

Accountability

An ongoing activity expected of a Role. Accountabilities can only be added to roles or circles via the governance process. They're captured as full sentences that begin with an -ing verb. For example, a "Website Manager" Role might have an accountability for "Building and maintaining the company's website."

Circle

A group of Roles that all contribute to the same Purpose. Every Circle has "core roles" (e.g. Facilitator, Secretary, Lead Link, and Rep Link) as well as other Roles doing the work. A Circle is treated like a Role with the additional authority to break itself down into sub-Roles.

Constitution

The documents that defines the fundamental rules, processes, and other constructs of the Holacracy system for organizational governance and operations. Within an organization running Holacracy, the Constitution is the formal power-holder in the organization rather than a specific person (e.g. CEO, President, etc.).

Cross Link

A Role within a Circle used to represent the interests and Tensions of an external Circle or organization. When a Circle is created within another Circle, a Rep Link (as opposed to a Cross Link) will be used to represent the interests of the sub-Circle at the Super-Circle.

Domain

Similar to a property right, a Domain centralizes control of a resource to a specific Role. For example, a "Social Media" Role might own the Domain of "corporate Twitter account." A Role may impact its own Domain to achieve its Purpose, but may not impact another's Domain unless given permission.

Election

An integrative process for selecting people to fill the Facilitator Role, Secretary Role, and Rep Link Role. Elections follow the Integrative Election Process that includes nominations and the processing of Proposals and Objections.

Facilitator

An elected Role with the purpose of facilitating the Circle's Governance and Tactical meetings in accordance with the rules of the Constitution. The Facilitator's Purpose and Accountabilities are listed in the Constitution's Appendix. Also, the Lead Link of a Circle is not eligible to be elected Facilitator for that Circle.

Individual Action

An action taken outside the current Purpose or Accountabilities of a Role. The decision to take Individual Action should be made consciously having considered the current Governance, and involves certain duties as a follow up to avoid repeating the same Individual Action.

Governance

An explicit, written set of rules and expectations including the Circles, Roles, Purposes, Accountabilities, Domains, and Policies of the organization. The organization's Governance changes in response to the demands of the environment through the processing of Circle member's Tensions during Governance Meetings.

Governance Meeting

A recurring meeting to process Tensions related to the Circle's Governance by making Proposals and raising Objections. Changes can be made to the Circle's Governance by creating new or making changes to existing Roles, Policies, and Elections. Governance Meetings follow the process outlined in Constitution section 3.3.

Lead Link

A Role that holds the Purpose of the overall Circle. The Lead Link is responsible for assigning people to Roles that have been created through Governance Meetings. The Lead Link also allocates resources and defines Priorities, Strategies, and Metrics within the Circle.

Metrics

Data chosen by the Circle's Lead Link to provide visibility into the work of the Circle. For example, a Metric for a "Social Media" Role might be "Number of Twitter followers." It is up to the Lead Link of the Circle to define and assign relevant metrics to the Roles within that Circle.

Next Action

A concrete action that could be taken immediately towards the completion of a Project. All Circle members are required to capture and track Next Actions for their Roles in a tangible form and to regularly review and update them.

Objection

An Objection is a reason why a Governance Proposal will cause harm or move the Circle backward. A Circle member raises an Objection during a Governance Meeting when that member experiences a Tension in response to the Proposal.

Policy

A Policy allows or limits others from impacting a Domain. For example, if a “Social Media” Role owns the Domain of “corporate Twitter account” then a Policy might be enacted to allow an “Events Promotion” Role to make posts to Twitter (e.g. “Events Promotion has permission to post events-related content to the corporate Twitter account”).

Project

A Project is a specific outcome that requires multiple and/or sequential actions to complete. Projects are phrased in the past tense as in, “Budget report completed.” All Circle members are required to capture and track Projects for their Roles in a tangible form and to regularly review and update them.

Proposal

A recommended change to the Circle’s Governance presented by a Circle member during a Governance Meeting. A Proposal is based on the proposer’s felt Tension and may involve as many parts as necessary to resolve that Tension.

Purpose

Clarifies the identity and intention of a Role or Circle. The Purpose orients the action of a Role even absent any other explicit Accountabilities, Policies, Strategies, Priorities, or resources.

Rep Link

An elected Role used to represent the interests of a sub-Circle to its super-Circle. Also note that the Lead Link of a Circle may not serve as the Rep Link of that Circle. Rep Links allow Tensions from the sub-Circle to be processed by the super-Circle when the issue seems to extend beyond the sub-Circle’s current authority.

Role

An organizational entity used to define certain functions of the organization. The definition of a Role includes a Purpose to express, Domain(s) to control, and Accountabilities to perform. The only way for a Role to be created, revised, or destroyed is through the Circle’s Governance process.

Secretary

An elected Role with the Purpose of aligning Circle Governance and operations with the Constitution through maintaining Circle records, scheduling meetings, and interpreting Governance upon request. The Secretary works actively and collaboratively with the Facilitator during Governance and Tactical Meetings.

Strategy

An easy-to-remember rule used to guide Circle member’s decisions. A Strategy defines one potentially valuable activity, emphasis, or goal over another. The Lead Link is accountable for defining the Strategies of the Circle and may use whatever process he/she feels is appropriate for gathering input from other Circle members.

Tactical Meeting

A recurring meeting for Circle members to surface operational data, updates, and triage Tensions into Projects and Next Actions. Agenda items are created during the meeting while the Facilitator works to get through all items in the allotted time. Tactical Meetings follow the process outlined in Constitution section 4.2.

Tension

A person’s felt sense that there is a gap between the current reality and a potential future. The Circle processes member’s Tensions during its Governance and Tactical meetings. This approach ensures that Governance and operational changes are driven by real experience rather than theory.