



Owning it - Creating Clear Unified Roles and Responsibilities

Within this blog post, we will specifically examine how to update an organizational structure to instill ownership, how to engage employees in the process and how to infuse a feeling of shared success.

The Power of Ownership

Ownership means that individuals feel responsible and accountable. They know what their job is - but equally important - why it is vital. I believe that people will go beyond their comfort zone when they know why they are doing something. They will be more willing to take responsible risks and be more open to learning. We believe this mindset empowers individuals and drives accountability.

Ownership also fosters a culture of innovation - critical in today's tech companies. Meeting ever-changing consumer demands with new products requires a nimble organizational design. Our purpose is to deliver Consumer Experiences. Automotive Grade. As we upgrade our organization, we share one vision with the same understanding of our objectives.

Instilling Ownership in Your Organization

An emphasis on ownership sets companies apart from competition. This is because a culture of personal investment inspires creativity and innovation. As ownership is seeded, top-down hierarchical org charts are replaced with a horizontal structure where individuals are free and empowered to do what's best in any given situation.

To instill ownership in the organization, all roles and responsibilities are examined to ensure that there is a clear description for each functional role. A transparent dialogue is fostered so every individual feels empowered to make decisions. Scaling at a high speed due to company growth requires everyone across the organization to embrace this approach.

The Case for Ownership

As we began our journey to upgrade the organization, our goal was to enhance collaboration across functional levels and move away from silo thinking. We wanted

to make sure that everyone in the organization was working toward the same goal – from engineering to human resources, marketing and beyond. The purpose was to bring teams closer together and empower decision-making. This approach inspires more dedicated and loyal employees.

A common challenge in our industry is how to dedicate sufficient attention to both products and projects. Our upgraded organization creates space for both to happen simultaneously and continuously. This is because we approached transformation in a holistic manner.



More Than Just an Org Chart

For this organizational upgrade, we looked beyond boxes on an org chart. We defined our strategy and business drivers – and the resulting architecture coming out of those business drivers. We defined the processes that we needed and made adjustments as a result.

Our People Framework was born by addressing these critical topics while considering how our organization should be structured. This approach delivered guidance in a transparent way on how to design our future organization based on our strategy. It's really all about putting the right people in the right position – and then leveraging the strength and knowledge across our organization.

Simplifying the number of hierarchical layers promotes more agile decisionmaking and collaboration. People management needs to make sense and have a purpose. The upgraded organization gives managers a healthier way of focusing on their tasks as well.

Designed by employees, for employees

Employee diversity is a strategic area of focus for HARMAN and was central to the creation of our approach. We have more than two hundred people working on this initiative to redefine the organization across the globe and across all functions. Every role is important at HARMAN, and they are all included in this project.

As we move forward, we know that it's imperative to walk the talk. We must be transparent about why and how we are transforming and continue to listen to our people. From town halls to information sharing in our employee portal, we will continue to communicate, to actively listen and to put feedback into action.

Committed Leadership

We have a leadership team at the highest level that is standing behind this initiative. They are supporting a cultural shift and empowering people with ownership to create change. Individuals will be motivated, engaged and committed to drive results and to be successful.

By setting shared transformational goals, everyone knows the current status and the vision for the future. I feel this truly increases employee engagement. We can already see that we are improving our problem-solving and decision-making. We are accelerating learning and skill development. We are looking closely at what we will need tomorrow to enable our people to achieve success.

For us, the future is an agile, forward-thinking organization whose culture reinforces, supports and rewards innovation, lean thinking, quick decision making, autonomy at all levels and cross-collaboration across the division.

At the end of the day, we are putting our mantra into action at HARMAN: Do More. Go Beyond. Aim for WOW.

As we reshape and grow the organization, we are also preparing to hire the brightest and most innovative individuals to add to our staff as new demands emerge. If you are interested in joining this movement and working in this type of Ownership culture, check out our [careers page](#) on the website and search for a job today!



Sonja Dierkesmann

**Director Human Resources, Transformation Management Automotive at
HARMAN International**

Connect with the Author: [LinkedIn](#)

Owning It - Key Takeaways

- **Place a focus on ownership to empower decision-making and to increase employee engagement.**
- **Build a new organizational foundation based on ownership with input from employees at all levels and functions to ensure total investment by all.**
- **Be completely transparent about the status with employees and stakeholders – and set a solid vision for the future that is achievable.**

About Me - More on Sonja

I've been with HARMAN for about eight years now. My education background includes a degree in Vocational Application and Cultural Studies from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in Germany, among other education institutes. That's when my interest in culture, organization structure and people development began.

After holding successful positions in various other industries, I decided to pursue a career in Automotive. Initially, I joined HARMAN as the Human Resource Lead for Germany where I had a team reporting to me. I then played an instrumental role in starting up the ADAS business unit from the ground up. That's when I was nominated to participate in the Organizational Upgrade at HARMAN Automotive where I assumed the role of the workstream lead for the People Framework.