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Function of social structure

The most common structure found within organizations, functional structure consists of units or departmental groups identified by specialty, such as engineering, development, marketing, finance, sales or human resources that are controlled from the top level of management. This differs from a divisional or product structure, which typically distinguishes its units by product type or geographical region and allows leaders within each unit more control. The functional structure was designed on the concept that high specialization and high control yields high efficiency. Though titles vary depending on the organization, each unit in a functional structure includes employees who are trained to perform specialized tasks. The top tier of a functional structure may be a company president. The second tier may be comprised of several vice presidents, each positioned in an area of expertise, such as vice president of manufacturing or vice president of sales and marketing. Below each vice president may be one or more directors with abilities in the same specialized area as that particular vice president. The directors might be followed by managers, and the managers followed by assistant managers, all possessing skills in the same area as those preceding them. To exercise control and operate with high levels of efficiency, the leaders of each unit within a functional structure need in-depth knowledge and experience in their specialized area. This type of structure is often found in environments where unit leaders possess a high level of technical knowledge in their given field, as well as in organizations where leaders serve as mentors to younger staff members. Competency in their field and solid management skills are key attributes in establishing and maintaining the tight, proficiency-oriented track of a functional structure. One of the major advantages of this type of infrastructure is that it develops specialists by promoting career advancement. Career paths are clearly defined, and because aptitude, talent and knowledge for specialized functions and particular roles are merged into sub-categories within the company, employees have the opportunity to learn from the expertise of their superiors. They also have the opportunity to work alongside colleagues who relate to their professional interests and abilities, thus making for a more productive and enjoyable work environment. Because each unit in a functional structure is focused on its own area of specialty, it might be lacking a broad view of the company if there isn't consistent integration of and communication between departments. Another disadvantage is that units may have limited flexibility in problem-solving, making changes or responding quickly to customer demands or needs since the final decision-making authority rests with the top level of management. This is in contrast to divisional or product structures where unit leaders are given more control within their unit's environment. The larger the organization, the more challenging it is for each specialized group to clarify how individual departments ultimately connect and contribute to the business succeeding as a unified company. For this reason, the functional structure is most successful in organizations that are small to medium in size and only deal with a few product types and services. Want a simple way to organize your small business? Try a functional organizational structure. A functional organizational structure is the most straightforward and common organizational structure for small- to medium-sized businesses. It works best for companies that have one or just a few product lines. Grouping employees by function or specialization is a simple organizational method to use when starting a business. A functional organizational structure groups employees together based on their functions or roles and areas of specialization. Typical departments are marketing, human resources, finance, engineering, sales and customer service. Departments in a functional structure are often called "silos" because they work independently from each other. The employees communicate exclusively with others in their group and report to a department head. Department heads communicate with their peers in other departments. Managers of departments report directly to top management or the CEO. This type of organizational structure works best in a stable environment with few changes where job tasks are standardized and continuous. Consider the functional organizational structure advantages and disadvantages. Specialization and efficiency: Employees achieve a high level of specialization. Grouping employees with similar skills increases efficiency and results in higher-quality work output. By executing standardized tasksrepeatedly, workers become more skilled and productive. Training and promotions: The path for growth is clear with well-defined objectives for receiving promotions. Since the tasks are usually standardized, training new employees is easier and quicker. Accountability: Employees have a clear chain of accountability by reporting to a single department head, not multiple supervisors from other divisions. : Silo effect on decision making: The silo effect leads to poor communication across functions since employees don't communicate and aren't accountable to each other. The structural bureaucracy slows down decision making. Everything must go up the chain to top management and then back down to the employees taking action on the decisions. Lack of cooperation: Because each department operates separately, employees can become territorial, excessively loyal to their own department and unwilling to cooperate with other departments. Growth: Functional models have difficulty adapting to the increased diversification that results from growth. Top management must assume the responsibility of coordinating and integrating the work of the various functional departments. . Sales: Eight salespeople are divided by geographically defined regions. Marketing: The marketing department has seven employees who are constantly monitoring consumer buying habits and competitors' promotional campaigns. Accounting and finance: Seven employees are in charge of sending invoices to customers and making payments for overhead expenses and supplies. One employee handles bank account reconciliations. Office: The administrative staff has 11 employees with an office manager, a receptionist, a customer service person and several people in charge of correspondence and filing. Production: Manufacturing uses 36 employees to handle the purchases of raw materials, production operations, warehousing and delivery of the products to customers. Research: The research staff has six employees working on improvements for Swifty Feet. Human resources: With 82 employees, the company needs seven employees in the human resources department to handle employment issues such as: recruiting hiring performance reviews benefits payroll insurance matters The organizational structure for Hasty Hare is considered "flat" because the seven department heads report directly to the president. This reporting chain of command will change as the company grows and adds more specialized departments. However, the president can only handle a certain number of people reporting to him without getting overloaded. At some point, the president will have to start relinquishing authority and delegating responsibility to other managers. When that happens, the organizational chart will become taller, with fewer department heads reporting to the president and other top management officers. A functional organizational structure is a logical starting point for most small businesses. It is simple to implement and easy to manage. Its limitations are the difficulty in adapting to growth and additions of new territories or product lines. A functional organizational chart will define the span of control and expose any limitations. Medically reviewed by Elaine K. Luo, M.D. — Written by Tim Newman on March 2, 2018StructureFunctionsRegenerationDiseasesHealthThe liver is the largest solid organ and the largest gland in the human body. It carries out over 500 essential tasks.Classed as part of the digestive system, the roles of the liver include detoxification, protein synthesis, and the production of chemicals that help digest food.This MNT Knowledge Center article will cover the main roles of the liver, how the liver regenerates, what happens when the liver does not function correctly, and how to keep the liver healthy.Weighing between 3.17 and 3.66 pounds (lb), or between 1.44 and 1.66 kilograms (kg), the liver is reddish-brown with a rubbery texture. It is situated above and to the left of the stomach and below the lungs.The skin is the only organ heavier and larger than the liver.The liver is roughly triangular and consists of two lobes: a larger right lobe and a smaller left lobe. The lobes are separated by the falciform ligament, a band of tissue that keeps it anchored to the diaphragm.A layer of fibrous tissue called Glisson's capsule covers the outside of the liver. This capsule is further covered by the peritoneum, a membrane that forms the lining of the abdominal cavity.This helps hold the liver in place and protects it from physical damage.Blood vesselsUnlike most organs, the liver has two major sources of blood. The portal vein brings in nutrient-rich blood from the digestive system, and the hepatic artery carries oxygenated blood from the heart.The blood vessels divide into small capillaries, with each ending in a lobule. Lobules are the functional units of the liver and consist of millions of cells called hepatocytes.Blood is removed from the liver through three hepatic veins.The liver is classed as a gland and associated with many functions. It is difficult to give a precise number, as the organ is still being explored, but it is thought that the liver carries out 500 distinct roles.The major functions of the liver include:BILE production: Bile helps the small intestine break down and absorb fats, cholesterol, and some vitamins. Bile consists of bile salts, cholesterol, bilirubin, electrolytes, and water.Absorbing and metabolizing bilirubin: Bilirubin is formed by the breakdown of hemoglobin. The iron released from hemoglobin is stored in the liver or bone marrow and used to make the next generation of blood cells.Supporting blood clots: Vitamin K is necessary for the creation of certain coagulants that help clot the blood. Bile is essential for vitamin K absorption and is created in the liver. If the liver does not produce enough bile, clotting factors cannot be produced.Fat metabolism: Bile breaks down fats and makes them easier to digest.Metabolizing carbohydrates: Carbohydrates are stored in the liver, where they are broken down into glucose and siphoned into the bloodstream to maintain normal glucose levels. They are stored as glycogen and released whenever a quick burst of energy is needed.Vitamin and mineral storage: The liver stores vitamins A, D, E, K, and B12. It keeps significant amounts of these vitamins stored. In some cases, several years' worth of vitamins is held as a backup. The liver stores iron from hemoglobin in the form of ferritin, ready to make new red blood cells. The liver also stores and releases copper.Helps metabolize proteins: Bile helps break down proteins for digestion.Filters the blood: The liver filters and removes compounds from the body, including hormones, such as estrogen and aldosterone, and compounds from outside the body, including alcohol and other drugs.Immunological function: The liver is part of the mononuclear phagocyte system. It contains high numbers of Kupffer cells that are involved in immune activity. These cells destroy any disease-causing agents that might enter the liver through the gut.Production of albumin: Albumin is the most common protein in blood serum. It transports fatty acids and steroid hormones to help maintain the correct pressure and prevent the leaking of blood vessels.Synthesis of angiotensinogen: This hormone raises blood pressure by narrowing the blood vessels when alerted by production of an enzyme called renin in the kidneys.Because of the importance of the liver and its functions, evolution has ensured that it can regrow rapidly as long as it is kept healthy. This ability is seen in all vertebrates from fish to humans.The liver is the only visceral organ that can regenerate.It can regenerate completely, as long as a minimum of 25 percent of the tissue remains. One of the most impressive aspects of this feat is that the liver can regrow to its previous size and ability without any loss of function during the growth process.In mice, if two-thirds of the liver is removed, the remaining liver tissue can regrow to its original size within 5 to 7 days. In humans, the process takes slightly longer, but regeneration can still occur in 8 to 15 days - an incredible achievement, given the size and complexity of the organ.Over the following few weeks, the new liver tissue becomes indistinguishable from the original tissue.This regeneration is helped by a number of compounds, including growth factors and cytokines. Some of the most important compounds in the process appear to be:hepatocyte growth factorinsulintransforming growth factor-alphaepidermal growth factorinterleukin-6norepinephrineShare on PinterestThere is a range of conditions that affect the liver.An organ as complex as the liver can experience a range of problems. A healthy liver functions very efficiently. However, in a diseased or malfunctioning liver, the consequences can be dangerous or even fatal.Examples of liver disease include:Fascioliasis: This is caused by the parasitic invasion of a parasitic worm known as a liver fluke, which can lie dormant in the liver for months or even years. Fascioliasis is considered a tropical disease.Cirrhosis: This sees scar tissue replace liver cells in a process known as fibrosis. This condition can be caused by a number of factors, including toxins, alcohol, and hepatitis. Eventually, fibrosis can lead to liver failure as the functionality of the liver cells is destroyed.Hepatitis: Hepatitis is the name given to a general infection of the liver, and viruses, toxins, or an autoimmune response can cause it. It is characterized by an inflamed liver. In many cases, the liver can heal itself, but liver failure can occur in severe cases.Alcoholic liver disease: Drinking too much alcohol over long periods of time can cause liver damage. It is the most common cause of cirrhosis in the world.Primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC): PSC is a serious inflammatory disease of the bile ducts that results in their destruction. There is currently no cure, and the cause is currently unknown, although the condition is thought to be autoimmune.Fatty liver disease: This usually occurs alongside obesity or alcohol abuse. In fatty liver disease, vacuoles of fat build up in the liver cells. If it is not caused by alcohol abuse, the condition is called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).It is usually caused by genetics, medications, or a diet high in fructose sugar. It is the most common liver disorder in developed countries and has been associated with insulin resistance. Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) is a condition that can develop if NAFLD gets worse. NASH is a known cause of liver cirrhosis.Gilbert's syndrome: This is a genetic disorder affecting 3 to 12 percent of the population. Bilirubin is not fully broken down. Mild jaundice can occur, but the disorder is harmless.Liver cancer: The most common types of liver cancer are hepatocellular carcinoma and cholangiocarcinoma. The leading causes are alcohol and hepatitis. It is the sixth most common form of cancer and the second most frequent cause of cancer death.Below are some recommendations to help keep your liver working as it should:Diet: As the liver is responsible for digesting fats, consuming too many can overwork the organ and disturb it from other tasks. Obesity is also linked to fatty liver disease.Moderate alcohol intake: Avoid consuming more than two drinks at a time. Drinking too much alcohol causes cirrhosis of the liver over time. When the liver breaks down alcohol, it produces toxic chemicals, such as acetaldehyde and free radicals. For serious damage to occur, it takes the equivalent of a liter of wine every day for 20 years in men. For women, the threshold is less than half of that.Avoiding illicit substances: When last surveyed in 2012, close to 24 million people in the United States had consumed an illicit, non-medical drug within the last month. These can overload the liver with toxins.Caution when mixing medications: Some prescription drugs and natural remedies can interact negatively when mixed. Mixing drugs with alcohol puts significant pressure on the liver. For example, combining alcohol and acetaminophen can lead to acute liver failure. Be sure to follow the instructions on any medications.Protection against airborne chemicals: When painting or using strong cleaning or gardening chemicals, the area should be well ventilated, or a mask should be worn. Airborne chemicals can cause liver damage because the liver has to process any toxins that enter the body.Travel and vaccinations: Vaccination is essential if you are traveling to an area in which hepatitis A or B might be a concern. Malaria grows and multiplies in the liver, and yellow fever can lead to liver failure. Both diseases can be prevented by oral medication and vaccination.Safe sex: There is no vaccination for hepatitis C, so caution is advised in regards to safe sex, tattoos, and piercings.Avoid exposure to blood and germs: Receive medical attention if you are exposed to the blood of another person. It is also important not to share personal items related to hygiene, such as toothbrushes, and to avoid dirty needles.Despite its ability to regenerate, the liver depends on being healthy to do so. The liver can mostly be protected through lifestyle choices and dietary measures. Last medically reviewed on March 2, 2018

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