

Painless Business

Roles and Responsibilities

In any business the list of things to be done can seem endless. It can be hard to ensure that everything gets done, nothing gets forgotten and the right people with the right skills get asked to do the right jobs.

Here we can learn from large companies and borrow and improve on what they do to guide what we do in our small business, whether we have one employee or more. Grouping the tasks or responsibilities into areas allows us to allocate them to individuals if we have staff, or to plan out time if we are on our own.

Imagine the tiers of a corporate organisation chart and allocate the tasks in your business accordingly. The more detailed the task, the lower down the chart you might expect it to go:

For example:

Chief Executive / Managing Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy• Accountability to shareholders• Key decision making
Director (eg Finance, Marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy• Key decision making• Reporting on responsibilities
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invoicing and getting paid• Purchasing and paying bills• Reconciling accounts• Projecting cashflows/profits• Statutory accounting/tax• Reporting to Director
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting the business (PR)• Advertising• Market research• Market analysis• Generating leads• Converting leads/ closing sales• Sales analysis• Reporting to Director

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Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supply chain relationships• Managing Production• Maintaining Facilities• Managing stock• Product or Service Quality• Delivery• Managing channels to market• Customer Satisfaction• Reporting to Director
Research and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New markets• Product innovation• Market testing• Trend analysis• Reporting to Director

This example has three tiers – MD, Directors and Areas of Work. Further tiers may involve splitting Finance in to Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Management Accounts, for example.

If you have a number of employees, understanding who does what in the organisation, in what areas, will smooth the recruitment, training, management and development process.

If there is just you, knowing the various tasks will ensure they are appropriately prioritised (or at least help!). For example, I know I need to allocate time in my schedule to be the Managing Director, as well as the Marketing Manager, as well as the Service Provider, and that this will vary over time.

What tasks can you add to the example above?

Do you have further tiers to add, or are the three enough?

Can you have one person working in different areas?

Is the person filling each role clear on what is expected of them, and are they accountable?

What do you need in place to make this happen?