



Outcomes, Structure, People

Designing for balance, alignment, and results



How most organizations get this wrong

It may sound counterintuitive, but a common mistake organizations frequently make is focusing on people first. To be clear, we are not implying that people are not critically important, there is no organization without them, but implementing the MIND Methodology with over a thousand teams has shown us that when building a value-driven, results-oriented organization people are actually the last step in the process. Designing your organization around people first is actually a disservice to them.

Eighty-six percent of employees and executives cite a lack of collaboration and communication as the most common causes of workplace failures. The reason people and teams struggle to collaborate and communicate is a lack of alignment and clarity. That is why, successful organizations start with outcomes first, then design a structure to achieve those outcomes, and only then, do they populate that structure with people capable of achieving the outcomes.

It all starts with outcomes

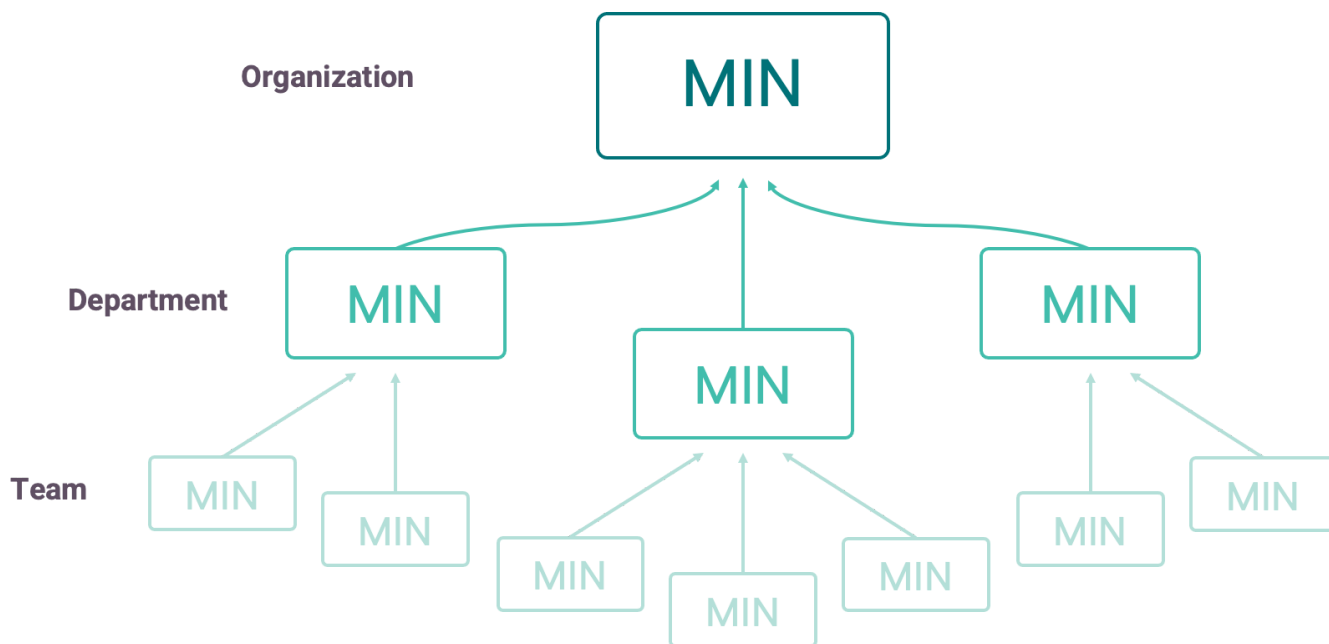
Intentionally identifying clear outcomes and the ideal organizational structure and keeping it all in balance is an opportunity missed by many organizations. Effectively doing this accelerates your results and provides a much higher return from all of your resources. Outcomes are the measure of success for the organization as well as for each department or team.

In the MIND Methodology, we call the overarching outcome the Most Important Number (MIN). Clearly defining and communicating outcomes at all levels balances and aligns the entire organization so that everyone is using the same roadmap towards the same destination.

Defining your outcomes

Start at the top with the organization's Most Important Number. Depending on the organization, it may stop here, or you may cascade MINs to each department/team that best quantifies the value they create. When deployed at multiple levels, it is critical that each MIN directly supports the one above it. *This interconnectedness provides clarity and ensures every level of the organization is working towards a unified outcome.*





The MIN is the north star that aligns the team's focus and guides decision-making. Identifying the correct Most Important Number is the essential first step to achieving your desired results.

The correct MIN

- Aligns everyone to a common outcome
- Guides team decisions
- Incentivizes desired behaviors
- Is the one number, above all others, that accurately measures success

An incorrect MIN

- Is not the top-level outcome
- Incentivizes the wrong behaviors
- Does not support other MINs
- Cannot be clearly measured
- Does not support the team's mission

It can be challenging to identify which metric is your top outcome. One way to accomplish this is to list your top metrics, then, narrow those down to the most critical few. Analyze this list and identify the one that:

- Does not feed into any number above it
- Most accurately measures the team's success and cannot be manipulated
- Drives the right behaviors

This is your top outcome or Most Important Number.

Important Metrics	Critical Metrics	OUTCOME (MIN)

Designing the right structure

Once the outcomes (MINs) are established shift your focus to ensuring you have the correct organizational **structure**, at all levels, to achieve your outcomes.

- ☐ Start by either analyzing your existing Org Chart, or creating one if one does not already exist. Either way, ask yourself;
 - ☐ *What is the ideal organizational structure to achieve the top-level MIN?*
 - ☐ Be intentional when answering this. Do not be swayed by your current structure. Focus on the Most Important Number and the most effective way, short and long-term, to achieve it.
 - ☐ *Do all the Most Important Numbers across the organization support the number above it?*
 - ☐ *Are resources adequately distributed to ensure each function can achieve its outcome and not hinder other functions from doing the same?*
- ☐ Next, identify the roles needed within each function for it to operate with maximum efficiency.
 - ☐ Do not worry about the people currently in those roles, just focus on what roles are needed.
- ☐ Create **Outcome-Based Responsibilities** for each role. *This is a critical element and one that can be challenging.*
 - ☐ Most organizations have detailed job descriptions with a list of tasks that the role is expected to complete. This approach can actually have a negative impact on results.
 - ☐ Team members often focus on completing their tasks, instead of focusing on the outcome. This leads many people to confuse being busy with being productive.
 - ☐ To improve your results and achieve your outcomes, replace the list of tasks with 2-4 Outcome Based Responsibilities.

Outcome-based responsibilities focus on results and free the individual to identify the right work, at the right time to achieve that outcome.

The example below is for a Human Resources Coordinator

Tasks	Outcomes Based Responsibilities
Maintain and update all office and company insurance policies.	Ensure all policies, procedures, and handbooks are current, accurate and accessible to all employees
Pay property taxes bi-annually.	
Process payroll bi-weekly	Ensure all payroll, benefits and applicable taxes are accurate and current at all times
Conduct benefits open enrollment	
Conduct new employee onboarding	Ensure the organization is compliant with all national and state labor and safety laws and regulations
Update policies and procedures monthly	
Maintain employee files	Ensure new and existing employees are supported in their professional development
Write disciplinary warnings and performance improvement plans	
Submit workers compensation claims	
Post OSHA and Labor Law posters as appropriate	

To create Outcome Based Responsibilities

Ideally these steps are done collaboratively with your team

- ☐ Start with your current job descriptions
- ☐ Categorize the tasks/activities and analyze *why those tasks are listed*. What is the outcome of completing those tasks? Rather than list process payroll bi-weekly, conduct open enrollment annually, pay taxes bi-annually, focus on the outcome, that all payroll, benefits, and applicable taxes are accurate and current at all times. One way to do this is when a task is listed, ask “in order to” or “so that”. This helps move beyond that task to the outcome.
- ☐ List the outcomes (we find in the 2-4 range is the most effective). Take note of any specific capabilities needed to achieve the outcomes.

Now you are ready to analyze your team to ensure you have the right people in the right seats.

People are most important, which is why they come last

Now that you have identified your outcomes and designed the ideal structure to achieve them, you ensure that each role is filled with people who are capable of achieving the outcome. This approach is incredibly supportive for team members because a lack of clarity and communication are frequently cited reasons for workplace failures. This approach eliminates those problems. Sit down with your team and:

- ☐ Share the outcome the team is working to achieve (the MIN). Ensure everyone understands what it is, and why it is the team's Most Important Number. Also, explain how it supports the Most Important Number above it
- ☐ Explain the overall structure for achieving that outcome and *where they fit into that structure*. It is essential that every team member knows where they fit and how they are contributing to the team
- ☐ Discuss the outcomes-based responsibilities with each team member for their role (and any specific capabilities). Clarify any questions, and address any concerns. It is essential that everyone understands that they are being held accountable for the outcomes of their role, and the overall outcome (MIN) for the team.
- ☐ This is the time to have an honest discussion about capabilities.
 - ☐ For team members who are fully capable, the leader's job is to provide support, resources, clarity, and get out of the way
 - ☐ For team members who are not fully capable the leader's job is to coach and develop the team member where needed. Provide support, resources, and development.

Development is a collaborative process, which includes an honest assessment of capabilities and expectations. Some team members may not be capable of achieving their role's outcomes, in which case it is in their interest to find a more suitable role that maximizes their ability to create value.

Building your organization following this approach creates an intentional, results-driven culture for team members, leaders, and the organization to thrive.

