

THE HOURGLASS ORGANIZATION®

Definition

The Hourglass Organization promotes constant renewal of the organization and empowerment of its people.

Description

The Hourglass Organization accepts the obvious: that the functional and hierarchical organization and those in it, change constantly in response to the outside world. In fact, the organization which does not change will mature, harden and either die off or suffer a great deal of internal conflict to renew itself. The Hourglass Organization integrates all the parts of the structure, from strategy to operational response, from executive to delivery. The Hourglass Organization goes through clear phases, as DIALOGUE occurs at and between the various levels of the organization on core and support processes. Refer to Figure 1 on the next page.

Process

1. *Messaging*

In the first phase, the structure resembles a top-down pyramid, as senior management sends out messages of mission, values and strategic directions. These messages develop from the analysis of client and market needs, as well as from a vision of the future of the organization.

2. *Feedback*

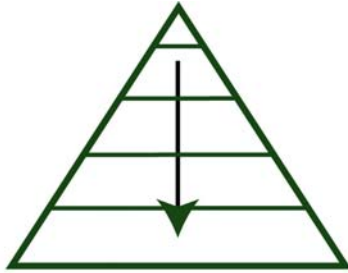
After a time, the front line of the organization responds to strategic directions and returns information from customers up through the organization and back to senior management.

3. *Redirection*

In response to new information, senior management redirects the energies of the organization back down through the structure. The organization changes in response to new demands.

4. *Integration*

The front line again responds, returning new information back up through the structure. Organizational information, both strategic and tactical, loops continually.



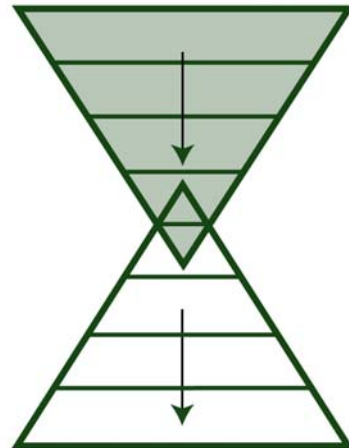
1. Messaging

In the first phase, the structure conforms to a traditional top-down pyramid, as Senior Management sends out messages of mission, values and strategic direction. These messages develop from analysis of both internal and external influences, including client and market needs and a vision of the future of the organization.



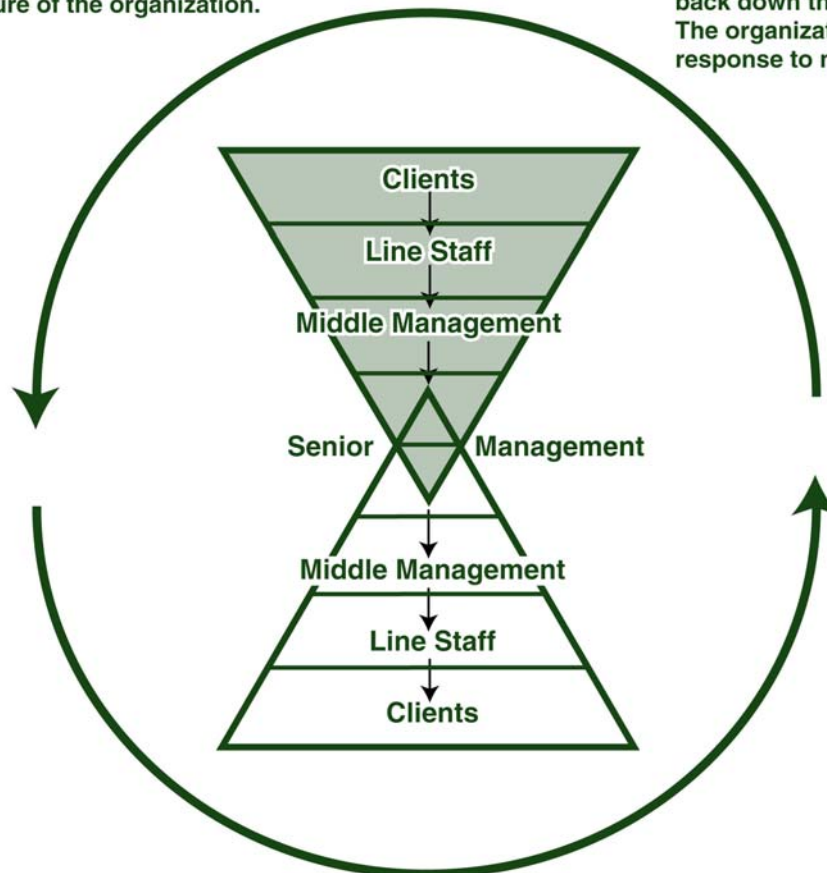
2. Feedback

The Delivery Level of the organization responds to strategic direction and returns information from clients up through the organization and back to Senior Management.



3. Redirection

In response to new information, Senior Management redirects the energies of the organization back down through the structure. The organization flexes in response to new demands.



4. Integration

The Delivery Level again responds, and returns yet more new information back up through the structure. Organizational information, both strategic and operational, loops continually as dialogue continues throughout the structure.

The 7 Success Factors of the HourGlass Organization

1. Strategy

A Business Plan that ensures vision and forward momentum for the organization and mobilizes people at the front line towards its achievement.

2. Structure

A Delivery Structure that helps everyone understand the importance of their work and their connection with all parts of the organization, and between the organization and its customers.

3. Systems

Systems that serve the information and communication needs of the organization.

4. Staff

Staff who understand what needs to be done, can act on their own and are responsible for their actions.

5. Style

Managers with aligned values who are comfortable with staff empowerment at the delivery level of the organization.

6. Skills

Skills development based on continuous and built-in learning and growth.

7. Supporting Goals

Goals which provide every team in the organization with a clear basis for knowing what they need to do and how they are doing.

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