



Organizational Reconnaissance

Map the organization behind the org chart: authority, influence, access, information, opportunity, and the unwritten rules.

LEADERSHIP FROM THE HELM

Tools Today. A Stronger Tomorrow.

A practical workbook for professionals and emerging leaders who want to navigate organizations with intention, build meaningful influence, and lead authentically.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

- 1 Type directly into the fillable fields or print and write by hand.
- 2 Answer for the role and organization you actually have - not the one you wish you had.
- 3 Revisit the workbook periodically. Leadership, careers, and organizational terrain change.



Start With the Official Map

Know what the organization says before you study what it actually does.

RECONNAISSANCE MINDSET

Do not confuse the official organization with the operating organization. Your job is to learn how decisions, information, opportunity, credit, and consequences actually move.

What is the stated mission or purpose?

What are the top three stated priorities right now?

What values and behaviors does leadership say it rewards?

Who formally controls approval, money, assignments, ratings, staffing, and access?

What current pressures, risks, or pain points shape leadership behavior?



Read the Culture

Watch patterns before you label them.

UNWRITTEN RULES

1. Who gets the high-visibility assignments - and why?

2. Who can get an unscheduled conversation with senior leadership?

3. Which meetings actually make decisions, and which only announce them?

4. Whose mistakes are treated as learning and whose become a reputation?

5. What communication style gets traction here?

6. What behavior earns the label "team player"?

7. What gets rewarded even when it conflicts with stated values?

8. What topics are technically discussable but culturally dangerous?



Map the Players

Formal authority tells you who can decide. Informal influence tells you who shapes the decision.

Formal Authority

Who can approve, direct, rate, fund, hire, assign, or stop?

Informal Influencers

Who shapes opinions before decisions are made?

Gatekeepers

Who controls access, timing, information, calendars, or process?

Sponsors + Allies

Who will advocate, introduce, defend, or create opportunity?

Connectors

Who knows everyone and sees information early?

Blockers / Risks

Who or what can quietly stall the objective?

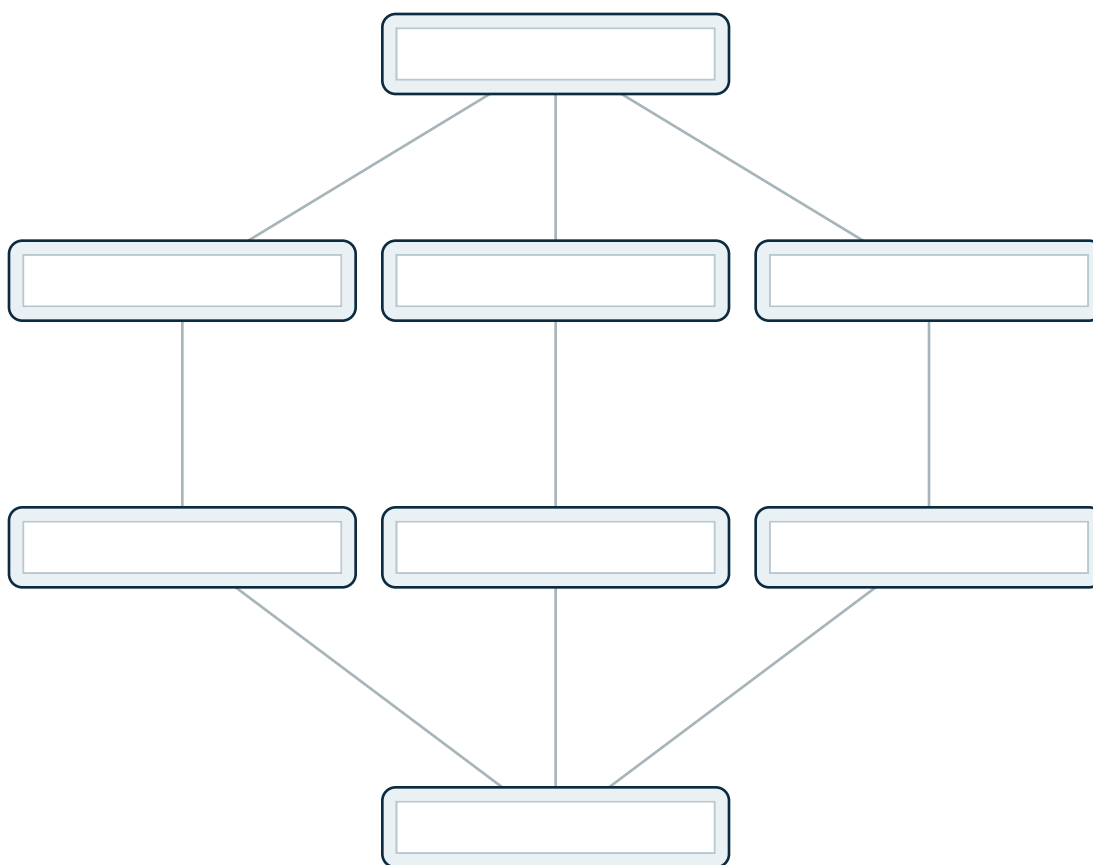


Sketch the Shadow Org Chart

Draw the flow of influence, not just the chain of command.

HOW TO BUILD IT

Place the formal leader at the top. Add the people who actually shape options, control access, carry information, translate the boss, or build coalitions. Use arrows to show who influences whom. Then note where you sit in the network.



Tip: Use titles if names are sensitive. The value is in seeing the pattern.



Validate the Inside Game

Turn impressions into evidence before you act on them.

DEEP RECON QUESTIONS

1. Who does the boss consult privately before a major decision?

2. Who can kill an initiative without appearing in the approval chain?

3. Who gets information before official channels distribute it?

4. Which relationships matter more than job titles?

5. Who has enough institutional capital to disagree openly?

6. Who gets opportunities that are not broadly advertised?

7. Who gets credit for team wins and who gets blamed for failures?

8. If one strategic idea must succeed, whose buy-in is needed before the meeting?



Your Reconnaissance Brief

Convert observation into a navigation plan.

What I know with reasonable confidence:

What I still need to validate:

Three relationships I need to build or strengthen:

The biggest organizational risk to my goals:

The unwritten rule I most need to respect or deliberately challenge:

My next three moves:

Continue the Journey

Organizational reconnaissance is not manipulation. It is situational awareness: understanding how the system actually operates so you can make better decisions, build trust, avoid preventable mistakes, and know when the terrain itself is the problem.

Performance gets you noticed. Strategy moves you forward.