

Lesson 1: Core concepts: structure, chain of command, span of control

3.4 journey

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Lesson 1 of 7

Learning goals

- ✓ Say what an organisational structure is
- ✓ Name job roles and who does what in a business
- ✓ Explain the chain of command and span of control
- ✓ Explain why businesses use a structure

Key words



Organisational structure How a business is organised, shown as a chart.



Hierarchy The levels of a business, top to bottom.



Chain of command The line that orders and decisions follow.

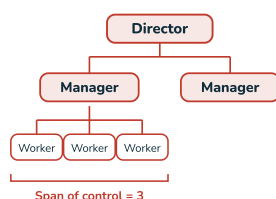


Span of control How many workers one manager is in charge of.



Authority The power to make decisions and give orders.

What you need to know



Chain of command runs down the levels; span of control is how many report to one manager.

Chain of command
line of authority,
top to bottom

1. What is an organisational structure?

An **organisational structure** shows how a business is organised. It tells you three things: what job each person does, who is in charge, and who reports to whom. It is usually drawn as a chart. The most senior people are at the top.

Why does this help? Everyone knows their job. Less work gets missed or done twice. Decisions are made faster. So the business is more likely to reach its goals.

2. Chain of command

A **hierarchy** is the levels of a business, from the boss at the top to the workers at the bottom. The **chain of command** is the line that orders and decisions follow, going down. It is about who is in charge of whom — not just how messages are sent.

"The chain of command shows who employees report to and who makes decisions."

Here is the structure of **FreshBite Foods Ltd**, a ready-meal maker: The CEO is in charge of the whole business. Each manager is in charge of the supervisors below them. Each supervisor is in charge of the workers. The chart makes everyone's job and the chain of command clear.

3. Span of control

Span of control is the number of workers one manager is in charge of. A **narrow** span means a few workers. A **wide** span means many workers. With a wide span, a manager has less time for each worker.

4. Tall and flat structures

A **tall** structure has many levels and a narrow span. A **flat** structure has few levels and a wide span.

Test yourself

Cover the answers below, answer Q1–Q10, then check.

Q1 What is an organisational structure?

Q2 Why do businesses use organisational structures?

Q3 What is span of control?

Q4 What is a narrow span of control?

Q5 What is a wide span of control?

Q6 What is the chain of command?

Q7 What is a tall organisational structure?

Q8 What is a flat organisational structure?

Q9 One advantage of a flat structure?

Q10 One disadvantage of a tall structure?

ANSWERS

A1 A formal system that shows how roles, responsibilities, and authority are arranged in a business.

A2 To clarify roles, improve communication, and ensure tasks are carried out efficiently.

A3 The number of employees a manager is responsible for.

A4 When a manager supervises a small number of employees.

A5 When a manager supervises a large number of employees.

A6 The line of authority through which decisions and instructions pass.

A7 A structure with many layers of management and a narrow span of control.

A8 A structure with few layers of management and a wide span of control.

A9 Faster communication and decision-making.

A10 Slower decision-making due to many management layers.