

Simple to Complex

A tool for recognizing the symptoms of organizational growing pains

How can you tell if your organization is suffering from growing pains? StraightUp developed the following tool to help you recognize some of the common symptoms. If you think your organization needs to shift towards the right-hand column and operate more like a “successful complex organization”, StraightUp can help you get there. Contact us at info@straightupmanagement.ca for a free consultation.

Simple to Complex		
<i>A StraightUp tool for recognizing and overcoming the challenges associated with organizational growth</i>		
Feature	Simple organization	Successful but more complex organization
Organization structure and role definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, loosely defined roles and reporting structures • Jack-of-all-trades (generalist) roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More specialist roles but linked effectively through well-defined communication processes and supporting technologies • Where matrix reporting structures exist, boundaries and accountabilities are clearly defined
Goal-setting and Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal, often non-existent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal goal-setting and alignment of goals throughout the organization. • Accountability • Compensation and other rewards tied to performance
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term, reactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of short-term, medium-term and long-term
Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not well-defined and/or not current 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined, documented, accessible, institutionalized; regularly reviewed
Communication & Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal • Ad hoc meetings • E-mails with multiple cc's and attachments • Disorganized shared drive with old and new files comingled, duplication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined communication channels within and across functions. • Knowledge management discipline supported by enabling technologies
Management Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical information only and generally limited to financial • One-size-fits all, voluminous, non-tiered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward-looking • Key Performance Indicators (leading and lag indicators; financial and non-financial) • Tiered exception reporting, tailored to users' needs

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Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mob the soccer ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative problem-solving, effective meeting practices
Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and general business acumen limited to one or two individuals • HR discipline and benefits to the organization are not well understood, not viewed as a priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and general business acumen are table-stakes for all senior management regardless of their functional role. • Executives and managers of people are well-trained in HR best practices and supported by accredited HR professional(s).
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management techniques not used, not understood • Ad hoc, “make it up as we go along” approach to developing and implementing new initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management discipline is understood, valued and best practices are applied throughout the continuum of change initiatives with appropriate scaling for size and complexity. • Change Management fundamentals (communication, training, rewards) are embedded in project management practices.
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal or non-existent risk management • Reactive: management assumes they “will know if there is a problem” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Risk Management framework with defined responsibilities for identifying, managing and monitoring risks with regular reporting to the Board of Directors. • Proactive: management identifies and responds to “early warning signals” and takes corrective action to mitigate risk of small problems escalating into large problems.
Partnership Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive reliance on external consultants to oversee key aspects of day-to-day operations; the relationships are informal and have evolved in an ad hoc manner • A large amount of core of “institutional knowledge” has migrated to these third parties and becomes less visible and accessible to the organization itself <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal or no outsourcing – missed opportunities in situations where it is cost effective to engage contracted professionals to provide specialized skills and expertise on a part time or episodic basis. (e.g., Legal, HR, Finance, IT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning processes include regular assessment of the organization’s core strengths and weaknesses which in turn inform decisions around resourcing including what activities will be outsourced versus handled in-house. • The nature and extent of consultant and other professional fees are regularly reviewed (annually) for value received and to flag emerging situations of inappropriate levels of operational dependency on third parties. • Clear accountabilities are established and enforced for vendor management including a primary point of contact within the organization for managing each major vendor relationship. Service delivery standards are clearly defined, measured and monitored against actual performance.