

Efficiency: Matching the right person with the right job

When I served in the Legislature in Harrisburg, my staff and I did anything and everything.



Jennifer Mann

One of my employees kept the books. She knew that skill set wasn't in her tool bag, and, to top it off, she really didn't enjoy the work. So it didn't turn out as we'd expected, and I wound up taking on the assignment until I could delegate the work.

That experience taught me a valuable lesson: In any organization, you want to put the right person in the right job at the right time. That's organizational efficiency, and it isn't always easy for a growing business.

A lot of small entities don't have a chief financial officer, a human resources director or a vice president of marketing and sales. They have multiple people juggling multiple jobs, requiring skills they may or may not have. Many are busy doing the day-to-day work and haven't the time for specialized training.

The statehouse was no different. Staffers took on the work they were given, and then some.

Instead of saying "I'm probably not the right person to do this," they shouldered the burden so they wouldn't disappoint the boss. That can increase errors, inefficiency and dissatisfaction.

We tackled the issue at the source. At least once a year, the three of us would do a 360 self-evaluation. I'd start by asking everyone to list what they do, including every activity, no matter how trivial.



At least once a year, the three of us would do a 360 self-evaluation. ... that information helped us formulate a plan for allocating work and time. It enabled us to capitalize on the skill sets of the talent we had.

We'd then note our strengths, weaknesses and preferences. Do we have the skills to handle that responsibility? Do we enjoy that part of the job or would we rather focus on something else?

That information helped us formulate a plan for allocating work and time. It enabled us to capitalize on the skill sets of the talent we had.

Here are some questions to help start the process in your organization:

- What tasks do I do on a daily basis?
- What do I do best?

- Where do I struggle?
- What do I enjoy doing the most?
- What tasks do I dislike?
- Are others better at doing some of those jobs?
- Can I delegate or outsource any of the work?

In asking those questions, employees will discover that organizational efficiency isn't about avoidance. In the course of the day, every one of us winds up doing something we don't want to do.

Organizational efficiency is about recognizing strengths and delegating or outsourcing

when necessary. It's about matching the right person with the right job.

That's what I did with the staffer who handled the books. She felt relieved when I found someone who both enjoyed and excelled at finance.

It was a good match.

Jennifer Mann is the founder and president of JL Mann Consulting LLC in Allentown. The company (www.jlmannconsulting.com) offers a wide range of services aimed at helping businesses grow.