

Advising Managers on Organizational Design – Checklist

Overall objective: An organizational structure that supports the mission of the organization by: achieving a proper balance among economy, efficiency, skills utilization; attracting and retaining a high-performing workforce; providing employee development and advancement opportunities; utilizing the most effective methods, work processes, and technology; and conforming to financial and program plans.

First step: identify the mission and note any changes that could affect position and organizational design.

I. Position Review

Is the position(s) authorized? Consider funds, ceilings, staffing levels, supervisory ratios established by higher authority.

If authorized, is it (are they) necessary?

- In relation to funds, staffing limits, and mission of the organization, does the essentiality of the work to the organization justify creating or refilling the position(s)?
- Can the position(s) be made part time or filled temporarily?
- Can the position(s) be restructured as entry level or developmental? If so, are there any training costs involved?
- Can the need for the work be diminished or eliminated by revising workflow, redistributing responsibility, or by using new or different technology?
- Can the work be absorbed by other positions?
- If a supervisory position is contemplated, can the planning, controlling, and evaluation of work be accomplished instead by enriching nonsupervisory jobs?

II. Organization Review

Can the organization be structured more effectively and economically?

- Does the proportion of full-performance, entry, developmental, and expert (if work at this level exists)--and similarly, specialists and technicians--closely match the amount of work calling for skills of each type?
- Is there adequate provision for development of future leaders, e.g., by having an appropriate number of intern positions?

- Would creation of a new position(s) distribute high-level (costly) or scarce (difficult to recruit for) skills among several positions?
- Can high-level or scarce skills be concentrated in fewer positions?
- Do high-level positions or those involving scarce skills have some tasks that do not require specialized training/experience and which could be assigned to lower-paid positions?
- Does the proportion of administrative/overhead work justify using funds, staffing limits, etc. for an additional supervisory or staff position?
- Is there overlap, duplication, or conflict with the work of other organizations, work units within the organization, or other positions?
- Will the workload be fairly distributed so that all employees are kept busy but not overloaded?
- Can work processes and work flow be simplified? Streamlined?
- Are lines of authority clearly defined and described?
- Is there alignment of responsibility and authority?
- Can communications and coordination within and among work units/organizations be improved?
- If there are deputy and/or special assistant positions, are the roles and authorities of the chief, the deputy, and the special assistant clearly defined and described? Is the chain of command clearly delineated so that employees know who is in charge and who is responsible for what tasks?
- Are the number of supervisory positions at a minimum? Can the span of control of supervisory positions be broadened without adverse effect on mission accomplishment or manager burnout?

III. Employee Engagement

Does the organization meet employee needs?

- Would a rearrangement of tasks improve the motivational aspects of the work?
- Does the work help prepare an employee for higher level work?

- Does the organization provide opportunities for advancement? Can jobs be restructured to provide career ladders for dead-end jobs?
- Will employees perceive inequities in the workload distribution or value of the assignments to the positions in the organization?
- Can position content and organization structure be reengineered to improve attraction and retention of a high-performing workforce?

Has management consulted with experts in budget and finance, workforce planning/manpower, training?