



Here is a step-by-step guide on how to create an organizational structure for a small business, along with an example accountability chart:

Step 1: Create departments by starting with the 3 elements common to every business:

Open a new powerpoint, keynote or google drawing doc – anything that will allow you to create a simple layout. You can even use pen and paper to start. Draw 3 boxes with the 3 core functions of every business:

1. **Sales and marketing** – every business needs to generate sales
2. **Operations** – every business needs to fulfill on the promises it makes to customers by delivering products or services
3. **Financial and Admin** – every business needs to keep track of its finances and insure that its infrastructure is maintained.

Step 2: Bucket more specific roles under each of the 3 main functions

Underneath each department, list the specific roles that must be filled in your business. Here is a quick list of some of the most common roles that you can adapt to your company’s structure:

Sales & Marketing

- Website maintenance
- Online Marketing
- PR
- Lead Generation
- Opportunity Management
- Account management

Operations

- Production
- Customer Service
- Shipping and Fulfillment
- Product Development

Financial and Admin

- Book Keeping
- Accounting
- Office Management
- IT
- HR
- Financing

Step 3: Assign a specific person to lead each department and own each role.

Write a single name beside each of the boxes in the org chart. Since you’ll each be taking on numerous titles, it helps to also be specific by adding a few high level responsibilities under the title.

Step 4: Define the Executive Leadership Structure

When there are 2 leaders in an organization they’ll ideally have complementary personality types:

- The Creative Thinker – this personality brings a ton of energy and innovative ideas. They’re often great at relationships and may have a larger personality – but they tend to be weaker on follow through.
- The organizational Thinker – this personality tends to be well organized, and strong at systems thinking. They may not be quite as strong at spotting opportunities but once the direction is defined, they are the person who will insure it gets done right.

I’m going to introduce a potentially controversial idea here, so please hear me through. While you may value the idea of equality in your partnership, I strongly advise *giving a single person the final word* in order to avoid organizational deadlock. In the case of equal partnerships, this person should always be *the organizational thinker*.

Why? Because you can have a business without a creative thinker but you can’t have a business without an organizational thinker. At the end of the day, *a mediocre idea that is well executed will trump a brilliant idea that is poorly executed*.

If you have serious questions about what role each partner will play it may be an indication of more fundamental problems in the partnership. That’s why it’s best to have this conversation early on, so you can avoid bigger pitfalls down the road, when there is more at stake.