

STRATEGY # 2: BREAK THE MOLD (Part 2)

4. **Get as flat as you can.** It is almost always a good idea to minimize the number of layers in your organization, so you can deal directly with as many people as possible. Each layer through which information is filtered multiplies the inaccuracies and distortions, making it much more likely that something minor will snowball into a serious problem. A flat structure enhances productivity by streamlining the decision-making process, speeding up follow-through, and optimizing communication.
5. **Eliminate overwork.** Do people in your organization complain about being overwhelmed? Do they mumble about not having enough time to do everything that's asked of them? This happens at times in most organizations, and Walt Disney is no exception. If you hear comments about being overworked, the culprit may be the organizational structure. Ask yourself these questions, which apply to every type of organization:
 - Is the overall structure getting in the way of productivity?
 - Are departments or teams disorganized? Could they be organized in a better way?
 - Are employees spending time on work that no longer has the value it once did?
 - Would employees work more efficiently if they were given more authority?
 - Do employees need training in time management?
6. **Rethink the meeting structure.** One typical symptom of a flawed organizational design is too much time spent in meetings. If your employees complain about useless meetings or meetings that last too long, you may want to rethink the contents of the meetings, how often they are being held, and who is being included. The first step is to identify the goals of your meetings. Then evaluate whether those goals are being served by the current structure. One productive meeting a month can be more valuable than one poorly planned meeting a week. The best way to evaluate the effectiveness of meetings is to get honest feedback from the people who attend them. Ask if the meetings are held too often or not often enough. Ask if they drag on too long or are too rushed. Also ask if the right people are included. Once you've identified the problems, invite key people to think up ways to make the meetings more useful, more productive, and more enjoyable, so that everyone who attends receives good value for the time spent.
7. **Anyone can take responsibility for change.** By now you might be thinking, "This is all well and good, but evaluating the organizational structure is not in my job description. Not only that, I don't have the responsibility or the authority to make structural changes." Wrong! You don't have to be officially in charge to influence organizational structure. If you have ideas for doing things better, write them up and present them to the person you report to. But don't come across as a complainer. Deliver your proposal in a professional manner, and

focus on the relevant positions and responsibilities, not on the people who do them. By the same token, if you do have the authority to make these kinds of changes, make sure every employee knows that his or her input is welcome. At Disney I always told Cast Members, “Part of your salary is for giving us your opinions.” Everyone was encouraged and empowered to evaluate the structure on an ongoing basis and to submit recommendations in writing. Remember, people on the front lines see things you don’t, like who doesn’t have enough responsibility and who is being stretched too thin and where communication is breaking down because of structural flaws.

"We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have. "

Friedrich Koenig

"You don't inspire your teammates by showing them how amazing you are. You inspire them by showing them how amazing they are."

Robyn Benincasa

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out."

Robert Collier