

Who's Afraid Of Hierarchical Orgs?

Hi, this is Elijah Lim - Who's Afraid Of Hierarchical Orgs? Or hierarchical structures? Now, we're all quite familiar with hierarchical structures. What it means is that usually there's someone at the top, he has maybe three, four, two, people directly reporting to him, and each of them has got x number of people reporting to them and so on so forth. So the higher up you go in a hierarchy, you're supposed to be better off. In other words, you're the one in charge, you have people to do things for you, you're the one who calls the shots. And a lot of people are very afraid of being stuck somewhere in the middle of a hierarchical structure. Everyone wants to get to the top, reminds you of the song "Everybody wants to rule the world". And people look up and they think about the Peter Principle, which says this, that "In a hierarchical organization, people tend to rise to their levels of incompetence." Which means, if you extrapolate it, that everyone at the top who is no longer promotable, so to speak, is already incompetent. They can't do their jobs and therefore the people below them are suffering. Now, people are advocating "Let's abolish this hierarchical structure, and let's go for flat structures." Everyone contributes. Everybody has got ideas. Everybody works together hand-in-hand and so on and so forth. Everyone gets a fair share of the profits. Well, this sounds pretty idealistic, pretty utopian, if you ask me, but in reality I submit to you that a flat structure like this doesn't really work.

Now let's examine this hierarchical structure that people view with a jaundiced eye nowadays. And recognize that what we are actually seeing are...relationships... There are relationships in the vertical lines, there are relationships in the horizontal lines and sometimes there are diagonal lines for cross-relationships between Departments and so on. Hierarchical structures were actually meant to be like a family structure, where the people at the top, the parents, the grandparents, the uncles, the aunts, are supposed to be helping those below as they come up to develop. And the development is a continuous development? Now, what happens is this - if the structure is not growing quickly enough to fulfill the aspirations of all those that are coming up the structure, then the people at the top have a duty, have a responsibility, to allow those who are coming up to go somewhere else where their abilities can be better employed. Now, it's a benevolent relationship, or it's supposed to be! The people up here are wiser, they're more mature, they have more years of experience, and what they are supposed to do is to pass down their experience. In other words, I give you everything that I have. You stand on my shoulders, and when I'm gone, you take over with what I've given you and you build upon it. So, a structure like this is not meant to be static, it's meant to be growing, it's meant to be expanding, so that people more and more, as they go up, they have more things to do. There is more pie for everyone to share. Now, in reality we all know that this doesn't happen, and one of the main things it doesn't happen is because people at the top layers, the top echelons of a hierarchy, think that "I have arrived. There's nothing more for me to learn. All I need to do is just sit here, make sure that things go according to how they should be run, and I get my just desserts. I'm not too sure they're just, maybe they're unjust, and I don't know about desserts. But, anyway, they're supposed to be relationships. So think about it - if you are in an organization that looks like this but which doesn't cherish, which doesn't nurture, the relationships, both the vertical as well as the horizontal relationships, well, maybe it's time to sit down and have a talk with one of the bosses, one of your leaders, or you could call me, talk to me, and let's explore what we can do.

Now, this structure really doesn't work at all, because we are all people , we're human beings. Somehow or other, even though we think we like to take charge, we have a will to dominate, but when the rubber hits the road, really, most of us don't like to be in a position where we need to take responsibility for our actions, and our decisions. So, this really is pretty mythical. Doesn't work in practice. What it IS - it is an expression of a desire. It is an expression that says "I wish that this chart with all the relationships, actually works." Because this is safe. This helps people to grow. This nurtures people to their full potential, provided those up here are actually doing their jobs. So, don't be afraid of hierarchical orgs. Talk to somebody, or give me a call +6597119005 and let's talk about it. Don't be afraid of hierarchical orgs.

Thanks for watching. Have a good day!