HOLACRACY®

Self-Organization Maturity Map
for Holacracy®-powered organizations

	LEVEL 01 — MIGHT SABOTAGE PRACTICE	LEVEL 02 — STABILIZES PRACTICE	LEVEL 03 — ENHANCES PRACTICE	LEVEL 04 — EVOLVES PRACTICE
OPERATING SYSTEM				
POWER/AUTHORITY SYSTEM	Conventional command-and-control system in which power resides at the top; hierarchy of managers that often overrule subordinates (Holacracy not yet adopted)	Veto authority still resides in management, but culture strongly supports delegating authority and empowering subordinates to lead their roles and make mistakes	The organization has a transparent system in place for distributing, encoding, and evolving authorities to all roles (i.e. Holacracy Constitution has been adopted)	The distributed authority system is encoded in the company's formal bylaws (or equivalent), and the culture no longer recognizes that a "CEO" even exists
APPLICATIONS				
LEAD LINKS	Lead Links still act like mangers and leadership still looks like a hierarchical pyramid; power resides implicitly in the Lead Link role, and Lead Links act like managers	Lead Links understand the difference between a Lead Link and a manager, and avoid wielding power implicitly beyond their Lead Link authorities and actual roles	There are some constraints on Lead Link autocratic authority captured in governance; or authorities of Lead Link are sometimes delegated to other roles	The organization has processes that replace many Lead Link authorities with effective distributed, peer-to-peer methods, encoded transparently in governance
TACTICAL MEETINGS	Circle is mostly "going through the motions" of tactical meetings; other operational meetings look like they did before Holacracy, and ignore the circle's role structure	Tactical meetings occur regularly, move swiftly, stay tension-driven, and generate clear next-actions without over-design; they have replaced other standing meetings	Facilitators regularly reinforce role clarity in tactical meetings; the team talks in terms of roles, assigns actions to roles, and regularly consults the role structure for clarity on expectations and authority	Tactical meetings are used purely as a fall-back; most operational needs are met outside of meetings or in ad-hoc meetings called when needed; teams self-reinforce role clarity in all meetings, not just in tacticals
GOVERNANCE MEETINGS	Circle is mostly "going through the motions;" few agenda items; mostly just bringing clarity to existing functions; very dependent upon Facilitator to hold process	Agenda items regularly show up to change or add something, not just clarify existing stuff; circle members are more engaged in the process and not fighting it	Proposals often more advanced (e.g. multiple parts, using domains, etc.); Governance outside of meetings happens; team is fairly self-disciplined around process	Some proposals attempt significant re-engineering, even to the circle structure itself, and challenge deep assumptions about how the work should be structured
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	Predict and control approach (e.g. "waterfall" approach, Gantt charts, etc.); project manager tries to minimize deviance from plan	Project plans involve all stakeholders and account for the unknown (e.g. prototyping and testing cycles, contingency planning, parallel tracking, etc.)	Project owner holds clearly to project intent beyond specific detailed steps; multiple project management tools are used to coordinate action	Radically simplified project management based on transparent information and organic prioritization; complex project management tools rarely needed
JOB TITLES	Job titles simply translated into role titles; Lead Link roles interpreted as "better" or more prestigious, and often looked at as a full-time job	Job titles and roles co-exist as parallel systems; people hold many roles; job titles are often part of implicit shadow power structure; sense of "living in two worlds"	Job titles are rarely used or focused on internally (but may be externally), and people understand Lead Link as just another role, not a full-time job	Absence of job title hierarchy pulls people to find deeper sense of identity and growth path; flexible role descriptions encourage development and exploration
DECISION-MAKING & ACTION-TAKING	Role-fillers mostly ignore governance and defer to the perceived leader or former manager on key decisions and significant actions to take	Role-fillers reconcile conflict between their explicit authority and old cultural norms by seeking consensus or buy-in before making most significant decisions	Role-fillers experimenting with making decisions given authority granted by Constitution and governance, without seeking consensus or even much input	Role-fillers own their authority but also seek input appropriately and organically; creating tension is not seen as something to avoid; Individual Action is accepted
BUDGETS	Broadest-circle Lead Link holds most spending authority and approves/denies requests individually, or makes ad-hoc decisions to delegate budgets to sub-circles	A transparent process is used to assign budgets to roles, circles, or major projects, with Lead Links still holding veto authority on most spending decisions	The organization's process for assigning budgets relies on input from multiple parties, beyond Lead Links, and includes checks and balances to avoid any one person over-controlling by granting or withholding budget	Budget allocations or spending authorizations emerge from a complex market-based process, with built-in feedback mechanisms to automatically align spending with whatever best serves customers and purpose
INFORMATION FLOW	Information is released on a need-to-know basis; and/or information flow is scattershot with lots of email cc's and "all hands" meetings	Information sharing outside of meetings is done mostly through role-based emails; informal real-time information sharing occurs haphazardly, but isn't well supported	Informal information sharing is encouraged through social events, work spaces, and platforms that stimulate "collisions;" information is increasingly transparent	Most information available in real-time to everyone; most emails replaced by transparent collaboration tools
ROLE ALLOCATION	The organization uses Holacracy's default: Lead Links assign people to roles	Lead Links assign roles, but there are useful systems/processes to support people finding and shifting roles; a "role marketplace" is developing	Governance adds checks/balances on Lead Link power to assign/remove people into roles (e.g. constraints on removing from a role, or more transparent criteria required for choice of person to assign, etc.)	Lead Link role-assignment authority is replaced by an effective, distributed, peer-to-peer process to get the right roles to the right people, and to remove them when needed, all encoded in governance
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	System is focused on individual performance; formal reviews where Lead Links appraise performance, much like a manager, often with scores given; feedback cycle is still directly linked to compensation review cycle	Formal reviews may still exist but are de-emphasized outside of their role in compensation updates; frequent regular feedback from Lead Links is favored, energizing Lead Link accountability for coaching role-fillers	Ongoing peer-to-peer feedback is encouraged in the culture and supported by some process/system, just for the sake of learning, with no direct link to compensation; team-level reflection for self-improvement is common	Feedback flows easily, freely, and often; peer feedback often reframed as "customer" feedback (inside and outside); multiple feedback processes and channels are available to suit different individual preferences & needs
COMPENSATION	Lead Links have the authority to set comp implicitly, perhaps within some overall system or process; individual performance incentives are often present	Authority to set someone's comp resides explicitly with a role created via governance (even if a Lead Link also fills it), and accountabilities or processes exist to ensure feedback is gathered from others for comp decisions	Authority to set someone's comp rests with a group in one or more roles; comp process and authority is transparent in governance; no individual incentives exist (though team-based profit sharing or stock grants might)	Comp emerges from a peer-to-peer or market-based process of some sort, with no easily-identified group the "sets comp" for others (e.g. Zappos Uber-like rate system for shift work, HolacracyOne's badge-based comp app)
DISMISSAL	Lead Links generally have the authority to fire as if still managers, perhaps within some overall system or process defined by an HR function	Authority to fire resides explicitly with a role created via governance (even if a Lead Link also fills it), and accountabilities or processes exist to ensure feedback is gathered from others before a dismissal can happen	Authority to fire rests with a group of people acting in one or more roles (e.g. HolacracyOne's "Core/Tenured Partners"), defined transparently in governance; a clear process is published; strong checks and balances exist	Dismissals emerge as one possible result of a peer-to-peer or market-based fit assessment process, which also offers ample advance signaling of potential issues in many cases; in practice, dismissals are often rare
RECRUITMENT	Interviews by trained HR personnel; focus is on past experience and fit with job description	Hiring and recruitment process delegated to a role and encoded into governance; hiring process revolves around traditional interviews and resumes	Hiring triggered by a role after integrating needs of others; hiring seen as "adding team members" vs. "filling a job opening"; screening uses working interviews with future colleagues or other hands-on methods	Hiring triggers driven by a process or formula that integrates needs across org; unique, customized screening process is used and may keep evolving; feels like "courting business partners" vs. "hiring employees"
ONBOARDING & TRAINING	No onboarding or training on self-organization or Holacracy	Onboarding process includes orientation and/or training on functioning in a self-organizing system (Holacracy); additional training and resources are regularly available for all partners	Self-selected mentor helps develop tension-processing knowledge/skills; lasts well beyond initial onboarding; internal Holacracy coaches readily available and used	The organization has its own internal training program to certify Holacracy practitioners, facilitators, and coaches
FOCUS ON PURPOSE	Purpose is assumed to be self-preservation and/or profit; explicit purpose statements non-existent or not treated seriously	Organization's Purpose is explicit, clear, and serves as its ultimate goal in practice; many circle and role-level purposes are still undefined though, and usually don't get much attention or evolution when they do exist	Role-level purposes are used to make decisions and drive actions; people feel tension when a role's purpose is undefined or out of date; company metrics reflect many aspects of purpose expression, not just financial	Organization's purpose is clearly differentiated from the purpose of its key people and founders; purpose is a major focus of the culture; alignment with purpose is clearly happening at all levels of scale, continually