

Holacracy

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1 Introduction to Holacracy

2 Brief Introduction

2.1 Holacracy: A New Paradigm for Organizational Management

Holacracy represents a shift away from the conventional, top-down hierarchical business model. It's a ground-breaking self-management practice designed to empower every team member. With a focus on work instead of people, and roles instead of titles, Holacracy distributes authority and decision-making throughout an organization, fostering transparency, accountability, and agility. Discover a more flexible, adaptable, and responsive way of running your organization with Holacracy.

3 Core Elements of Holacracy

3.1 Roles instead of Job Descriptions:

In the dynamic world of Holacracy, traditional static job descriptions give way to fluid and adaptable roles. Each team member may fill several roles at a time, often across different teams, in line with their skills, interests, and the evolving needs of the organization. Roles are continually updated and defined through the collective intelligence of the team, ensuring that they reflect the work that truly needs to be done. This approach not only optimizes workflow but also harnesses the full potential of your team, promoting job satisfaction, engagement, and

productivity. Embrace the power of role-based work with Holacracy, and drive your organization into a future of adaptability, resilience, and growth.

3.2 Dynamic Steering

Dynamic Steering is a unique decision-making process embraced by Holacracy. It is fundamentally different from traditional consensus-building or top-down directive models. In Dynamic Steering, decisions are made when there is enough information to make a "safe-to-try" move, rather than waiting for complete certainty or full agreement.

To illustrate, imagine a team considering a new marketing strategy. Rather than debating the perfect approach or waiting for complete data, the team would ask, "Is this strategy safe enough to try and valuable enough to merit a trial?" If the answer is yes, they move forward. This encourages rapid learning, adaptability, and resilience, and also fosters a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement.

3.3 Tensions as Opportunities

Holacracy views tensions differently from traditional management structures. Rather than seeing them as problems, tensions are seen as opportunities for enhancement. A tension, in the Holacracy context, is the sensed gap between the current reality and the potential we sense - the difference between 'what is' and 'what could be'.

For example, a team member feeling tension about the lack of a clear communication protocol isn't seeing this as a 'problem'

to be 'solved', but rather a potential for improvement. The aim is not to eliminate the tension, but to use it as a driver for change that brings the organization closer to its purpose. In this way, sensing and processing tensions becomes the primary driver of organizational evolution, ensuring the organization is always learning and adapting.

3.4 Tactical Meetings

Streamlining Operations for High-Performance Teams

While Governance Meetings shape the overall structure of your organization, Tactical Meetings keep the gears turning smoothly. These meetings are specifically designed to bring focus to ongoing operations, track progress, and quickly triage any operational hitches that might arise.

In a Tactical Meeting, team members update each other on the statuses of their various roles, and 'tensions' (i.e., gaps between what is and what could be) are discussed and processed into concrete actions. This systematic approach keeps everyone informed and engaged, enabling the team to synchronize their efforts, resolve issues swiftly, and stay focused on their tasks. Tactical Meetings offer a space for rapid-fire problem-solving and collaborative decision-making, ensuring your operations stay streamlined and effective.

Holacracy's Tactical Meetings are about swift action, clear communication, and sustained momentum. Adopt Holacracy to infuse your operations with efficiency, responsiveness, and resilience.

3.4.1 An Example of a Tactical Meeting:

Let's paint a picture of a Holacracy Tactical Meeting in action.

The meeting begins with a 'check-in round', where each team member briefly shares how they're arriving at the meeting. This clears the space and brings everyone present. Next is the 'metrics review', where critical numbers reflecting the health of the operations are shared, providing everyone with an understanding of where the team stands.

Then comes the 'project updates' segment. Here, individuals succinctly report on

their assigned projects - just the facts, not full stories. For example, "Website redesign - in progress, expected to finish by next week."

After updates, the team enters the 'triage' stage, which is the heart of the Tactical Meeting. Here, anyone can raise a tension they've sensed in their role, with the aim of making it actionable. Suppose a team member in charge of customer relations brings up a tension: "We've been receiving complaints about delayed responses."

The facilitator, maintaining the meeting's structure and flow, would ask, "What do you need?" The team member might respond, "I need an extra hand to manage the volume of customer inquiries." The team can then discuss potential solutions, such as re-assigning some roles or hiring a new team member.

Finally, the meeting closes with a 'closing round' where each member can share reflections or appreciations about the meeting. This practice reinforces the collaborative culture and leaves the meeting on a positive note.

With Holacracy's Tactical Meetings, you're not just talking about work; you're doing the work, in real-time, ensuring your team stays agile and cohesive.

3.5 Governance Meetings

Power to the People: Evolution and Clarity through Collective Decision-Making

Underpinning the Holacracy system are regular Governance Meetings, where the evolution of the organization is shaped collectively. These structured sessions provide a forum for everyone to participate in refining roles, defining responsibilities, and setting expectations. Within a 'safe-to-fail' environment, team members can propose changes or voice concerns, sparking discussions that lead to actionable outcomes.

Each participant has an equal voice, and decisions are made based on the principle of 'integrative decision-making'. This means the group works together to find solutions that address all expressed concerns, not just those of a majority or senior person. Through this process, roles are continually updated and fine-tuned to better align with the organization's purpose and strategy. Governance Meetings in Holacracy are

all about shared leadership, transparency, and alignment.

3.5.1 An Example of a Governance Meeting:

Let's explore the unique dynamics of a Holacracy Governance Meeting.

The meeting starts with a 'check-in round', similar to the Tactical Meeting. Each team member shares their mindset coming into the meeting, enabling everyone to arrive in the present moment.

Next is the 'administrative concerns' phase. Here, any logistical issues, like scheduling or minutes from the last meeting, are quickly addressed.

Then we move to the 'agenda building' stage. Each team member has the opportunity to add governance items - tensions about the team's structure or processes that they believe need to change. These items are rapidly listed without discussion, focusing only on naming the tensions. For example, "Overlapping roles in marketing" or "Unclear decision-making process in content creation."

We then enter the main part of the meeting, the 'integrative decision-making process'. Each agenda item is processed one at a time, with the goal to reach an outcome that resolves the tension.

Take for example the "Overlapping roles in marketing" tension. The person who raised the issue would describe the tension and propose a change, like defining more specific domains for each marketing role. Then, each team member is invited to ask clarifying questions.

Next comes the 'reaction round', where everyone gives a quick reaction to the proposal. One might say, "This will help me understand who to approach for specific marketing issues."

The proposer then has a chance to 'amend and clarify' their proposal based on the reactions. They might refine the role domains further based on the feedback.

The facilitator then calls for 'objections'. An objection is not just disagreement, but a reasoned explanation of why a proposal could harm the organization. If there are no objections, the proposal is 'adopted'. If there are, each one is processed - the group

works together to address and integrate valid objections, revising the proposal as needed.

Finally, the meeting ends with a 'closing round', just like the Tactical Meeting. This allows everyone to reflect on the process and leave on a positive note.

Through Governance Meetings, Holacracy enables every team member to influence the structure and processes of the organization, fostering ownership, clarity, and alignment across the board.

4 The Holacracy Constitution

The Holacracy Constitution serves as the cornerstone of any Holacratic organization. This written document is the definitive "rule book" that guides how the organization operates. The Constitution lays out the "rules of the game" and provides methods for structuring and governing the organization.

Unlike a conventional corporate charter, the Holacracy Constitution isn't customized for each organization. It's a standard document that articulates the core principles and practices of Holacracy, ensuring that power is truly distributed. Everyone in the organization, from the CEO to the newest hire, is bound by the same set of rules, providing transparency and equal footing for all members. Latest copy can be found at: <https://www.holacracy.org/constitution>

5 Circle Structure

Holacracy organizes work into "circles" or teams. Each circle has its clear purpose and domains, along with the authority to execute its tasks. Circles are self-organized, and roles within the circles are defined based on the work that needs to be done to achieve the circle's purpose.

For example, a company might have a "Marketing" circle, which has its specific domains (like managing the company's website, or handling social media) and roles (like Content Creator or Social Media Strategist). Each role has the autonomy and authority to make decisions within its domain, which fosters efficiency and innovation.

Furthermore, circles are not static but can evolve based on the organization's needs.

If a tension arises suggesting a need for a new circle or a change in a current one, this can be addressed in a Governance Meeting, ensuring the organization structure remains dynamic and responsive.

6 Distributed Authority

A key feature of Holacracy is its distributed authority system. Instead of a top-down hierarchy where power rests solely with the leaders, Holacracy disperses authority throughout the organization based on defined roles and their domains. This means that each role has the autonomy to make decisions and take actions within its domain without needing to constantly seek permission from a superior.

For example, if you fill a role in the "Customer Service" circle, you have the authority to make decisions regarding customer queries or complaints within the boundaries of your role's defined domain. This accelerates decision-making, reduces bottlenecks, and fosters a sense of ownership, accountability, and empowerment among all members of the organization.

7 Transparent Rules

Holacracy operates on a set of transparent rules that everyone in the organization can see, understand, and influence. These rules are not hidden in a handbook that no one reads, but are actively used and referenced in the day-to-day operations, particularly in Governance and Tactical Meetings.

Transparency in rules ensures everyone understands the "game" they're playing. It helps prevent confusion and power struggles that can arise from ambiguity. Moreover, because everyone has a voice in shaping these rules during Governance Meetings, it encourages a sense of shared ownership and

alignment around how the organization operates. This way, every member is aware of their rights, responsibilities, and the avenues available to them for addressing any tensions they sense.

8 Call to Action:

Ready to transform your organization into a dynamic, responsive, and purpose-driven entity? Embrace Holacracy and unleash the potential of distributed authority and purposeful work!

You are invited to explore more about this revolutionary management system. We offer workshops and consultations designed to guide you through the transition and implementation process. Take the first step in this transformative journey. Step into a future where your organization operates at its full potential, where roles are clearly defined, and where everyone's voice is heard. Embrace the change. Embrace Holacracy.

9 Contact

To learn more about Holacracy can check out <https://holacracy.org>

Here are some books that provide an in-depth understanding of Holacracy:

"Holacracy: The New Management System for a Rapidly Changing World" by Brian J. Robertson This is the seminal book on Holacracy by its creator, and is considered a must-read for anyone looking to understand or implement the system.

"Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness" by Frederic Laloux While not exclusively about Holacracy, this book explores the new wave of organizations (including those using Holacracy) that operate on principles of self-management, wholeness, and evolutionary purpose.