

WHITE PAPER

Charting the future for IT departments



Organisation charting tools have evolved from producing static box and line diagrams to dynamic tools creating software-generated graphical interactive charts. Organisation charting applications are offering far greater insights than before. They are gaining the attention of IT departments, not as another piece of business software, but as a tool that will empower their alignment with business strategy.

Traditionally, an organisation chart was a diagram representing the position structure of a department or organisation. The chart depicted the hierarchy of positions, position holders and associated reporting and approval lines.

The responsibility for organisation charts was the domain of HR departments. They were used to map the structure of organisations, as well as help new employees understand where they 'fit' within their team, division and company. Charts were a means by which organisations could visualise their structure to ensure it aligned with current and future business objectives.

However, producing a chart often meant printing and stitching together many pages to get a single overview of an entire business unit or organisation. Besides this manual process, paper-based charts presented additional challenges.

In dynamic organisations, the accuracy of an organisation chart quickly eroded because of ballooning staff numbers or conflicting demands on resources. Even when an administrator diligently maintained the data, the organisation chart was still not valuable unless they redistributed the updated versions. More often than not, staff considered organisation charts to be out-of-date and lacking in value. As the use of organisation charts fell out of favour, managers and staff viewed their content as theoretical and not a basis on which to make informed decisions.



The emergence of cloud-based organisation charting software has helped to address these problems and deliver new benefits.

It is real-time

Every change made to a cloud-based organisation chart application is saved in real-time. Depending on the organisation, the responsibility for maintaining the chart can be decentralised, removing the burden of chart maintenance falling to one person or team. Instead, managers or department heads could be given access to their departmental structures, enabling them to reflect changes as they occur. This ensures greater accuracy, timeliness and reliability of organisation chart information.

It enables mobility

Best-of-breed organisation charting software enables access via mobile devices. Hence, access to both edit, view and use accurate organisation chart data is available anywhere and on any device, laptop, notebook or smartphone.

It permits custom data views

Businesses are realising the potential organisation charts have to display more than just a position title and incumbent details. As the reliability of organisation charts improves with cloud solutions, businesses are seeking to use organisation charts to capture other data points. Examples might include education, skills and training. Still, others might consist of salary data versus budget for each position.

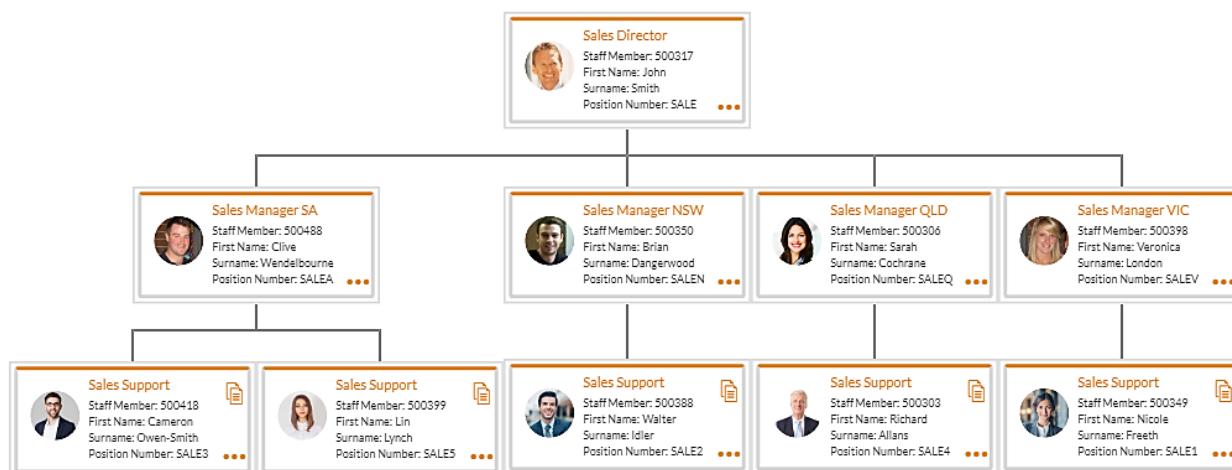
Including custom data points empowers organisations to maintain and deploy multiple views of the organisation structure, which better inform strategic and business planning. The diversity of possible data points further increases the opportunities for an organisation to utilise organisation charts as a business tool.

Organisation charts for IT departments.

IT departments are transforming in response to rapid and far-reaching changes within the industry. More than ever, IT departments need to consider the value proposition of real-time organisation charting software.

Modern IT departments are striving to become more agile with the relentless trend toward innovation as a mantra and Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions as a delivery mechanism. The changes to modern IT departments require Chief Information Officers (CIOs) to reconsider their structures and resource allocations. For example, there is a trend towards creating teams that are just client-facing and distinct from the technical resources that had previously performed both roles. There are new and emerging technologies that are challenging the reliance on legacy systems, but require resources with entirely new skill sets to be engaged. The booming SaaS industry, for example, requires existing resources to be fluent in more platforms than ever before. The trend toward IT deliverables being managed as projects has disrupted traditional structures with skilled personnel being re-deployed into fixed-term programs.

Set against a strategic directive to increase deliverables at the lowest cost possible, CIOs are facing significant challenges when trying to implement the changes required to meet executive guidelines. There are many ways organisation charts can help CIOs both understand existing structures and devise new ones to align with business strategy and direction.



By providing a view of the structure of a team, IT managers can identify gaps in skills and capacity. Vacancies created by project secondments can be identified and filled with existing or contract resources. Of particular value is the ability of organisation charting software to create views of both current state and proposed states. Because online charts can display custom data points, the skills delivered by the proposed structures can be shown, enabling CIOs to justify their recommendations to decision-makers. In such scenarios, the organisation chart becomes a visual aid to support and illustrate the rationale for proposed changes.

Organisation charting software can be instrumental in clarifying relationships within teams and departments and in highlighting potential conflicts of interest. Take, for example, the roles of CIO and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). The CIO is charged with delivering a better and more agile level of service with a limited and often shrinking budget. Hence, their focus is on innovation, new technologies and cost-saving processes. A CISO, however, takes responsibility for information security and the protection of sensitive company data from nefarious actors.

Many organisations have naturally assumed that the CISO role is a technology position, which necessitates a reporting line to the CIO, or their equivalent. In reality, this reporting relationship creates an untenable situation for the CISO who would be required to challenge the decisions made by their superior. Organisation charting software that lists the KPIs of each position would help identify this conflict and enable the rapid re-allocation of this resource to a more senior executive position.

Benefits of organisation charting in IT departments

Some key benefits to IT departments in adopting online organisation charts are:

Better Communications

Charts can hold contact mechanisms, including emails and phone numbers, Slack™ and Skype™ addresses. This enables employees to quickly identify whom they need to contact and the best mechanism by which to do so.

Better Onboarding

As organisation charts help identify the need for new resources, those new hires need to understand the structure of the department and group, including who does what within each team. Organisation charts can provide the visual breakdown and relevant data points to orient a new starter quickly.

True Agility

Accurate and up-to-date reflections of team structures and skillsets enable informed decision making. Gaps and blockages can be identified and rectified. Some organisation charting software allows drag-and-drop changes to update the reporting database, enabling real-time updates of reporting relationships and associated workflows.

Better adoption of change

Organisation charts enable IT leaders to communicate the rationale for suggested changes to decision-makers. They can then use the same charts to share the change with the immediate team, its stakeholders and clients. Organisation charts provide IT departments with transparency, both within and outside of their department or division.

The adoption of organisation charting software has restored organisations' faith in its value, accuracy and application. For IT departments, organisation charts provide an effective means to analyse current states and a tool with which to devise future states that align with business strategy. Mobility and security controls ensure accurate data is available to authorised users on-demand and that structural changes can be applied with minimal effort. Using online organisation charting software, CIO's can begin to proactively manage the need to become agile service providers without over-extending the budget.