

Health and Safety Essentials

QUICK RECAP of

Lecture 1: Introduction to Occupational Health & Safety



Date: 7th October 2024

**Undergraduate Diploma in
Occupational Health and Safety**



Who is known as the “Father of Occupational Medicine”?



**Mention some disasters that shaped
OHS as we know it today**

Health and Safety Essentials

Lecture 2 – Understanding Organisational Context and Management Theories

Applying Management Theory to Occupational Health & Safety Practice

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**Undergraduate Diploma in
Occupational Health and Safety**

Learning Objectives

- Understand the Levels of Management in OHS.
- Explore Key Management Functions and Their Failures in OHS.
- Examine Mintzberg's Managerial Roles in the Context of OHS.
- Analyze Real-World Case Studies to Apply Management Theories.
- Understand the Impact of Organizational Structures on Safety.



Learning Objective - 1

Understand the Levels of Management in OHS:

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of top, middle, and lower-level management in ensuring workplace safety.
- Analyze how different management levels influence safety culture and risk management.



Learning Objective - 2

Explore Key Management Functions and Their Failures in OHS

- Examine the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling functions in managing occupational health and safety.
- Understand how failures in these functions can lead to major industrial accidents, as demonstrated by the Deepwater Horizon case.

Learning Objective - 3

Examine Mintzberg's Managerial Roles in the Context of OHS

- Apply Mintzberg's managerial roles (interpersonal, informational, and decisional) to real-life situations.
- Evaluate how poor communication, lack of leadership, and weak decision-making contribute to safety failures.

Learning Objective - 4

Analyse Real-World Case Studies to Apply Management Theories

- Use the Deepwater Horizon disaster as a case study to assess planning failures, communication breakdowns, and controlling deficiencies in OHS.
- Develop recommendations for how better management could have prevented the disaster.

Learning Objective - 5

Understand the Impact of Organizational Structures on Safety

- Compare centralised and decentralised organisational structures and their effects on safety decision-making.
- Evaluate how organisational culture and structure can either support or hinder effective OHS management.



"Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets" - Dr. Paul Batalden

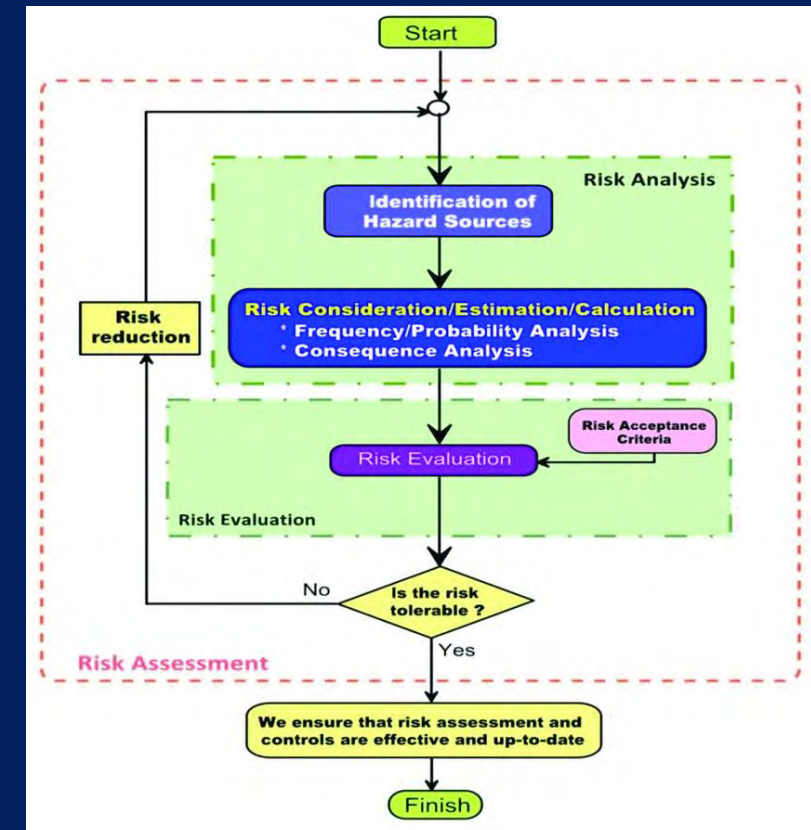
*It is often misattributed to W. Edwards Deming.

What the quote implies:

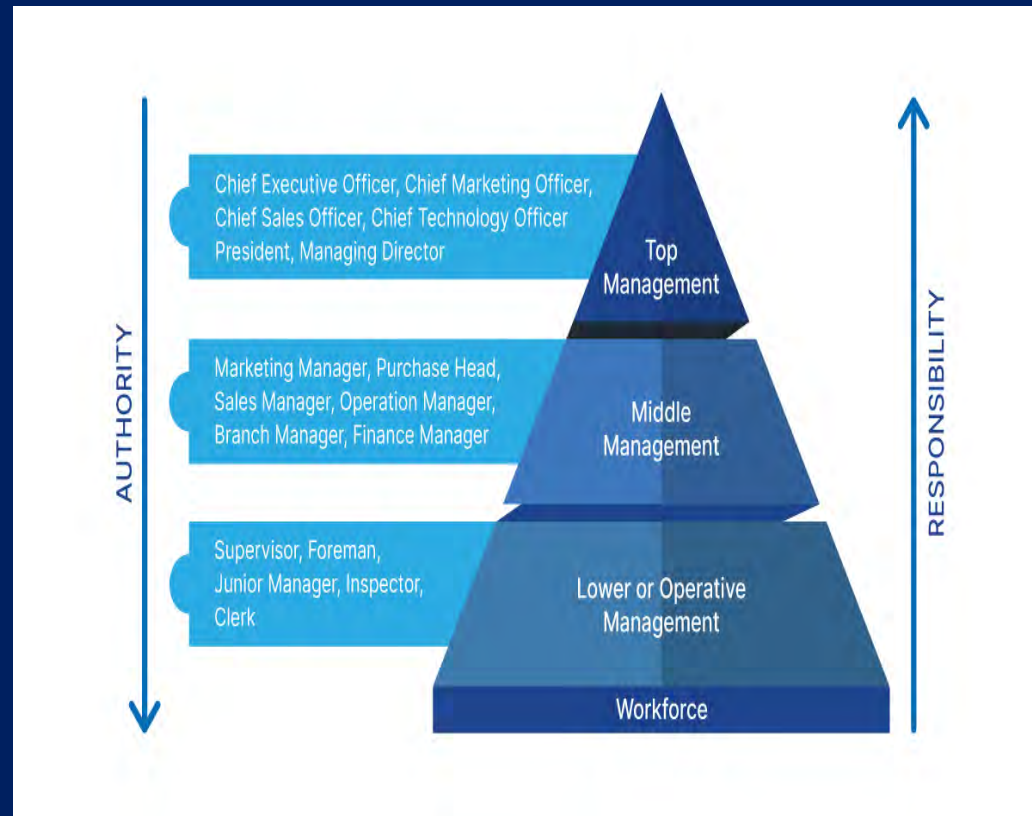
- **Results are a function of the system:**
 - The outcomes are not accidental. If a system consistently produces a certain result, it implies the system was designed, intentionally or not, to achieve that specific outcome.
- **Changing the system is key:**
 - To change the results, one must change the system's design. Focusing on individuals or blaming them for poor results is often unproductive because the system is the root cause of the problem.
- **Systems are often created to serve a purpose:**
 - For example, a customer service system might be designed to protect company risk and drive sales, which could lead to results that are frustrating for the customer, even if the individual representatives are following the rules correctly.
- **The quote is a call to action:**
 - It encourages leaders and individuals to analyze and redesign their systems to achieve desired outcomes, rather than accepting current results as fixed or the fault of individuals.

Overview of Management (OHS context)

- What is Management in OHS?
 - Implementing safety protocols
 - Leading and monitoring safety initiatives
 - Organising safety resources
 - Controlling safety performance
 - Planning improvements in safety culture



Levels of Management



- **Top-Level Management:**
 - Strategic planning, compliance oversight, external relations
- **Middle-Level Management:**
 - Policy implementation, resource allocation, reporting
- **Lower-Level Management:**
 - Direct supervision, training, hazard identification

Functions of Management

- **Planning:** Setting **safety goals and objectives**.
- **Organising:** Allocating **safety roles and resources**.
- **Leading:** Motivating teams to follow **safety protocols**.
- **Controlling:** Monitoring and evaluating **safety performance**.



Planning



- **Strategic Planning:** Long-term **safety initiatives** (e.g., reducing accidents by 50% over 5 years).
- **Tactical Planning:** Short-term actions (e.g., quarterly audits, staff training).
- **Operational Planning:** Daily tasks (e.g., ensuring **PPE is available**).

Organising

- Identifying **safety-related tasks**
- Assigning roles and responsibilities
- Allocating resources (**PPE, training**)
- Ensuring inter-departmental coordination



Leading



- Motivating employees to prioritise safety
- Fostering a safety-conscious culture
- Delegating safety tasks effectively
- Communicating safety goals

Controlling

- Monitoring **safety performance**
- Evaluating **compliance with safety protocols**
- Correcting deviations from the plan
- Providing feedback for future **safety planning**



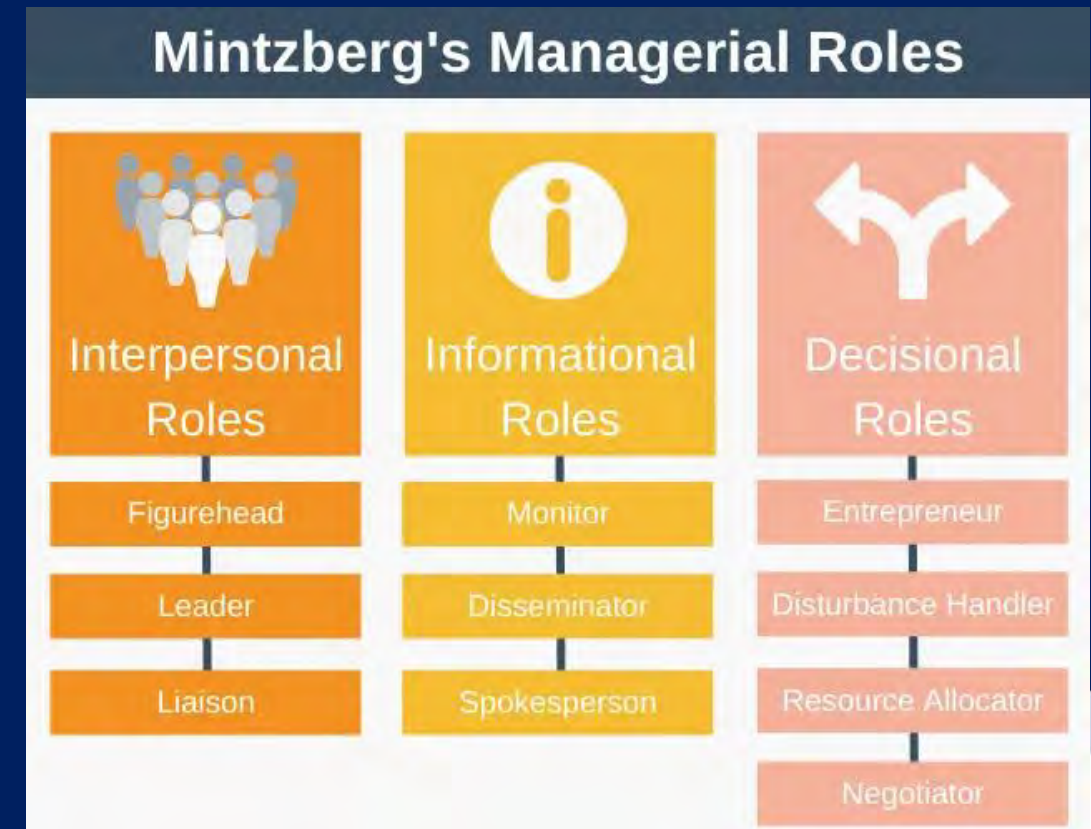
“Managers work at an unrelenting pace, characterised by brevity, variety, and fragmentation.” — Mintzberg (1973)

- “Mintzberg’s research showed that managers’ lives are hectic — meetings, calls, interruptions.
That’s why safety has to be built into the daily routine, not treated as an extra.
- Each level of management influences safety differently — top management sets tone and resources; middle management translates policy into plans; operational management turns those plans into practice.
The strength of an OHS system depends on how well these three levels connect.”
- “Quick question: In your own organisations, which level do you think has the strongest influence on safety culture — top, middle, or front line?”



Mintzberg's Managerial Roles

- **Interpersonal Roles:**
 - Figurehead, Leader, Liaison
- **Informational Roles:**
 - Monitor, Disseminator, Spokesperson
- **Decisional Roles:**
 - Entrepreneur, Disturbance Handler, Resource Allocator, Negotiator



Case Study – Mintzberg's Roles in Action

Breakout Rooms or Open Discussion

Scenario: A chemical spill occurs at a manufacturing plant. How do the top, middle, and lower-level managers respond based on Mintzberg's roles?

Group Discussion Points:

- **Group 1: Top Management**
 - How would the CEO or top executives handle the overall situation?
 - What Mintzberg roles would be most prominent?
 - How would they manage external communication and resource distribution?
- **Group 2: Middle Management**
 - How does middle management coordinate between top and lower levels?
 - What information would they monitor and how would they distribute it?
 - What roles would middle management adopt, and how would they support both sides?
- **Group 3: Lower Management**
 - How would lower-level managers lead workers on the ground?
 - What immediate actions would they take in response to the spill?
 - How would they allocate resources and ensure safety compliance?



Break

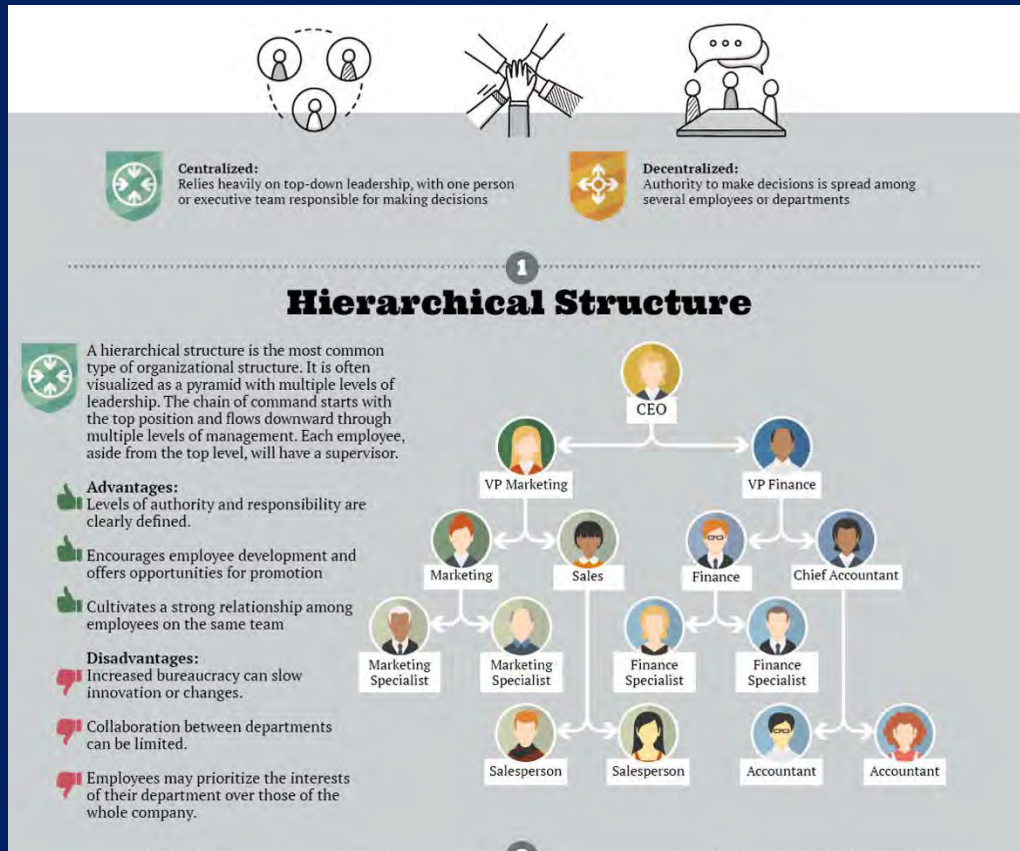


“The bureaucratic structure goes hand in hand with the concentration of administrative means of production.” — Max Weber (1920)

- “Weber saw bureaucracy as the foundation of order and accountability — it’s what allows large organisations to run smoothly.
- In OHS, structure can both help and hinder. Hierarchies give us clear reporting, but sometimes too many layers slow decision-making.
- Matrix systems encourage teamwork but can blur accountability for safety.
- The key is ensuring safety accountability is *never lost in the chart.*”



Organisational Structure



• Types of Organizational Structures:

- Hierarchical, Functional, Divisional, Matrix, Team-Based

• Key Elements:

- Departmentalisation, Chain of Command, Span of Control

Interactive Discussion – Organisational Structures in OHS

- Discuss the pros and cons of a matrix structure in managing OHS.

A Matrix Structure is an organisational setup where employees report to more than one manager or work across multiple departments and teams. This flexible system allows for collaboration across different functions, meaning employees are not confined to a single department or manager but instead contribute to various projects or initiatives. In the context of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), this structure can be highly beneficial, as it promotes cross-functional collaboration, but it also presents certain challenges that must be carefully managed.



Interactive Discussion – Organisational Structures in OHS

Benefits of a Matrix Structure in Safety Management:

1. Cross-functional Collaboration:

"A matrix structure encourages collaboration across different departments, which can be beneficial for safety management. For instance, safety audits can involve multiple teams like operations, engineering, and HR, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of workplace hazards."

2. Resource Flexibility:

"This structure allows for the flexible use of personnel and resources. Employees from different departments can contribute their expertise to safety initiatives, ensuring diverse input and better problem-solving during safety assessments or emergency planning."

3. Enhanced Communication:

"Safety information flows more freely across departments, making it easier to address safety concerns that may affect multiple areas of the organization. This can lead to quicker identification of risks and more timely interventions."



Interactive Discussion – Organisational Structures in OHS

Drawbacks of a Matrix Structure in Safety Management:

1. Confusion in Reporting Lines:

"One of the biggest challenges in a matrix structure is the potential confusion about reporting lines. In safety management, it's crucial to know who is ultimately responsible for safety decisions, and in a matrix setup, employees may be unclear about whether they report to their functional manager or the project leader. This can delay critical safety decisions or actions."

2. Conflicting Priorities:

"Employees working across multiple teams may face conflicting priorities. For example, a project team might prioritize speed and cost-efficiency, while the safety team focuses on regulatory compliance and risk reduction. This can lead to tension or compromises in safety standards."

3. Diluted Accountability:

"In a matrix structure, accountability can become diluted. If something goes wrong from a safety perspective, it may be harder to pinpoint who is responsible, leading to delays in addressing the issue or holding the right people accountable."



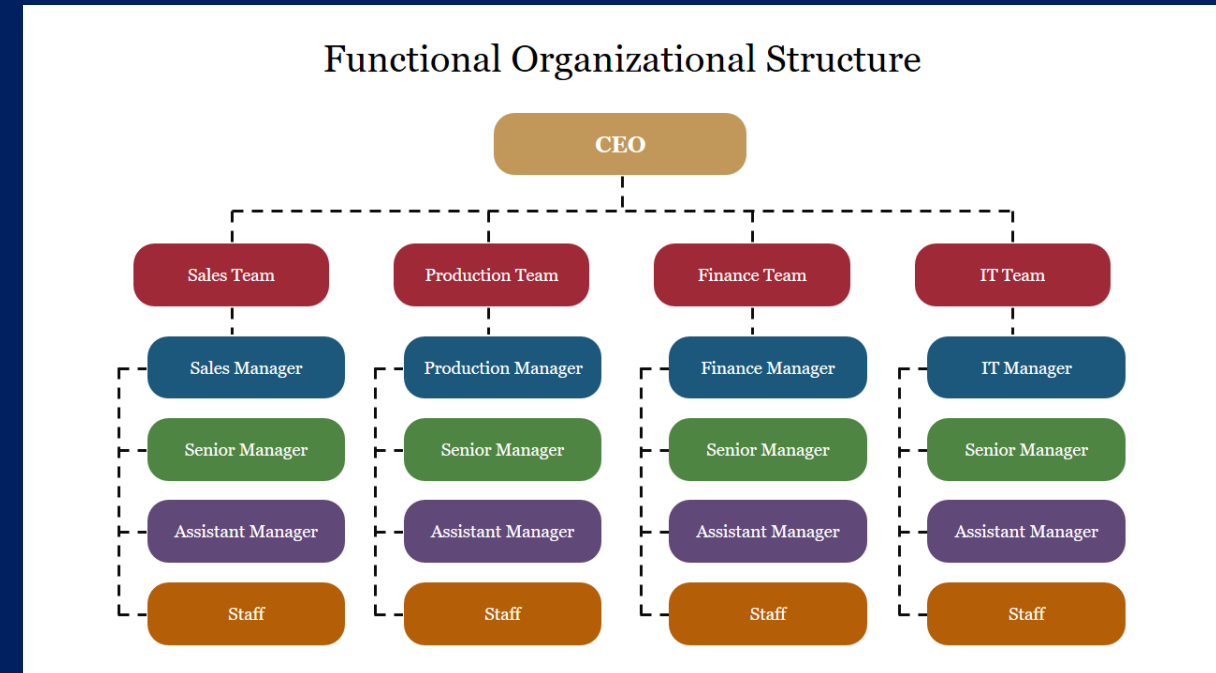
Hierarchical Structure

- Clear chain of command and defined authority.
- Decision-making flows top-down.
- High accountability but slower adaptability.
- Works well for compliance-driven systems (e.g. OHS policies, audits).



Functional Structure

- Groups people by similar expertise (HR, Engineering, Operations, Safety).
- Clear departmental specialisation.
- Encourages depth of knowledge but can cause “silos”.
- Coordination between departments becomes critical for OHS.



Divisional Structure

- Organisation split by products, regions, or projects.
- Each division operates semi-independently.
- Focuses on results, flexibility, and client or product needs.
- OHS consistency depends on corporate-level oversight.



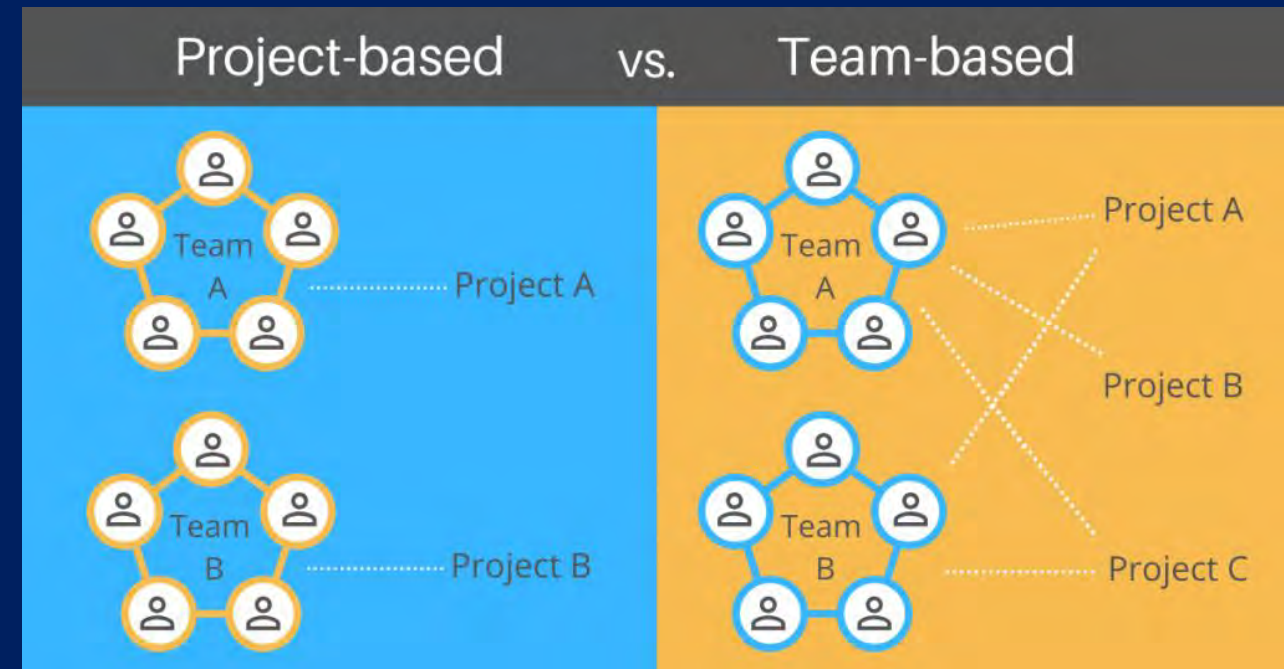
Matrix Structure

- Dual reporting lines (functional + project).
- Encourages collaboration and resource sharing.
- Can blur lines of accountability if not clearly managed.
- Excellent for multi-disciplinary safety teams — if roles are defined.



Team-Based Structure

- Flat structure built around cross-functional teams.
- Emphasises collaboration and flexibility.
- Fast decisions and high ownership, but needs a strong safety culture.
- Works best where empowerment and trust are embedded.





Which organisational structure do you think best supports effective OHS management?

Real-World Example: Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

- Real-World Example: The Deepwater Horizon oil spill and management failure.
- Discussion points: How could better leadership, organisation, and control have prevented or mitigated the disaster?

Deepwater Horizon – Video & report

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NQ8LehUWSE>

Investigation Report: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-OILCOMMISSION/pdf/GPO-OILCOMMISSION.pdf>



Deepwater Horizon – Management Failures (Discussion Points) - 1

Lack of Planning

1. Failure in Strategic,
2. Tactical, and
3. Operational Planning

- How could better planning, especially at the strategic and tactical levels, have reduced the risk of this disaster?
- What role do you think management pressure to meet deadlines played in the lack of safety planning?

Deepwater Horizon – Management Failures (Discussion Points) - 2

1. Failure in Leadership and
 2. Communication (Mintzberg's Interpersonal and Informational Roles)
- How would strong leadership, particularly in Mintzberg's liaison and disseminator roles, have changed the outcome of the incident?
 - What communication barriers existed between the rig workers and top-level management? How could they have been resolved?

Deepwater Horizon – Management Failures (Discussion Points) - 3

Failure in Controlling

1. Monitoring,
2. Evaluating, and
3. Correcting

- How could a stronger controlling function have prevented this disaster?
- What should have been done when the safety violations were first identified?
- Who was responsible for monitoring safety on the rig, and where did the breakdown occur?

Lessons Learned: Applying Management Theories to Improve OHS

- What can we learn from this?
 - Had BP & co followed the principles of effective **planning**, **leading**, and **controlling**, this disaster might have been prevented.
 - **Strategic planning** would have prioritised safety over speed
 - **Tactical planning** would have involved regular risk assessments and drills
 - Effective **leadership** would have created a culture where safety concerns were heard and acted upon
 - Strong **controlling** would have ensured that equipment was maintained



Discussion & Conclusion

- What are your thoughts?
 - Biggest failure in Management?
 - Planning?
 - Leadership?
 - Controlling?

Would things have turned out differently if the management had followed the principles we discussed today?"





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