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*Catt-alyst for Profitability*

**Eight Steps to Organizational Alignment and Profitability**

The following organizational alignment checklist is taken from the upcoming book: **“The Organizational Chiropractor”** by Fiona Cattermole. She is known as the Organizational Chiropractor for one simple reason – she aligns organizations using the chiropractic metaphor to provide a simple frame of reference for a rather complex concept, as follows:

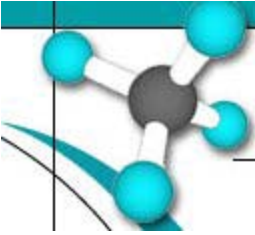
A chiropractor aligns the head, spine and limbs so that the central nervous system (CNS) runs from the brain, and out through the spine, providing an efficient communications highway which takes messages from the brain to all parts of the body and brings information back. The brain then makes the necessary adjustments to maintain or promote the health of the body.

An organization is no different. Leadership (the brain) defines the vision and strategy, develops the organizational infrastructure (the spine) to support that vision and strategy, and then ensures that the right talent (the limbs) is in the right positions to move the organization towards its goals. The CNS of an organization is its management system, providing leadership with a communication mechanism that reaches all parts of the organization and brings information back so that the necessary adjustments can be made to maintain the stability or promote the growth of the organization.

As with a human body, imbalances or instability in any part of the organizational structure will cause dysfunction, so it’s the job of the alignment consultant to ensure that these are identified and corrected in order to restore optimal functioning and growth.

Among other things the Organizational Chiropractor, like a chiropractor, will go through a checklist when evaluating an organization, looking for stability, balance and overall functionality. Review the list and see where you may benefit from implementing what’s missing from your organization.

- **Vision and Mission Statements.** These detail where you want your organization to go and how you plan to get there. Does everybody in your organization know what they are? If not, you’re splitting employee energy and effectiveness into

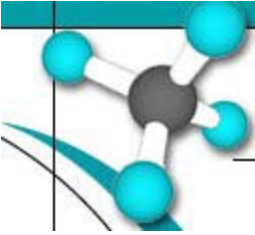


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different directions instead of using all that energy to drive the organization to successful attainment of its goals.

1. **Leadership.** A CEO, Management Team and sometimes a Board of Directors or Advisory Board. Do all members work collaboratively? If not, how does this adversely affect communication, productivity, etc?
2. **An Organizational Chart.** If there is one, is it realistic or does it bow to political pressure? Is a VP on the Management Team due to his ownership share? Is a family member on the Team because she has contributed significant “sweat equity” in building the business but may not be best qualified?
3. **An Integrated Long and Short-Term Planning Process.** The Long Term Plan outlines strategy and long term goals. Sometimes referred to as a strategic plan. The Short Term Plan outlines annual goals and is perhaps best updated on a quarterly basis. Sometimes referred to as a business or operational plan. Essential components of these Plans are:
  - a. **The Financial Plan.** This will allow a company to judiciously use cash and other resources. This Plan should be integrated with monthly financial reporting to enable management to easily compare actual to plan.
  - b. **The Marketing Plan.** At a minimum this must identify clearly what are your particular product or service offerings, your target markets, and how you will go to market.
4. **A Management System.** Not necessarily highly formalized, but must be effective in ensuring the timely flow of essential information throughout the organization and include a secure repository for important documents. Without such robust communication and documentations systems in place, little else you do will ensure success.
5. **A Performance Appraisal System.** This ensures that individual goals, supportive of departmental and organizational goals, are set and meaningful. This system also lets employees know how well they are doing, or where improvement is required, which is an essential step in minimizing employer liability.
6. **Key Processes.** In an ideal situation, all processes would be identified, developed, documented and implemented, but it’s essential to at least have all the key processes implemented and maintained to ensure maximum use of resources.
7. **Job Descriptions.** An accurate job description for each employee provides a significant means of communication and will pay rich dividends. This provides



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the boundaries within which every employee can produce and know that he is contributing to the overall mission of the organization.

8. **Behavioral and Values Identification**

Assessing for individual behavioral styles enables you to know exactly what you have in terms of human capital, and how you can move that resource to fit the ever-changing environment without unnecessary firing, hiring and costly re-training. Assessing for individual values provides you with important information about how to motivate, manage and improve the performance of individuals. Knowing collective values quickly enables you to identify the organizational culture

So take some time, take stock, and see where some simple adjustments can avoid costly inefficiencies or reap some big benefits.

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