When silo’s become layers?

It is already too late. Yout company used to have lots of infighting between the different business units. Now the BU’s have been flattened into layers. At least with silo’s you knew what each silo’s is tasked with. Sales needs to sell, Operations needs to deliver the services, and so on… Back then it was no walk in the park. Each had their own particular and most of all conflicting priorities. Must be cheap collides with must deliver better (expensive) quality. Must keep customer happy by sticking to the minimum service level agreements (SLA’s) for each customer. This could conflict with must offshore the delivery team. Or could conflict with the implementation teams that setup the customer with non-standard processes that are not only more difficult to deliver, as not yet known, but therefore also more expensive and even more prone to mistakes leading to those dreaded SLA problems that the Account Manager keeps on prioritizing.

The solution to silo’s back then was integrated teams. Really, everyone can just come together and do all the things each does, but first time right, at the right time, not too late, ….

Maybe a solution for some problem, but the real problem was that not enough people know what matters, know, really know the business. It should not matter for a company that sales, ops, development, production, have conflicting priorities, if all understand the business the company is in, the company culture will be such that such issues never arise. Everyone understand what matters in the end.

Today in 2023 the world is bracing for this US-China Trade War. Offshoring already became nearshoring. Sometimes the protectionist attacks on the global supply chain now force this to go back to onshoring. At the very list, many of the offshore BU’s now need to have a duplicate offshore location. You never know if cheap and just in time might be no longer allowed from somewhere or to somewhere. I guess the cheap will also become well less cheap if that happens. I mostly see this as the world that decided for the wrong reasons to become less efficient and less global so we can all become less wealthy in our own poorer back yard.

How many management layers can you get rid of?

How many management layers are about your business?

You only have one business in your company. Does every management layer know what your business is?

Is there a value add for your business for each management layer?

Are parrot management layers useful? Sometimes managers repeat exactly what is coming from the top without adding anything. In itself this is not necessarily wrong, but what is the reason that the same exact message, word for word, could not be heard, read and understood by everyone in the lower rangs? Webcasts can be recorded, slides can be emailed, messages from the c-suite can be sent by email as well. (as a side note, myself, I’m not a big fan of all the other company-social-intranet successors myself, too many channels for the same things).

One problem in particular where this can actually be a symptom off, is parasite managers/layers. They can usually be identified because they tend to isolate their teams from the rest of the organization. For instance, make sure your team is not included in an email distribution list that the an C-exec uses to send messages to everyone, but at the same time the parasite manage makes sure that he/she gets those messages which can then be parroted back to their teams. Fantastic vision that the company has now. But with parroting you loose a lot. If a company has a charismatic leader, that charisma is gone with parroting. People are left with something that makes sense. Something that could work for the marked they’re in. But where is the energy, where is the drive, what could motivate an entire company, is watered down a fantastic, even somewhat secretive thing, that only the “important” people in the company really understand why it is so great. Why should your people stay and work for you when all you have to offer is “something that makes sense”? Every employee at every level kneeds to understand what the company is about, and needs to be convinced, that there is a vision, that will not only work for the company, but that will also work for their job at that company and they need to be convincing themselves why that job, is the right job, for their life and their future.

When you are convinced that everyone needs to understand your business, from the CEO to the receptionist, and if you ask me even the cleaning lady that comes by every evening. It’s about culture. If you don’t bother explaining to everyone in the office, you better not bother at all.