



BUILD WHAT LASTS

Stewardship, leadership, culture, and legacy - building an organization capable of carrying meaningful responsibility beyond one person.

Do You Have the Right People in the Right Seats?

Growth doesn't just require good people. It requires people who fit the organization, understand what they own, want the responsibility, and have the capacity to succeed.

Most leaders eventually face a frustrating problem: they have loyal, hardworking people, yet responsibilities still fall back to the leader, decisions take too long, someone needs constant follow-up, or a talented employee creates friction everywhere they go. Before assuming you need more people - or different people - separate two questions: **Do we have the right people on the bus? And are they sitting in the right seats?**

FIRST, LET GO OF THE ROCK STAR MYTH

The person who sells the most, solves the hardest problems, or produces the most can look impossible to replace. But if they burn bridges, hoard information, damage trust, frustrate coworkers, or leave the leader continually cleaning up relationships, their individual output is an incomplete measure of performance. **WHAT gets accomplished matters. HOW the work gets accomplished matters too.** A person who produces extraordinary individual results while reducing everyone else's effectiveness may not actually be a high performer for the organization.

The best person on your team isn't necessarily the person who produces the most. It may be the person whose presence makes the entire team better.

ASK YOURSELF: If I removed this person's individual production from the equation and evaluated only their effect on everyone around them, would I still consider them one of our best people?

1 Define the seat - and teach the job - before judging the person

You cannot fairly hold someone accountable for expectations that primarily exist **inside your head**. Before deciding that someone does not get the job, define what the role owns, the decisions they should make, the important processes they should follow, and what good performance looks like. Then provide training, an opportunity to practice, useful feedback, and confirm that the person actually understands what they were taught. Founders often carry years of pattern recognition intuitively and forget how much knowledge has never been transferred. **Until the expectation is clear, the process is known, training has occurred, and understanding has been confirmed, employee confusion is primarily a leadership problem.**

ASK YOURSELF: Have I actually equipped this person to succeed - or am I evaluating them against expectations I never adequately transferred out of my own head?

2 Give them a scoreboard they can understand

A person cannot truly own a seat if they cannot tell whether they are winning in it. Give the role a small number of **quantitative measures** tied to outcomes the employee can influence. Production might track units completed, labor hours per unit, rework, on-time completion, or material waste. Sales might track qualified opportunities, close rate, revenue, gross margin, or follow-up time. The exact number matters less than choosing measures that reflect the outcome you actually want. Be careful: people respond to what gets measured. Measuring only speed can damage quality; measuring only sales dollars can encourage poor-margin business. **The goal is not to measure everything. It is to identify the few numbers that help the person make better decisions.**

ASK YOURSELF: Does this person have a number they can regularly look at and know whether they are winning in their role?

3 Once you've taught it, do they get it?

Training and understanding are not the same thing. Eventually the person has to begin **seeing the role for themselves**. Someone who gets it connects the pieces, anticipates problems, recognizes tradeoffs, and increasingly exercises judgment without the leader continually doing the thinking. A strong manager does not simply follow the schedule; they understand how labor, quality, inventory, customer commitments, maintenance, costs, and people interact. The fair question is not **'Did I explain this once?'** It is: after appropriate training, repetition, feedback, and experience, is this person developing the judgment the seat requires?

ASK YOURSELF: Am I seeing this person increasingly think and make decisions at the level the role requires - or am I still doing most of the thinking for them?



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4 Do they want it?

Leaders sometimes confuse **willingness** with **desire**. An employee may accept management because it pays more. A family member may assume they should eventually run the business. A longtime employee may say yes because they do not want to disappoint the owner. Someone may want the title without wanting the accountability. Real ownership means wanting the **actual work**: making decisions, having uncomfortable conversations, solving problems, being accountable for results, and carrying responsibility when things go wrong. You cannot sustainably manufacture that desire for someone.

ASK YOURSELF: Does this person genuinely want the responsibilities of the role - or do I want them to want it?

5 Do they have the capacity?

A person can understand the role and genuinely want it while still lacking the capacity to carry it successfully. Capacity includes knowledge and skill, time and bandwidth, emotional maturity, prioritization, problem-solving, leadership, communication, ability to handle complexity, and ability to learn as the role grows. Some gaps can be developed. A first-time manager can learn. A technical skill can be trained. But leadership must distinguish **'They haven't learned this yet'** from **'We have spent years hoping they will become someone this role requires.'** Good stewardship means knowing when to coach, train, restructure, move someone to a different seat, or acknowledge that the role exceeds their capacity.

ASK YOURSELF: Is there a realistic development path from where this person is today to what this role actually requires?

Before You Call It a People Problem

Good people decisions begin with leadership clarity. Define the role, process, training, measures, and feedback before deciding whether the employee is the problem. Once those conditions exist, accountability becomes both fair and necessary.

DEFINE THE SEAT	DEFINE PROCESS	TRAIN	CONFIRM	SCOREBOARD	FEEDBACK	EVALUATE	FIT
What do they own?	How should work get done?	Have we taught it?	Can they demonstrate it?	How do they know they're winning?	Opportunity to develop?	Get it? Want it? Capacity?	Right person + right seat?

People deserve clarity before accountability. Once clarity, training, measurement, and feedback exist, accountability becomes both fair and necessary.

TRUE PERFORMANCE IS BIGGER THAN OUTPUT

WHAT DID WE ACCOMPLISH?

The measurable outcomes: productivity, quality, financial contribution, execution.

HOW DID WE ACCOMPLISH IT?

Trust, teamwork, humility, communication, integrity, and relationships.

CAN WE DO IT AGAIN?

Process, capability, development of others, and organizational sustainability.

True performance is producing the right measurable outcomes, in the right way, through a system and relationships capable of producing them again.

BEING THE RIGHT PERSON MATTERS TOO

Getting, wanting, and having capacity for the job is not enough if the person damages the organization while doing it. Patrick Lencioni's *The Ideal Team Player* offers a useful lens: **HUMBLE** - team ahead of ego; **HUNGRY** - motivated to contribute and improve; **SMART** - interpersonal awareness to work effectively with others.

Skills and results matter. But **how someone contributes matters too**. A good person is not automatically the right person. And the right person is not automatically in the right seat.

ASK YOURSELF: If everyone behaved like this person, would we have the culture we say we want?

LOYALTY CAN MAKE THIS HARD - AND THE FOUNDER IS ON THE BUS TOO

These decisions are hardest when the person is family, a friend, a longtime employee, a faithful volunteer, or someone who helped the organization survive difficult years. **Past contribution deserves honor. It does not automatically create a permanent claim on a future role.** Sometimes good stewardship means development; sometimes redesigning the seat, narrowing responsibilities, moving someone, or helping them transition with dignity.

The founder should apply the same questions personally. As the organization grows, your own seat changes. **Do I get the job the organization now needs me to do? Do I actually want that job? Do I have the capacity to do it well?** Sometimes the person most in need of a seat change is the founder.

Before adding another hire, ask whether the real problem is unclear accountability, inadequate training, the wrong measures, a role that is too large, or a founder who has delegated responsibility without actually releasing the decisions. Clarity should usually come before headcount.

BUILD WHAT LASTS

Strong organizations are built through stewardship of people, culture, leadership, and the organization entrusted to us.

Getting the right people in the right seats is not about sorting employees into good and bad. Leaders first have a responsibility to create clarity and equip people to succeed. Employees then have a responsibility to understand, own, measure, and perform their roles in a way that strengthens the organization.

AgStrat helps founders and leadership teams clarify organizational structure, define accountability, develop useful performance measures, evaluate leadership needs, develop people, and work through difficult people-and-seat decisions as an organization grows. To start a conversation about the people and structure your organization needs for its next stage, contact virgil@agstratsolutions.com.

People | Seats | Clarity | Measurement | Capacity | Stewardship