENT AT A SENIOR LEVEL

The ability of an organization to deliver consistent quality in the face of complexity is founded on your ability to pass the baton from department to department, like a well-trained 4X100 relay team. Sales passes to finance which passes to operations which passes to admin - all seamlessly.

In a fast-growing organization, this ability quickly breaks down. Increased complexity results in balls being dropped in between functions and teams becoming siloed. Part of this is due to not having a clear org chart. However, it's amplified by the fact that management (and senior leadership) consider the protection of their functions to be their primary focus.

To overcome this, your organization's leaders (starting from the top) need to learn that there are no longer brownie points for being able to manage *vertically*; they now need to learn how to manage *laterally*.

Beginning with your Senior Team, Walk through the Following Steps:

#1 Adopt the Enterprise Commitment.

Start each meeting by promising to adhere to the following:

"When working in a team or group environment, I will place the interests of the Enterprise above my personal interests."

#2 Develop Internal Customer Protocols and Service Level Agreements.

Identify who your internal customer is in the organization and build with them a Service Level Agreement for meeting their needs on an ongoing basis. Make sure you have every Internal Customer Protocol at the senior level mapped out before moving on.

#3 Adopt a Robust Decision-Making Process.

At Predictable Success, we teach and train **the 4D model.** You have to implement and adhere to a decision-making process which ensures co-equality of all four of the leadership styles – Visionary, Operator, Processor and Synergist. (Not sure of your leadership style? Visit **SynergistQuiz.com** to find out.)

#4 Build Accountability and Communication Protocols.

There are two elements of a good decision – making it and implementing it. Most senior teams are good at the first but struggle with the second. Build protocols into your decision-making process which focus on accountability and communication.

For example, it may be helpful to split apart the decision-making process from implementation. Use a brainstorming session to identify the needed solution(s), then schedule a second implementation session devoted to executing those decisions.

At the end of this process, your senior team will have the skills and tools it needs to consistently make and implement high-quality decisions. It's important, however, that you don't try to fix this before working on your org chart. Building lateral management protocols on top of a dysfunctional org chart will only lead to more confusion.

INTRODUCE CROSS FUNCTIONALITY
Into Your Organization

The next step toward rebuilding your ability to pass the baton is to push the behavioral and procedural shifts you've made at a senior team level deep into the business. Essentially this means encoding the ability to make and implement high-quality decisions into your organization's DNA.

Here's how:

Develop Team Mandates for All Key Cross-Functional Teams.

Using your experience from the work you did at a senior level, pull together key cross-functional teams within the organization. Then begin to define their team mandates, ensuring the mandates in your organization link together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Teach the Enterprise Commitment.

Teach your people to adopt the Enterprise Commitment in their cross-functional settings. This will help break down the silos and keep them focused on what's best for the organization.

"When working in a team or group environment, I will place the interests of the Enterprise above my personal interests."
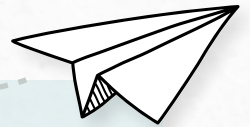
Build the Appropriate VOPS Balance.

Ensure that you have the right VOPS mix within your team based upon its **position on the lifecycle**. A new division needs a Visionary/Operator leadership combination. A more established team would do better with a balance of the four styles. And deep legacy teams could benefit from elevating the Visionary role.

Teach a Robust Decision-Making Process.

Teach your people the importance of a robust decision-making model. Show them what you've adopted as a senior team and hold them accountable to using the same model.

At the end of this process, everyone within your business will have the skills and tools they need to not only make and implement high-quality decisions, but to work effectively across the organization.
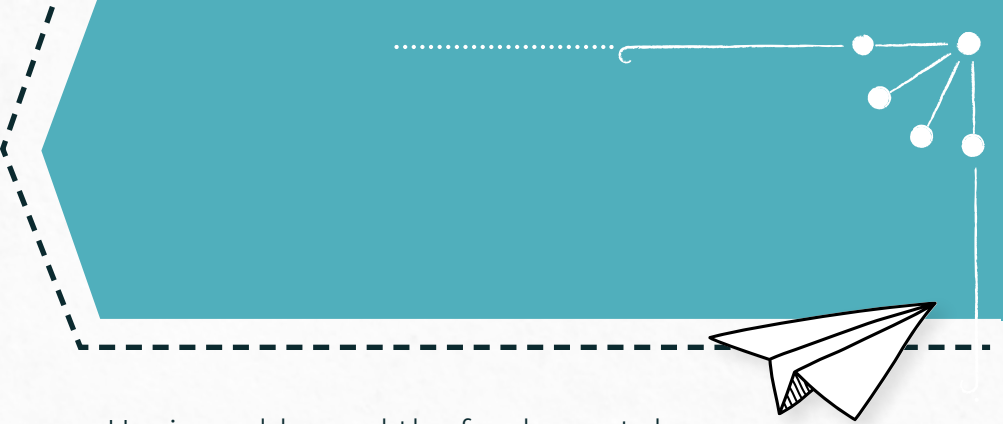
And by mastering lateral management at a senior level first, before introducing cross functionality, your executive team has shown just how powerful these behaviors can be.

JUMPSTART CROSS FUNCTIONALITY & BETTER DECISION-MAKING

CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED!

CONCLUSION

Having addressed the fundamental areas of org chart, lateral management and cross functionality, your organization has a solid foundation on which to build. It's now and only now that you should turn your attention to the alignment of your people. If one or more of the previous three are broken, then no amount of fire walks and trust dives will fix your fundamental problem.

Notes on Timing & Key Success Factors

The work we've just walked you through takes between 6 – 15 months to fully execute, depending upon your relative strength in each of the areas. It's also dependent on the following success factors:

#1 Strong Leadership Support

The project needs a strong Executive Sponsor to drive it through to conclusion, as well as hold the team's feet to the fire when it gets tough.

#2 Openness of Executive Team

The senior team needs to be able to be ruthlessly constructive with each other. Leadership vacuums or deferring to the most senior executive should be discouraged.

#3 Strong Action Planning

Each time the team gets together to review another aspect, they should make sure to walk away with a robust action plan.

#4 A Focus on Implementation

This action plan should focus heavily on implementation and accountability.

#5 Staying the Course

About 4 months into this process, things will start to feel worse than they did before. The Executive Team must commit to each other to get through to the other side, regardless of the temptation to go back to the way things were before.

#6 On-boarding New Executives Appropriately

Steps 1 and 2 above regularly involve either bringing new executives on or rotating out executives who remove themselves from the team through self-selection or performance-related issues.

Click here to get Started!

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