



Leading from the ground up

For new or renewing leaders

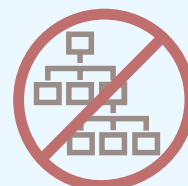


How teams add to the organisation

There are different ways to understand how each team fits into the organisation. The common organisational structure chart is usually not that helpful for this. Productivity and wellbeing are more easily supported when teams are recognised as part of a purposeful network creating positive outcomes.

The limited value of organisational structure charts

The organisational structure chart shows chains of command. It is a great administrative tool for coordinating resources and where functions sit. However, it doesn't show purpose or direction. It can provide a sense of identity and belonging, but this can quickly degrade into competing factions within an organisation. The description of our purpose and goals lies elsewhere in an organisation's documents and culture.



The rich content of organisational plans

Purpose

All organisations have a purpose for its existing. Purpose is always linked to an organisation's relationship to others. No organisation can exist serving itself. Even a highly profit oriented organisation has to provide value for others or it will lose customers. To see your organisation's purpose, look at its purpose statement, how it describes its aspirations, what it aims to do for customers and the community, and the values it seeks to live out.

Vision

Purpose on its own is not enough. It could remain wishful thinking without a clear set of goals and strategies to make it happen. This is where vision fits in. A vision is developed by applying the organisation's purpose to the real world. This means looking at the strategic context of economics, technology, society's culture and priorities, and trends that are happening across the world and in your sector. From these an organisation creates a vision for where it wants to go, how it will do it, and what its future will be like. This makes the purpose something that can become real. This is what the organisation's vision and strategic plan sets out.

Mission

A strategic vision still has to make its way into operational activity - the things we do every day. The key way these are linked is through the mission. To identify the mission, an organisation identifies the gap between the vision for the organisation and the way things are now. Where there is a gap, the mission is to close the gap. Where things are already in place, the mission is to sustain them. Typically a strategic plan with its vision looks five years ahead. The mission explains how this will link into the annual business and operational plans.

Operations

Operational plans take the purpose, vision, and mission and turn them into everyday activity. It usually begins with the annual business plan. It spells out the year's targets, who's responsible for what, and what special projects or initiatives have to happen. It shows how all the different pieces of the organisation work together. This business plan usually links clearly to the organisational structure, because at this point, chains of command and responsibilities are very important. It also links to many sub-plans throughout the organisation. These include budgets, projects, people and capabilities, procurement and maintenance, information technology, community engagement, and pretty well any plan you can think of. Most importantly for teams, it is the framework that their work plans and people's annual performance plans fit into. This link means that through their performance plan, a person can see what it is they have to prioritise. It is how they will succeed in doing their bit to help the organisation fulfil its purpose, realise its vision, and achieve its current mission.

There is no fixed convention for the use of strategic planning terms. How they are used here might not match how your organisation uses them. The labelling is not important. What matters are the components, how people participate, and how they all come together to drive your organisation forward.

