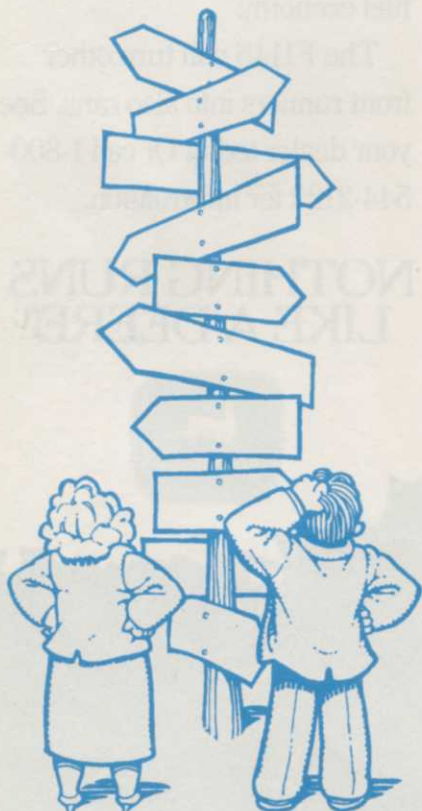


# ORGANIZATION:

## clear or confused?

### WHO'S RESPONSIBLE HERE?

—A state of organizational confusion sends mixed signals to employees and can frustrate them.



by Ed Wandtke

■ Lawn/landscaping operations in the green industry continue to expand through an increased number of customers or services. However, many managers do not add administrative or supervisory personnel.

Some organizations don't even take the time to formally designate a person in charge of a new undertaking. Rather, they assume everyone else in the company knows who is in charge.

If this sounds like your company, read on. **Rapid growth**—One cause of an operation's inability to declare responsibility is the top manager. Many wait until the very last minute to see what segment of their operation will grow the most before making a decision.

These operations have fragmented leadership. Crew chiefs and lead technical personnel, in order to get the job done, take on responsibilities which they have not been assigned. If such is the case, what will force the manager to appoint someone the team leader? If judgment errors are made, who will be held accountable?

Managers often personally take care of marketing, finance and administration. As the operation starts to grow, additional people are not hired because management does not want to commit to fixed overhead expense. The solutions are often very confusing to employees.

When an organization is growing, many owners prefer to avoid hiring full-time employees if part-time individuals will do. Many, large and small, purchase the services of specialized consultants to supplement current employees rather than hire more full-time employees.

For example, instead of using a full-time payroll person, an operation could hire Automated Data Processing (ADP). However, this does not have to limit opportunities for employees seeking higher responsibilities, because these outside temporary employees are generally replaced when a full-time individual is needed.

**Promote from within**—Many managers say they will promote supervisors and other positions from within the organization, but they continue to advertise in

trade magazines or regional publications. This mixed signal confuses and further frustrates employees who are hoping to be promoted.

If your organization does not have a periodic evaluation plan where the manager discusses the employee's ambitions, employees will have difficulty growing.

Establishing such a plan is necessary and very beneficial. Goal-setting and training programs help employees grow into the positions that will be needed in the future.

Doing this during the busy seasons is often overlooked. When a manager reviews employees' goals with them during a busy season, they realize how important the goals are.

**Long-range designs**—It's difficult to develop a training plan if you haven't identified the various positions and skills that will be needed as the organization grows. By formalizing a long-range plan, the manager will be taking time to identify anticipated personnel needs based on probable future services and volume of business.

**Stabilize morale**—When an operation has no formal organizational design, employees often flounder—sometimes from lack of direction, sometimes from too much direction.

Employees like jobs where daily duties and assignments are very specific and predictable. They like a steady work environment. The smoother an operation runs, the more the employees enjoy coming to work. And, in many instances, employees work harder.

When their daily duties are predictable, employees tend to have a bounce in their actions. Their overall attitude is more relaxed. They tend to get along so well that they begin to socialize outside of the office. They often perform at a higher level than anticipated.

**The bottom line**—Allowing employees access to the organizational chart will help them to recognize who is in charge of various functions. Open communications mean higher morale and better feelings about an operation by its employees.

If you don't have an organizational chart now, develop one. If you do have an organizational chart, share it with all employees. Knowing where an individual stands will strengthen the lines of communication, and errors will be avoided.

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