

Taking the Org Chart into the 21st Century

Running a business today with 15th Century tools is like driving a 1931 Model A Ford on the modern German Autobahn. Yes, the Model A is an automobile with wheels and a motor but it is not equipped to handle 21st Century demands for speed and peak performance.

Back in 1931, the Model A offered state-of-the-art features such as air conditioning with its front slant window that opened to cool passengers, an analog clock to help you get to your destination on time, and flower vases that adorned the door posts between the front and back seats that added a touch of luxury. As fascinating and advanced as it was for its time, the Model A cannot compete or even keep pace with 21st Century needs.

The organizational chart that governs most organizations today is much like the Model A. It's been around for centuries. While it is often referred to as Newtonian and thought to be around 500 years old, history shows that its beginnings date back to not only Roman soldiers but ancient Egypt. The organization (org) chart is defined by various sources as a graphic representation of how authority and responsibility is distributed within a company or organization.

Is Your Organization Chart Still Working for You?

Does the org chart still work as well in the 21st Century as it did in the 5th Century? The Newtonian org chart is filled with boxes and linear movement and is no longer an effective and efficient way for organizations to operate. It is very hierarchal in nature, puts all authority into boxes and limits the flow of communications, interpersonal relations, productivity and peak performance.

And, when something goes wrong, such as the economy tanking, or a major client is dropped, the solution is to remove the person in one or more of the boxes or add a new box – instead of digging deeper into the problem. Most of the time, the real source of the problem is at the core of the organization – the company vision, the glue that holds the company together, and its operating system laid out in the organization chart.

The “Orbital Effect”

Once you've grasped the limiting factors inherent in the conventional org chart and how they affect your organization's productivity and profitability, it is much easier to envision the future with clarity. Everything in your organization must revolve around your reason for existence, your story, your vision – much like planet Earth revolves around the sun. In an organization the vision is the sun – it provides the fire, desire and motivation for your existence. The vision is your story and at the center of your org chart. Everything

else needs to revolve around your core reason for existence. You can no longer do that in the 21st century if you continue to operate within boxes and angles that do not flow and complete an orbital or circular trajectory of communication, productivity and peak performance. It is the completion of the path that provides more efficiency, improved effectiveness and buy-in on the part of the workforce, which yields more profitability and maximized value to stakeholders.

Leadership, Creativity and Practical Operations

These three categories are often treated separately and fall in different areas on the old org chart but in reality they belong in the vision and fire of the organization. They drive the organization and all of the sub-orbital sections which regularly interact in meaningful communicative ways. How can you know what type of leadership you need and if you have the right people in those positions if you don't know your story – if you don't have a vision that is real and summarized in five to seven words?

Leadership, creativity and practical operations are the sun that provides your organization life and everything else must revolve around it – that is how balance and sustainability are created in the 21st Century. There is a natural flow of energy that moves throughout an organization called the “orbital effect” and it no longer can operate with boxes and angular movement. There is a natural flow to information and communications as well, but if it doesn't complete the orbit, you have no way of knowing whether what you wanted to communicate is what your workforce or the consumer heard – until it is played back.

Are you still driving the Model A version of the org chart? It's time to try a better way, a newer, more efficient and productive way of operating. The “orbital effect” is a major upgrade to your operating system. The result: improved productivity, profitability and sustainability with less stress.

© Pat Heydlauff, all rights reserved 2012

Pat Heydlauff speaks from experience. She creates environments that engage and focus your workforce. She is the author of the forthcoming book, *Engage, Unleash the Power of Focus* and published books, *Feng Shui, So Easy a Child Can Do It* and *Selling Your Home with a Competitive Edge*, and can be reached at 561-799-3443 or www.engagetolead.com.