When you started your business, you might have been a team of one. Or, perhaps your business started with a small team of trusted co-workers who shared your vision, understood your product/service and worked together to achieve the goals and milestones of growth over time. As your business continues its growth trajectory and your team expands, more time needs to be spent on putting in place operational efficiencies. This may require different ways of organizing, communicating with and leading your team. As a business owner, you are responsible for organizing all business functions and breaking them down into departments or units, which improves your employees’ effectiveness.

Organizational structure is also important in improving the decision-making process, especially if there are documented guidelines detailing how the business is supposed to operate. These guidelines document how information is conveyed throughout the organization and to those individuals responsible for making critical decisions.

In this Business Operations Series, we will address three operational concepts that will help you more smoothly navigate growing the team as your business expands and grows.

- The Importance of People, Process and Tools
- The Importance of the RASCI Chart
- The Purpose of KPIs and Metrics
1. PEOPLE, PROCESS, TOOLS:
Work in a business gets done by knowledgeable PEOPLE who are using defined PROCESSES, supported by TOOLS such as computer programs, manufacturing equipment, packaging systems, etc. As your business grows, the systems you had initially put into place may become inefficient or even break which creates a range of issues for you and your team.

Looking at your operations routinely and considering which of the three components of PEOPLE, PROCESS and TOOLS needs updating can help you resolve operational issues more quickly and effectively. In many cases, what’s needed is a mix of all three being updated, in the right measure for where you are today and how you are planning for growth.

2. A RASCI chart can also be used to spark a discussion about how to improve processes within the company as well as to inform an employee’s job description.

Who does what – the RASCI chart.
This tool will help you and your team confirm:

a. Responsible – Who is performing and responsible for various tasks in a clearly outlined process with specific and measurable outcomes?

b. Accountable – Who oversees and/or supervises the work flow?

c. Supporting – Where is collaboration with other employees needed in the process?

d. Consulted – Who must be consulted prior to a decision being made or a task completed?

e. Informed – Who needs to be kept in the loop throughout the key points in the project life-cycle and after a decision is made or work is completed?

3. KPIs and Metrics: Most businesses and organizations set goals in order to achieve the right objectives and fulfill the needs of its stakeholders. Those goals need to be embraced by every team member within the organization, each of whom is performing unique functions to advance the business.

There are many different ways to set and measure goals. One effective way to measure an individual, team or company’s progress toward a goal is by using Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs, which set a standard of success for a specific business process or objective. Organizations use KPIs to help individuals at all levels focus their work toward achieving a common goal. KPIs also help businesses understand whether they’re spending their time and money on the right strategies, and executing their tasks and using their systems in appropriate ways in order to achieve their goals. If you pick the right measures, you can keep employees focused on how they can improve the profitability of the company or at a minimum, see when something is just not going as planned.