

## STRATEGY # 2: BREAK THE MOLD

A crucial component of leadership is organizational structure. You might hire the best people, inspire them, and pay them every cent they're worth, but if you don't give them the right framework in which to operate, they can't perform at their best. On the other hand, if you structure your workplace to maximize your employees' creative potential, you'll have a major competitive advantage. No matter what industry you're in, one of your challenges as a leader is to evaluate the structure on an ongoing basis and not to be afraid to break the mold. Remember, a great leader never settles for good enough. Here are some practical strategies to guide your way.

- 1. Be clear about who's responsible for what.** Every individual in your organization should clearly and completely understand what he or she is responsible for, what level of authority he or she has, and how he or she will be held accountable. Each employee also needs to know what *others* are responsible for, what authority *others* have, and how *others* will be held accountable. Without clarity on those points, confusion and mishaps are inevitable. Clear communication is one of a leader's principal tasks, especially when it comes to responsibility and authority. Keep that concept in mind at all times, and your team will perform above expectations.
- 2. Remember that responsibility and authority go hand in hand.** If you give people responsibility without also giving them the necessary authority to carry out those responsibilities, you are setting them up for failure. If you tell someone, "It's up to you to get this done," but you don't also say, "You are empowered to make whatever decisions are necessary to do it," and "You'll have all the resources you need," you are giving that person responsibility without authority. That can be an untenable position – and, by the way, one of the leading causes of stress. As a leader you are always responsible for the outcome. At the end of the day there should be no confusion about who is authorized to take which actions and what the results of those actions should be.
- 3. Make every position count.** Making sure that every position has genuine value can be difficult, but it's a challenge that leaders have to face squarely. Ask yourself these questions:
  - Does the position create real value for our company?
  - What would happen if we eliminated this position?
  - What would happen if we redistributed this position's direct reports to others who can handle more responsibility?
  - What would happen if we changed our structure or processes so we no longer needed this position?

Let's face it, answering these questions can force you to make emotionally wrenching decisions. No leader wants to let go of a longtime employee who no longer fits or to move someone to a less responsible role and risk making him or her feel demoted. But leaders can't let anyone 'hide' within the organization, and that means analyzing the value of every position objectively.



*"To understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to."*

Kahlil Gibran

*"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory."*

Theodor Seuss Geisel

*"Always give without remembering. Always receive without forgetting."*

William Barclay