



An MRAA Mini-Guide:

Why Your Dealership Needs an Org. Chart & What It Will Tell You

Authored by Valerie Ziebron of



An MRAA Mini-Guide to the Dealership Org. Chart

Dear Marine Dealership Professionals,

On the heels of the growth many of you experienced in 2020 and early 2021, our team at the Marine Retailers Association is seeing a spike in requests for workforce resources and education.

We understand why: You know how critical it is to your success to support, develop and retain your current employees, as you work to find new ones who are just right, those people who will not only allow your business to improve and grow, but maybe even accelerate that growth. Not as easy as it sounds, we know, so we're honored that you're turning to us for help.

As exciting as it is to see customers lining up for your products and services, and revenue climbing, with increased demand also comes increased pressure on you and your employees. It raises questions like:

- How do we care for and hold onto our employees in stressful times?
- How do we increase our efficiency, while providing excellent customer experiences?
- How do we make the time to hire the right people and train them properly?

Here's the good news. Being great at workforce recruitment and retention often comes back to mastery of the basics: things like creating crystal clarity for your employees about what success looks like and how to work with your team to achieve it.

This can be made easier by developing some simple resources like job descriptions, an employee handbook, and yes ... a dealership organizational chart.

As you'll see on the final page of this guide, over the years, we have developed a database of sample job descriptions, a sample employee handbook, and lots of workforce-related education for you. But until now, we didn't have anything to help you develop and refine an org. chart.

That's why our team was over the moon when Valerie Ziebron, president of VRZ Consulting, offered to share her expertise in this area with us and with you.

Please join me in thanking Valerie for her generosity in working with us to create this short, but powerful guide for you!

Kind regards,



Liz Walz

The power of the organizational chart

At VRZ Consulting, we happened upon the power of the organizational chart by accident.

Years ago, a business owner had scheduled a call to discuss their dealership's growing pains, and prior to the call, they emailed us a copy of their organizational chart.

VRZ has done hundreds of similar calls, but having the org. chart in front of us was pure genius. The call was incredibly productive because we could cover so much ground so quickly. I felt like I had already spent a day visiting the dealership!

At a glance, your org. chart allows you and the people you work with to get clarity on the dealership: names, positions and who reports to whom. For more insight, dig deeper to discover how long each person has worked there, who is family, and more.

Looking at it objectively in black and white can help your dealership in so many ways. Creating this one-page document can help you pinpoint why:

- You are struggling with turnover in certain positions;
- Customer experience is compromised;
- There is drama and conflict internally;
- Some areas are not as profitable as they should be;
- Management's time and effort is being overtaxed in certain areas;
- Some positions are destined for failure no matter who you hire;
- And so much more!

Ever since that call, I've requested an org. chart prior to working with any dealership. Unfortunately, not many dealerships maintain an org chart. Often, they will send an employee roster with job titles, but that doesn't really show you or your team the true chain of command. If the team isn't clear on the organizational structure, there will likely be confusion and even conflict.

What it is and what it should look like

So, let's start by defining exactly what an org. chart is and what it should look like. As we do, keep in mind that seasonal dealerships might have a very different looking chart in January than they do in July. Like so many other important documents in the dealership, the org. chart should be a living document that gets updated every time there is an



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adjustment in staffing or job positions. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the organization chart as:

“A diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships between the different people, departments, or jobs within that organization.”

Every person on your team should be represented on your org. chart. We should see their name, their position, who they report to and who reports to them. The image below is a great example.

There are online programs that can help you make your org. chart look very professional. At MRAA, they use a program called Lucid Chart. But I

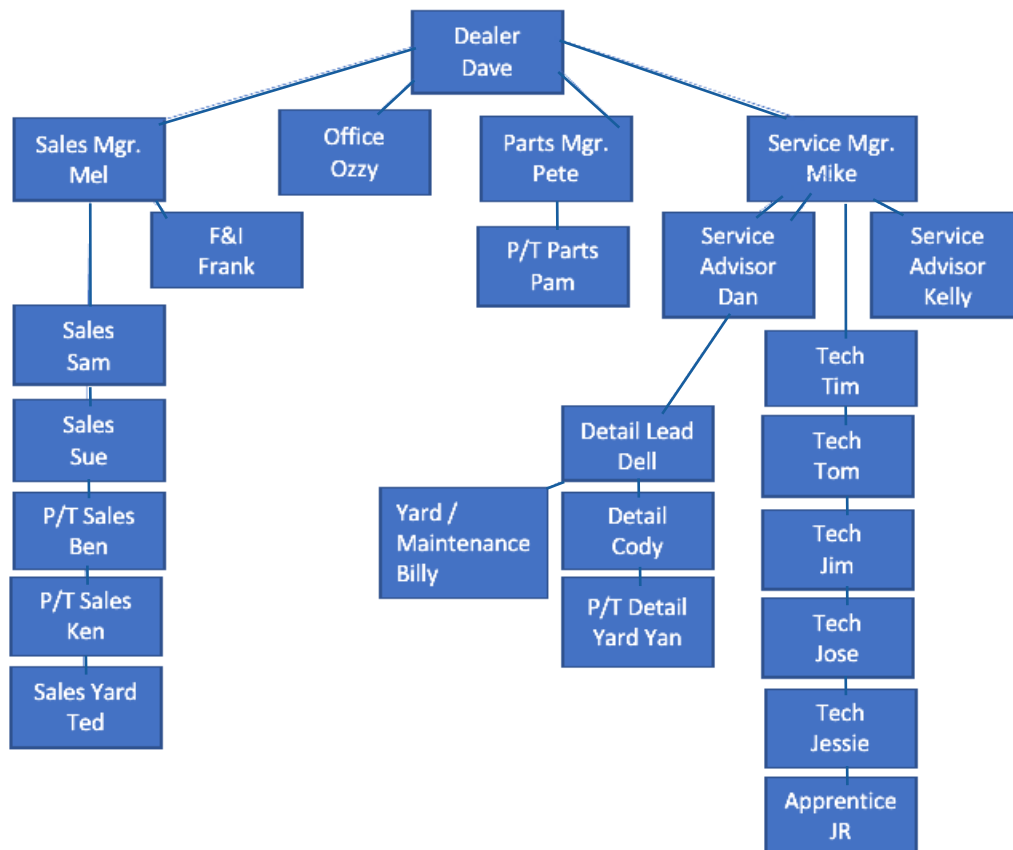
usually start by simply sketching it out by hand.

Common red flags

When you lay out or look closely at your org. chart, light bulbs might start to go on as to why things are not going as smoothly as you'd like.

Some common occurrences we've learned to identify as red flags include:

- **Everyone reports to the big cheese** – By big cheese, we mean you, dealership principles or general managers. When you have too many people reporting directly to you – people who need you to intervene to get daily work done – you will never have enough hours in the day to do everything well. You'll



have to choose – and someone and perhaps even some department will get the short end of the stick. In the end, you'll wear yourself down and not be very effective. This happens most with "Type-A" leaders and with dealerships that have experienced a lot of growth quickly.

- **High ratio of managers to workers** – How many Chiefs versus Indians do you have? Some stores have many "managers," yet no true leadership for the workers to follow. Others have so many workers, all trying to get a minute with the person who can answer their question or make the call.
 - One thing that we see frequently when people specifically request help with their shop: The sales department will have a clear and effective org. chart, but the service and parts departments look like a bowl of spaghetti with the chain of command confusing everyone. Sometimes people have been given the title of "Manager," but their daily tasks are so consuming that there really isn't any time for true management tasks. This happens a lot with Service Advisors or Service Managers who are also doing advisor duties.
- **"Managers" who are not in charge of any specific department or people** – If you have a title that suggests you are in charge, yet you are not specifically in charge of any department or people, chances

are good you will be frustrating everyone while not having much accountability. We tend to see this situation most often used with children of the dealership owner or with employees who have been inherited from a past owner. It's not fair to the team, and it really isn't fair to them either as it's setting them up for failure.

- **Workers who have multiple bosses** – When you are taking direction from more than one person, chances are good you're not going to make everyone happy. This is incredibly frustrating and unfair to the person doing the work. We see this happen most frequently with lot attendants, forklift drivers and even technicians. Sometimes it's clear to see on the org. chart, and sometimes it's because people are not honoring the org. chart by following the chain of command. For example, the GM is not going through the service manager

"When a dealership is struggling financially, it often comes back to processes that need improving, and this jumps off the page when the people, lines of communication and authority, and the roles are laid out in an org. chart!"

– Carrie Stacey, VRZ Consultant

or advisor. They are using their authority to pull a tech or lot worker off of a job to do something else.

Conclusion

In our experience, marine org. charts are not one-size-fits-all or even something that you can pick up in “small,” “medium,” or “large” to fit your store perfectly. Every dealership looks different, and often dealers with multiple locations are surprised to see how each store is unique when you look at it from the perspective of your org. chart.

In addition, analyzing your own organizational chart isn't always as straight-forward as it sounds. Sometimes it is plain to see that you need a service advisor in addition to a service manager with that many techs. But adding staff is not always the answer. For example, sometimes work isn't being performed efficiently. Maybe we have the wrong people in certain positions or maybe something is wrong with their job descriptions or processes.

To help answer these questions and more, you may want to combine analysis of your dealership's org. chart with a professional financial review. CPA and VRZ Consultant Carrie Stacey explained it this way:

“A balanced organization with clear lines of authority results in an efficient and effective organization, which translates directly to a healthy bottom line. When a dealership is struggling financially, it often comes back to processes that need improving, and this jumps off the page when the people, lines of



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communication and authority, and the roles are laid out in an org. chart!”

We often hear that dealerships are “understaffed,” but the financials tell a clear picture of how “in range” you are for spending on payroll in each department – and how well the department is performing.

What is your organizational chart telling you? Take a fresh look at it and see if it is helping or hurting your team work together towards the dealership's common goals.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Valerie Ziebron, president of VRZ Consulting, has spent more than two decades helping businesses “fire on all 8” through education and motivation. She makes it a point to uncover best practice “golden nuggets” that help people flip the switch from reactive to proactive for greater profitability and customer loyalty.

Through studying and comparing hundreds of dealerships across North America, VRZ Consulting specializes in what stores can do to maximize their resources, specifically their people, processes, space and location.

Learn more at: www.vrzconsulting.com.



MRAA's Workforce Resources

At the core of every dealership's success is its people. That makes workforce resources and education among the most important we can offer you. Regardless, if you are an MRAA member or not, we have tools and guidance that can help you recruit, develop and retain the best team you've ever had. Here are a few of them.

FOR ALL DEALERS: Available at [MRAA.com/workforce](https://mraa.com/workforce)

- Setting Up New Employees for Success: The Importance of Onboarding
- Why Technicians Quit
- Soft Skills to Look For in a Marine Tech (Graphic)
- Get Your Shop in Order to Attract Millennial and Gen Z Technicians
- Venues to Find and Recruit Future Techs
- Retaining Technicians: From Marine Techs' Perspective
- Golden Nuggets to Developing Marine Techs
- Tips on Recruiting and Managing Millennials in the Workplace
- Creating a Work Environment that Supports Both Male and Female Techs
- Honoring Diversity in the Workplace
- States Offering Tax Credits and Tuition Support for Apprenticeship Programs
- Tactics for Prioritizing and Avoiding Barriers to Success
- Resources for Your Mental Health and Well Being
- 6 Things You Can Do to Care for Your Team's Mental Health

FOR BRONZE, SILVER AND GOLD MRAA MEMBERS

- [Sample Job Descriptions Database](#) – Check out the nearly 50 sample job descriptions in our database
- [Sample Employee Handbook](#): If you don't have one or want to improve yours, MRAA's sample handbook includes more than 100 dealership policy templates.
- [MRAA Guide](#): Job Descriptions that Amp Up Productivity: Learn about including key result areas (KRAs) in your job descriptions and other ways to improve them.
- [MRAA Guide to Apprenticeship](#): One alternative to filling an open position through a traditional job posting is apprenticeship. Learn more about success with this strategy.
- [MRAA Guide to Dealership Improvement](#): For ideas on how to develop your team, including onboarding tips and a training template, download our Guide to Dealership Improvement.

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FOR SILVER AND GOLD MRAA MEMBERS: Available at MRAATraining.com

- **Move Beyond Burnout, by David Spader:** If long hours, the unrelenting pace of business and the challenge to deliver to your high standards have resulted in burnout for you and your team, this 2020 Dealer Week course is for you.
- **Dealer Case Study: Onboarding:** During a Dealer Case Study at Dealer Week 2020, Alpin Haus shared several workforce best practices, including a handout with a Sample Boat Product Specialist Hiring Process, Training Process and Schedule.
- **Develop Your Dealership's Bench Strength:** This Dealer Week 2020 session from The Rawls Group includes an Implementation Tool, 10 Key Questions to Determine Management Potential, and a Workbook with tools and processes to help you evaluate your managers and leaders, rank your staff's ability to build your bench strength, and identify key positions in need of bench strength.
- **Attract and Keep Techs, by Valerie Ziebron:** This course, with its resource-packed workbook, unveils best practices you can use to attract and grow new talent, as well as why top techs quit and what you can do about it.
- **Build a Service Dream Team, by Valerie Ziebron:** This 3-hour workshop may have been filmed in 2014, but it's real-world lessons and tools for recruiting, hiring, onboarding and retention of Service Department employees are just as relevant today as they were then.
- **Create a Parts & Accessories Superstar, by Robert Grant:** As part of this course, you'll learn how to prepare your team member to succeed in this department. Perhaps most valuable is its resource-packed workbook, which includes an onboarding schedule, job descriptions, daily checklists and performance evaluations for each P&A position.

FOR GOLD MRAA MEMBERS ONLY: Available at MRAATraining.com

- **How to Create a High Accountability Dealership, by John Spence:** The No. 1 dealer-requested topic, accountability, comes to life in a real-world approach through the advice of the foremost authority on the subject, John Spence, in this Continuous Certification course.
- **Boost the Productivity of Your Leadership Team, by Ty Bello:** It's easy to be busy these days, but being busy and being productive are two different things. This Continuous Certification course, will help make your entire team more productive.
- **Develop Your Dealership's Workforce Outside In, by Jim Million:** The No. 1 impediment to dealership growth? Lack of skilled workers. Through this Continuous Certification course, you can learn how to develop your workforce through coaching and mentoring.