



Is Your Business Structured for Growth?

5 things to consider before adding more people, sales, and complexity

Growth can hide a lot of organizational problems. When a business is smaller, good people work around unclear responsibilities. The founder fills gaps. Everyone pitches in. Problems get solved because somebody eventually takes care of them.

But as the business grows, that flexibility can turn into confusion. Two people think the other owns something. Managers have titles but are not really accountable for results. The founder keeps stepping into the gaps. At some point, growing the business requires more than adding people. **You have to build an organization capable of carrying the growth.**

1 Build the structure you need - not just the one you have

Most small-business structures happen accidentally. You hire someone because you need help. A good employee takes on more responsibility. Someone becomes the shop manager because they have been there the longest. As the company grows, reverse that thinking. Instead of asking what your current people should do, ask what the business needs someone to own. Draw the organization the business needs first, then decide who belongs in each seat.

ASK YOURSELF: If I were building this company from scratch for the size we expect to be three years from now, would I organize it the way it is organized today?

2 Make sure every important result has an owner

An organizational chart tells you who reports to whom. An **accountability chart** should go further and show what each seat actually owns. Who owns sales results? Production? Inventory? Hiring? Cash management? Customer problems? When ownership is unclear, two people try to own it, nobody owns it, or the founder ends up owning it. You do not need a complicated job description, but every important result should have one clear owner.

ASK YOURSELF: What important results in my company do not have one person who clearly owns them?

3 Get the right people in the right seats

A good structure still fails if the wrong people occupy it. There are two different questions: **Is this the right person for our company?** and **Are they in the right seat?** Your best salesperson may be a poor sales manager. Your most experienced production employee may not be able to lead people. Someone who was perfect when you had five employees may struggle when you have twenty-five. Growth requires evaluating people for the role the organization now needs.

ASK YOURSELF: If I were hiring for every seat today, knowing what I know now, would I put the same people in them?



4 Look for people who are hungry, humble, and smart

Patrick Lencioni describes the *Ideal Team Player* as **Humble, Hungry, and Smart**. Humble people can admit mistakes, give credit, receive feedback, and put the team ahead of protecting their own importance. Hungry people take initiative and do not need constant pushing. Smart, in Lencioni's framework, means having good judgment about people and relationships. The combination matters: you want people who make the organization stronger, not people the organization continually has to compensate for.

ASK YOURSELF: When I look at the people I am counting on for the next stage of growth, are they consistently hungry, humble, and smart?

5 Don't build a structure that still depends on you to hold it together

You can draw an accountability chart, create titles, promote managers, and write job descriptions - and still have a founder-dependent company. When responsibilities overlap, who settles it? When managers disagree, who makes the call? When someone is not performing, who addresses it? If nearly every answer is still 'the owner,' the chart may have changed without the organization actually changing. The founder should lead the company, but should not have to be the glue holding every part together.

ASK YOURSELF: If I stopped filling the gaps between people and departments, where would the organization begin to break down?

Your Accountability Chart Is Really a Bet on the Future

An accountability chart is not primarily about boxes and lines. It answers a more important question: **Who are we trusting to carry this business forward?**

Every seat represents something the business needs accomplished. Every person in a seat represents a bet that they have - or can develop - the ability and character to carry that responsibility. Every responsibility that remains with the founder represents capacity the organization has not developed yet.

"The goal is not to build a bigger organization. It is to build a stronger one."

If you want to double the company, ask whether today's organization can carry twice the customers, employees, decisions, and complexity. If it cannot, adding sales may simply add strain.

A SIMPLE GROWTH-READINESS TEST

RIGHT SEATS: Does the structure reflect what the business actually needs - not simply the people we currently employ?

RIGHT ACCOUNTABILITY: Does every important result have one person who knows they own it?

RIGHT PEOPLE: Do the people in those seats have the ability to do the job - and are they the hungry, humble, and smart people we want carrying more responsibility?

When all three get stronger, the organization develops something extremely valuable: capacity beyond the founder.

BUILD THE BUSINESS BEYOND THE FOUNDER

AgStrat helps founders of rural and real-world businesses build the leadership, financial, organizational, and operating foundation needed for the next stage of growth.

Founder Transition Assessment | Business Foundation & Leadership Blueprint | Strategic Advisor Partnership