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# Demystifying the RE-ORG

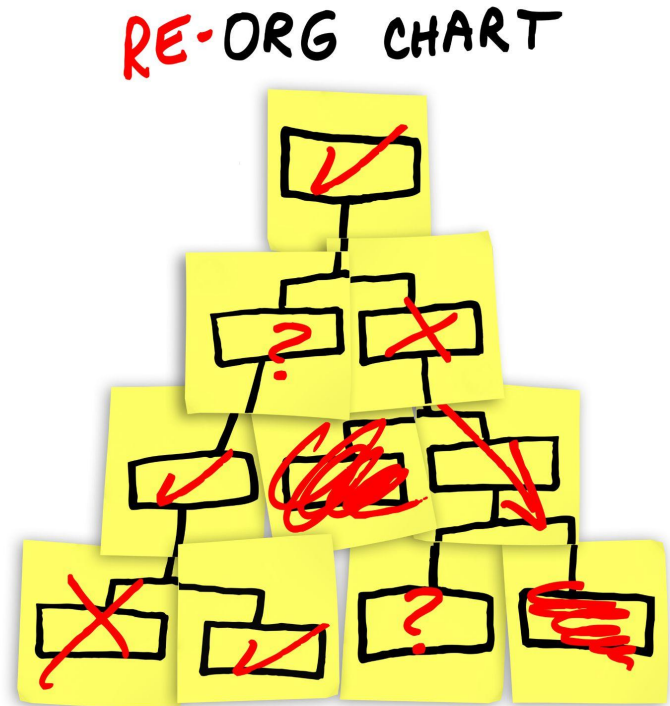
Best Practices and Pitfalls

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In your career, it is likely your team will **outgrow the processes and structure** that have been put in place



Change

Worry



—  
It's no surprise, as many reorgs do go wrong.

**More than 80% fail to  
deliver desired value  
and 10% cause damage  
to the team.**

Source: hbr.org



#### Additional Stats

Re-orgs can cause **greater stress and anxiety than layoffs**, leading in about 60% of cases to noticeably reduced productivity



# Session Goals

Offer a practical RE-ORG toolbox  
based on lived experiences





## Story Time.

A tale of Database team growth

# Key signals of org headwinds

- Unhealthy manager to reports ratios
- Micromanagement

- Coordination challenges
- Decreased productivity

- Lack of written standards
- Onboarding difficulty for new members



# Team Size

## → Rule of Thumb

A single team no less than 6 and no larger than 12 to avoid manager burnout and brittle communication

## → What are my ratios?

**Golden ratio:** 1 Manager to 8 Direct Reports

Experience level and role matters. The more senior your role is the smaller should that ratio be. Need more time for strategic work, broader efforts





# Team Structure

→ **Functional - separates teams by their primary purpose or function. Ex: engineering, qa, operations**

**Pros:** Geared towards specialization and linear career progression

**Cons:** Poor cross functional communication. Responsibility of a project scattered between teams. Prone to waterfall handoffs vs agile collaboration



# Team Structure

→ **Matrix** - Each team member may have 2 or more managers, one focused on people aspects and second on project management

**Pros:** Single project ownership, more direct communication

**Cons:** Multiple bosses, pull in different directions, manager coordination overhead



# Team Structure

→ **Agile - Self-organizing teams focused on delivering value to customers**

**Pros:** Fosters innovation, more autonomy, easier to scale

**Cons:** Requires stronger isolation from other teams including the codebase



# Conway's Law

→ How will team structure over time influence the software architecture that the team is building?

**Conway's Law Premise:** Organizations design systems eventually mirror their own communication structure.

→ Can you leverage it to your advantage?



# Antipatterns

- **Do not re-org around a single person.**

Pick structure first, then fill in people.

- **Do not re-org to solve an interpersonal or performance issue?**

Leverage people management best practices to resolve people issues. Re-Org is for organizational issues.



# Communication

## → Proactive vs Reactive

Bring your leaders along on your thoughts on org scalability with early socialization and feedback before a re-org is even needed.

## → Create a templated communication plan

How and when you cascade the news is key to successful outcome and buy in.



# Key Takeaways

If done thoughtfully, re-org's can be a great lever to help you scale your teams:

→ **Anticipate 12 months out**

Consider your options to maintain key ratios, ability to deliver on business objectives in advance of the need.

→ **Right solution for the right problem**

Don't reorg to solve interpersonal issues or around a single person.



# Key Takeaways

If done thoughtfully, re-org's can be a great lever to help you scale your teams:

→ **Be aware of Conway's Law**

Pick an organization structure to align with what and how you want to ship.

→ **No surprises here**

Mitigate fear/surprise by socializing your vision of team growth in advance of need with key members. Hear out additional perspectives. Can they reach the same conclusions?





**Thank you and  
good luck on your  
scaling journeys!**