

RUNNING HEAD: SIMULATING THE CORPORATE REORGANIZATION

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SIMULATING THE CORPORATE REORGANIZATION
A PROPOSED MODEL

By

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Abstract

Corporate management structures are redesigned, realigned, and manipulated each day across the corporate United States. The adjustment of management chains, reporting lines, and shifting areas of responsibilities create an increased level of stress in the employees who are affected by these shifts. While a flawlessly designed restructuring of an organization elicits stress, a poorly designed change event can have even more severe consequences. Increasing the potential of that occurrence is that the individuals driving these changes have little background knowledge in organizational design and therefore increase the likelihood of these events turning disastrous. This paper proposes a simulation model in which a team would be enabled to systematically evaluate their organizational structure and their flow of operations in other organizational structures. This has the potential to empower a team with the predictive foresight to reduce friction that will be encountered during the planned change.

Key Words: Adhocracy, Bureaucracy, Change Management, Command and Control Structures, Flat Structures, Matrix Structures, Organizational Complexity, Organizational Design, and Simulation

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Introduction

Organizational change effects every corporate culture. These changes take form in a variety of ways ranging from the implementation of new work processes to integrating cultures following the merger with another company. Change occurs in an organization under the belief that the change will provide a long-term benefit to the organization (Hayes, 2002). Kotter in 2005 estimated that only 30% of change efforts are successful and twelve years later speculation would consider that number unchanged (Kotter J. , 2005).

This article focuses specifically on the change of the reorganization of managerial structures. This type of change event is defined by Karim's work where a reorganization is a creation, deletion, or recombination of work units within an organization. While the resources and activities of the organization have remained the same, the teams or individuals performing those activities have been altered in some form (Karim S. , 2009). While the intent behind these reorganizations is to peak efficiency, they can also trigger a number of negative effects on a workforce including lost productivity, greater inefficiencies, and increased stress amongst the participants (Beerel, 2009). Employees tend to gain comfort in their roles in an organization over time; they establish routines, customs, courtesies, and, often times a sense of security (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, Jr., & Konopaske, 2012). Changes to this harmony, even if for the individual's betterment, can bring with it great levels of stress to the individual. This stress can be intensified when it occurs suddenly and without notice. That often leads to disempowerment in the eyes of the ones being impacted (Karim, 2009). This disempowerment has a direct lead to the eventual disenfranchisement of employees which increases the probability of resignation or termination (Hall, 1999).

There are numerous reasons corporate reorganizations fail, not the least of which is poor planning. This paper explores two specific aspects of poor planning. The first is that poor planning does not adequately predict the effectiveness of the change in reporting structures. The second aspect is that it does not adequately engage the individuals in the organization who will be impacted by the change. These two causes are correlated to the finding that a significant number of poorly executed reorganizations were designed, implemented, and overseen by individuals with insufficient knowledge of organizational design and change management (Deloitte, 2013).

This article explores a variety of management structures beginning with a brief historical overview of the organizational design. The article then reviews several of the structures typically used in organizational design today before diagnosing which management structures are best suited for which specific situations. Lastly, the article proposes a model for simulating management reorganizations prior to invoking the change as a means to predict likely and perhaps unintended impacts and consequences of making the change. The proposed simulation model is designed to provide individuals who are not experts in organizational change with the capability to effectively plan and potentially execute organizational changes while minimizing the negative impact on the organization's employee population.

A Review of Organizational Structures

Organizational structures reach back tens of thousands of years to tribal structures and small bands of leadership. As humankind has progressed and population centers have increased, so has the formality of organizations and their structures, such as the various forms of royalty and religions to the different forms of feudalism and formalized military structures. As the Industrial Revolution took hold, management structures expanded as populations were put to work in more complex environments. Additional oversight and control were needed as complexity grew. A vertical structure delineating lines of management and employee lines of accountability became

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the cultural norm which has carried through into the present day. Following World War II and the infusion of veterans into General Motors, Alfred Sloan helped design a new structure for the automobile company. Using the principles modeled in the command and control structure, he was able to build a centralized structure that separated a growing number of profit centers to reduce organizational complexity (Sloan, 1990).

Over the past fifty years, a number of new innovations in structural design have occurred. Some of these innovations include experimenting with flat organizational structures, team-based structures, and even organizations without formal organizational structures (Jacobs, 2015). Yet, such experimentations are still on the fringe and have not become the norm in corporations. For example, holacracy is an organizational structure and management practice without structure. Based upon the concept of a decentralized organization in which authority is allocated to self-managing teams. The organization is based on circles with clear scope and responsibilities of the circle rather than the individual. Less than ten years old, this new model is still in the experimentation stage but has been adopted by a number of companies with Zappos being the most notable organization to implement (Jacobs, 2015). For this examination, three of the most prevalent organizational structures will be reviewed.

Command and Control Structure

Originally conceived in ancient military organizations and feudalism, the command and control organizational structure was coined. The model codified the vertical differentiation of a tall pyramid-type structure with one overarching leader. The model highlights centralized control as each layer throughout the structure is intended to be a replicate of the overarching leader's intentions. Command and control-type structures are especially effective in extreme situations where a great number of people need to be mobilized in a structured and controlled fashion (Moon, 2013). This model was widely employed during the Industrial Revolution as mass production and assembly manufacturing flourished. It continued to be the standard throughout the twentieth-century across most large-scale industries. The key positives to this structure are that there is the enablement of close managerial supervision, clear lines of responsibility, and a reduction of ambiguity. The key negatives to this structure present themselves in delays in communications as messages need to travel throughout numerous layers of supervision, a slower pace in terms of decision making where numerous managerial levels may interject in the process, and a delayed response in being able to adjust strategies to align to new shifts in the industry or market (Ancker III, 2013). The command and control organizational structure example diagrammed below would be for a hypothetical manufacturing company that is mass producing a product or products with little variation. This is putting a high value on standardizing work processes to ensure that products produced at different locations are identical.

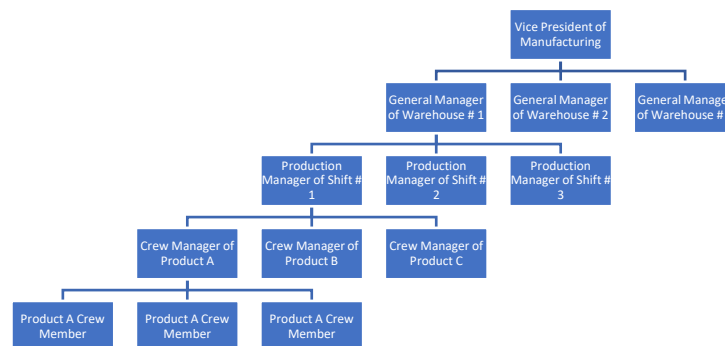


Figure 1.0 Command and Control Example

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Matrix Structure

During the mid-twentieth century, ad-hoc projects and specialized teams came into a greater occurrence in larger organizations and drove a new matrix-based organizational structure to better accommodate project-based work. These structures created environments where individuals would have two reporting lines of managerial instruction. The first reporting line was between the employee and the employee's functional area supervisor. The second line was between employee and project supervision (Ali Mehrabian, 2008). Such an approach creates an ability to maximize functional expertise in specialized projects, yet, it also creates higher levels of ambiguity in terms of organizational control and responsibility (Daft, 2013). In the below example a construction firm has a number of ongoing projects in which they need to leverage their subject matter experts across a number of projects instead of dedicating them to a specific project.

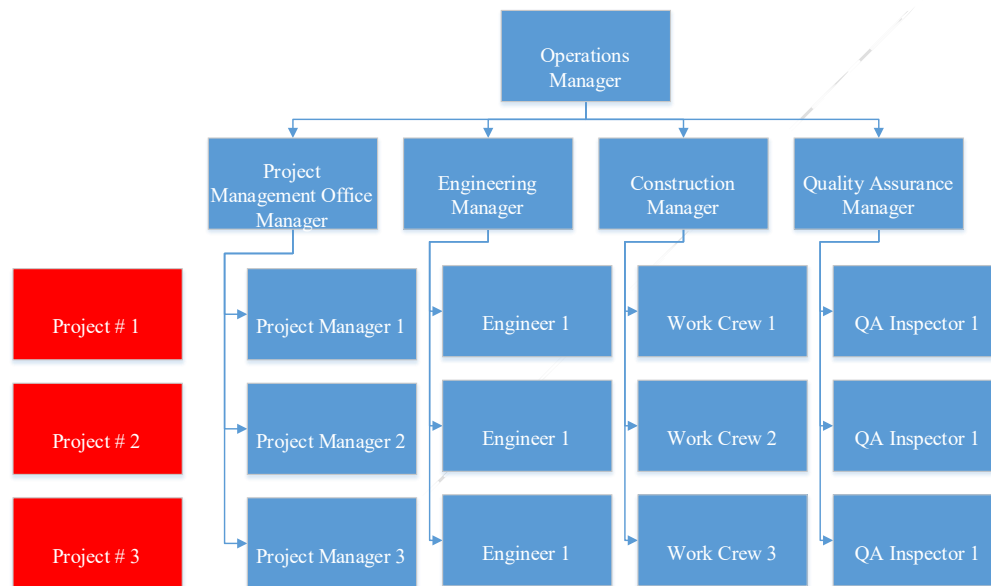


Figure 2.0 Matrix Example

Flat Structure

The opposite of the command and control organizational structure is the flat structure. The flat structure is unique in that it centers on a high level of organizational complexity that is managed by highly skilled subject matter experts in an interdependent organization (Robbins, 1983). This approach represents a lack of vertical differentiation between levels of authority. This model is also known as the consultant structure as it is closely associated with high levels of decentralization which separates it from the distinction of a simple structure.

Most notable in the flat organizational structure is the elimination of levels of authority. While this reduces standardization across the organization, it has the potential to enable greater communication flow and transparency through direct levels of communications thus increasing its ability to facilitate change (Daft, 2013). In a flat organization, decisions are made quickly and easily at the level where the action will be taken. In the example below a regulatory consulting agency maintains specialists in a variety of disciplines where each individual has ultimate domain expertise and authority.

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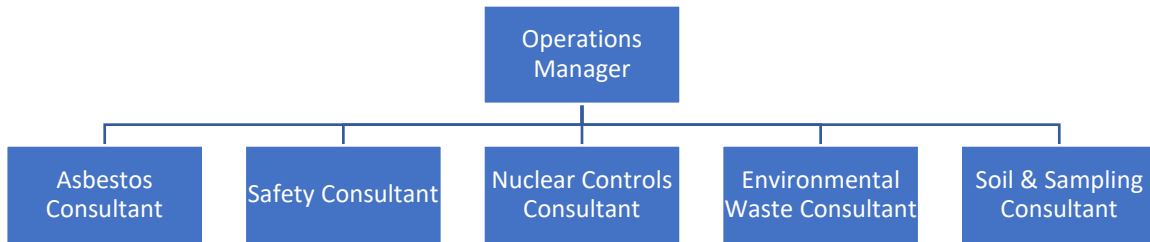


Figure 3.0 Flat Organizational Structure Example

Determining Organizational Structure

Organizational Strategy

Hammer and Champy argue that all organizational structure and decision-making approach should be a function of the organization's strategy (Hammer, 1993). Organizational strategy dictates the management structure that an entity employs and the alignment between cross-functional departments to achieve an overall strategy. Though unlimited specific strategies exist, most can be organized into two fundamental strategies: growth or stability. This article will also touch upon two additional strategies of innovative/learning and acquisition.

An organization employing a growth strategy is posturing itself to expand its operations and/or revenue streams and/or profitability. Growth strategies are often buttressed with a strategy for scaling the organization. All of this is predicated on expanding the organization in a relatively rapid timeframe (Daft, 2013). Growth strategies typically call for organizations to utilize a flat organizational structure so as to be able to more adeptly adjust to market changes and the realities of dynamic growth. Elements of a matrix organization are also employed so as to utilize resources and people throughout the organization as needed to support the work needed for causing and responding to rapid growth.

A stabilization strategy centers on maintaining the status quo of performance for an organization in the market, perhaps with moderate and/or incremental growth to maintain its current positioning but in no way with a loss of market position. Such an approach entails an organization ensuring stability through the use of consistent, reliable processes, typically high levels of managerial control, and a distinct aversion to realizing risk (Daft, 2013). Organizations seeking to ensure stable performance often utilize elements of the command and control structure as it provides the built-in infrastructure to enable greater levels of maintenance and control and ensure consistency.

A third organizational strategy is an innovation and learning strategy, where the model is still in the incubation stage. Such a strategy is associated with testing new products and strategies prior to significantly investing the organization's time and resources into a new direction (Huber, 2016). An innovation and learning strategy are well suited to a matrix organizational structure as such a strategy benefits from efficiently using the organization's resources for both experimentation and routine activities. That said, a flat organization also supports an innovation and learning model as deeper levels of research and development are enabled in the structural culture. However, the flat structure is limited in being able to foster cross-functional area expertise that a command and control model with an overarching authority can identify and catalyze.

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Lastly, a strategy of acquisition is one which can buttress a growth or a stability strategy. In this context, however, use of the strategy can be more for appearances than for attaining peak operational performance. If the company is seeking to be acquired, it is often in the interest of the selling organization to appear to be efficiently run with the least amount of complexity. This does give the purchasing organization the benefit of understanding more completely what they are buying and simplifies their concerns on integrating these operational structures and environments into their own culture. Both the flat and the command and control structure adhere to this strategy as both structures clearly define areas of responsibility and limit the number of cross-functional initiatives (Lin L.-H. , 2014).

Operational Environment

Fulfilling on strategy is a matter of execution. Execution and performance are partially a function of acting within the operating environment in which the organization and/or individual finds itself. The operational environment is the combination of the conditions, circumstances, and influences in which an organization (or an individual) seeks to execute. Operational environments are defined by two specific elements: bureaucracies and adhocracies.

A bureaucracy is defined as a stable operation in which little deviance is experienced (Robbins, 1983). Though today typically associated with large organizations where much is organized but little is done, such as a government bureau, such is not the original design of a bureaucracy. Max Webber's original conception of the term stipulated that a bureaucracy provided an ideal advantage capitalizing on economies of scale, standardization of work, reaching maximum efficiency, perfected division of labor, a well-defined relationship hierarchy, and expectations (Andreski, 2006). Ideally, a bureaucracy aligns with a command and control management structure enabling a centralized decision-making process and a standardization of policies, procedures, and processes across a large organization.

Adhocracies, on the other hand, offer a second operational environment quite distinct from the bureaucracy. An adhocracy model is designed for projects, innovation, and new non-repeatable events. An adhocracy centers itself on problems and/or opportunities and the creation of something new (Robbins, 1983). Adhocracies typically align with matrix organizations where certain work activities need to blend categorical and functional management with subject matter expertise in standalone initiatives. Moreover, adhocracies tend to align with flat organizations where technical specialists operate in non-routine processes and functions. A prime example of an adhocracy is a law firm where the work product is legal representation in which each case and customer is different on each occasion.

Organizational Complexity

The complexity of the work environment is defined by the number of resources involved in an organization. These resources can include people, activities, requirements, data sets, machine parts, and etcetera (Dooley, 2002). Exploring the complex work environment, Fabac found that a complex organizational system consisted of many independent entities, many individuals working on highly specialized tasks, and the exchange of mutual benefits between these individuals and entities leading to a highly interconnected organizational system (Fabac, 2010). Complex organizational systems benefit from flat and matrix organizational structures where independent decisions are needed to be made by technical specialists not encumbered by a chain of overarching management that makes consensus-based decisions. Examples of a complex organization include a global technology company in which engineering, marketing, sales, and production operate together while overcoming technical, cultural and communication challenges

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that occur while functioning in a worldwide environment.

Straightforward organizational complexity indicates an operational environment where lines of control are limited to specific functions, each with limited exposure or interaction with external functional organizations (Dooley, 2002). These straightforward organizations can best be classified as having a specific purpose and the key resources within their area to complete their mission. Straightforward organizations adhere to the command and control structure as the structure centers on clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the completion of work thus limiting the organizational complexity. Examples of common straightforward organizations include the governmental agency the department of motor vehicles. This organization is entirely self-sufficient with a very specific purpose of issuing driver's licenses and vehicle registration. There is little variation of work processes nor is there extensive coordination between external entities needed to accomplish work.

Decision-Making Culture

Fulfilling on organizational strategy is greatly impacted by the decision-making culture of the organization. Stagnate strategies lead to workplace routines that place a greater importance on standardization, processes, and stability, inviting a context of and structure for centralized decision-making (Robbins, 1983). Centralized decision-making funnels decisions to higher levels of the organization until it reaches an individual accountable for making that decision and/or accountable that the decision is made. This methodology is typically applied in organizations where there is a low tolerance for risk, such as in heavily regulated industries. The matrix and command and control structure align with this culture as ample opportunities for managerial checks and balances can be applied (Proctor, 2011).

A decentralized decision-making culture models a workforce of subject matter experts that making decisions in their area of accountability and/or field of specialty at the lowest level of formal authority possible. Decentralized decision-making is well suited for non-routine environments replete with ambiguity and unclear rules for operating in the external market or competitive theater as a centralized decision-making approach becomes too complex and unwieldy for the central body to manage (Robbins, 1983). A decentralized decision-making model aligns well to the structure of the flat organization as such a combination allows and enables direct alignment of the decision to the subject matter expert and what is needed where the work is done.

Summary of Organizational Structures

Four factors have been shown to be critical for determining the appropriate organizational structure for an enterprise. Those factors are clarity on the overall strategy for the organization, the particulars of the organization's operating environment, addressing the realities of the organization's operational complexity, and the organization's culture of decision-making.

The architect Louis Henry Sullivan coined the statement, "form follows function." While the quote was in reference to designing building space in accordance to the function of the occupants, this holds true in numerous conditions in the modern corporation. An organizational structure is determined, first, by the organization's strategy: is the organization intending to significantly grow or hold steady, doing either by innovation and learning or operational efficiency? Secondly, the organizational designer considers if the organization needs to be organized around decentralized project work (adhocracy) or centralized operations (bureaucracy)? Next, what are the levels of complexity of the work of the organization (whether what is present and/or what is required in the future to fulfill the strategy) and if the process of

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production is resource dependent and complex or has limited resource dependencies and is fairly straightforward? Lastly, consideration of the decision-making ability of the employee population and whether or not it is centralized or decentralized. Understanding these four factors is essential in determining the appropriate and most effective organizational structure as outlined below in figure one.

Organizational Structure Matrix

Organizational Conditions		Command & Control	Matrix	Flat
Environment	Bureaucracy	X		
	Adhocracy		X	X
Complexity	Complex		X	X
	Straightforward	X	X	X
Decision Making	Centralized	X	X	
	Decentralized			X
Strategic	Growth		X	X
	Stabilization	X		
	Innovation & Learning		X	X
	Acquisition	X		X

Figure 4.0 Organizational Structure Matrix

Simulations

Simulations have a long history of application and measured usefulness. Simulations range from standard statistical modeling and Monte Carlo simulations to process modeling via board games and even digital gamification video games (McGonigal, 2011). Simulations are shown to help place an individual's mind in a condition where they can mentally acquire new constructs and possibilities of how things work. (Nandhakumar, 2013). With the increased expectation in organizations for people to acquire new skills and knowledge in increasingly shorter timeframes, expedited learning and reflection has become a necessity (Stogr, 2014). Simulations provide an opportunity for such learning and reflection.

Learning through the utilization of virtual reality tools and video games has proven to improve people's ability to visualize scenarios. Additionally, it has shown to help people shift their individual mindset or framework for a given situation. Such simulated realities bring additional meaning and understanding to mental constructs thus creating the capability for compressed learning (Esther Zaretsky, 2005). Maan found that gamification proved to be successful in enabling organizational social transformation by helping the user maintain a consistent focus and engagement. This creates the perspective that a gamified simulation would be effective in not only building a learning event within an individual but also it creates the environment of high engagement needed to achieve the higher level of thinking required to design an organizational structure (Maan, 2013).

Simulation Conceptual Framework

The proposed simulation will model a board game reminiscent of Monopoly, Risk, and Chess. Beginning with defining organizational value and the flow of operations, the participating members will create a game board defining the beginning and end of their business cycle and identify how they will make progress on the board. During this creation process, the members

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will identify bottlenecks to workflow, communication gaps, previously experienced issues, and potential opportunities while assigning an impact value to each event thus creating variable cards. The participants will then simulate their current state and have the opportunity to identify the effectiveness of their current model.

Following their understanding, the participants will be able to effectively determine their desired end state structure using the organizational structure matrix outlined previously. With this baseline, the participants can redesign their board game based on the collective learnings of simulated experience. Upon creation of a new model and iteratively adjusted simulations, the participants will be able to experiment and test their newly defined operational model and organizational structure.

Simulation Model

This model is built upon a facilitative application in which the participants are guided through the simulation process. Beginning with diagnostics the facilitator would lead the group through an initial set of questions to determine the current organizational design structure and the theoretically preferred structure. These questions include the identification of the current organizational structure as a Command and Control, Matrix, or Flat structure. The second question is to determine the environment if it is a Bureaucracy or Adhocracy. Next, the complexity of the operational model will be identified. Following, the participants will identify how the decision-making process is required to be as either Centralized or Decentralized. Lastly, the overall organizational strategy will be assessed as either a Growth, Stabilization, Innovation & Learning or Acquisition strategy is in effect. The facilitator will then be able to make a judgment call based off of the Organizational Structure Matrix as to what is the best fit and least preferred organizational model.

Upon these determinations, the key to the overall simulation is the determination of the operational flow. This begins by determining the start point of the flow of operations and the end point of where actions terminate. This bounds the simulation in either a point of time or throughout an overall process lifecycle. Following, milestones will be identified that occur at the start and finish which will also be associated with a value of how much the completion of each milestone is worth.

Associated with each milestone the participants will then assign risk to each milestone in terms of how often work goes as planned and the impact that it has upon the overall completion of the milestone. This will be identified in the form of simulation game pieces that will be negative or positive depending upon its occurrence and the impact upon the overall milestone achievement.

Following the participants will define the organizational processes or key steps that are associated with each milestone. Prior to the simulation layout of operations, each game piece will then be identified with a star or asterisk to identify managerial or cross-departmental approval needed to complete this step. Lastly, the simulation board will be laid out in order of operational flow in a linear manner. The participants will then break into three separate teams consisting of the command and control organizational structure team, the matrix organizational structure team, and the flat organizational structure team.

Each team will transverse the game board and for each game piece, the participants will identify what actions if any that they take to accomplish that identified action. Additionally, the participants will identify if their actions would be different depending on the organizational structure. The number of interactions for each movement will be identified and the overall subject

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matter expert will determine if the interactions taken would add or negate the value.

At the conclusion of all three simulations, the number of interactions and value observed will provide an indication of the speed of operational movements and operating effectiveness. More importantly, it will be essential to identify positives, negatives, and operational bottlenecks for each organizational structure. The participants can then redesign their simulation and rules to a structure that is more conducive to their operational flow. This will then empower the participants to make an educated judgment of their ideal organizational structure, the ability to rerun the simulation with additional insight, and foresight into mitigating potential issues prior to them happening.

Conclusion

What is proposed in this paper is a theoretical planning and simulation model that focuses on engaging an organization through a change process centered on organizational design. This proposed model accounts for the benefits of an organizational design whose operational flow is enhanced by reducing obstacles. As organizations have continuous variation in their strategic plans it is certainly important to decidedly dictate the appropriate organizational design structure to best empower its endeavors. While predictive foresight can be a significant market edge on the competition, employing a simulation-based model can have the same operational benefits for an organization if they are able to perfect their operating model prior to a change being implemented.

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