Pair Management and Virtual Hierarchies

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Executive Summary

Hierarchies are essential in an organization for delegation of work among the employees and its normal functioning. The existing organizational hierarchies are good at division of work and keeping the roles of the employees clearly defined but they suffer from problems like:

- Single point of failure (absence of an employee might significantly disrupt the information or workflow taking place in a hierarchy).
- Inability to respond to a newly emerged situation in the absence of the concerned employee.

This paper introduces a new concept called pair management which aims to improve the workflow of an organizational hierarchy without disturbing its original structure. Pairing helps in overcoming the shortcomings of a normal hierarchy by increasing the flexibility and robustness of the hierarchical structure. A pair consists of two employees or managers who cooperate with each other in their work. Pairing involves sharing of information and cooperation between the two partners.

Pairing leads to the formation of virtual hierarchies which act as a cushion to absorb the disturbances arising in the organizational hierarchy. The positive implications of pairing are:

- Improved work and information flow.
- Handling the critical situations better.
- Enrichment of the job of the managers.

However, pairing requires clear role definitions, good coordination, and clear communication protocols, absence of which might lead to: a) Coupling; b) Conflicts; c) Dissolution of the pair.

To avoid these problems, we can choose an optimum degree of pairing and define the roles and communication protocols accordingly. The degree of pairing depends upon:

- Personal characteristics of the employees.
- Managerial styles of the employees.
- Work schedules of the employees.
- Organizational requirements.

If the degree of pairing is very high, it might lead to coupling or conflicts. On the other hand, less degree of pairing might lead to underutilization of the pair. Deciding upon the degree of pairing involves identifying and analysing two kinds of characteristics of the employees forming the pair. These are: a) S-Factors, i.e., the factors which need to be similar in both the employees; b) D-Factors, i.e., the factors which should be dissimilar.

We need to achieve a balance such that the efficiency of the pair is high and, at the same time, the chances of conflicts are minimum. Low degrees of pairing are safer as they ensure clear role definitions and hence less chances of conflicts.

An analysis of working schedules of four managers is presented in this paper to find out how pairing can help them in improving their work efficiency and managing their work schedules better. This analysis reveals that:

- Feasibility of pairing and its success also depends on work schedules of the employees.
- The benefits of pairing can be different for different employees.

Implementation of this concept involves choosing a relevant degree of pairing, defining the roles and communication protocols, observing the effectiveness of the process, and redefining the degree of pairing based upon the inputs from the feedback. This cycle repeats to ensure smooth functioning of the pair. The privilege of varying the degree of pairing makes it very flexible and adds to the feasibility of the concept.

The success of pairing depends on the professionalism shown by the employees and clear role definitions. An organization might start using this concept with safer degrees of pairing and later on move to higher degrees. The concepts and views expressed in this paper can be further analysed to suit the needs of an organization.
Flattened organizational structures as discussed by Mazda (1999) provide an efficient way of managing the employees. Nevertheless, hierarchies do exist in organizations and prove to be valuable for delegation of work and effective functioning. In a hierarchical set-up, there are employees who are managed by a senior employee who, in turn, might be managed by another senior employee (Figure 1). This type of a hierarchy is well structured with all the responsibilities clearly divided among all the nodes. But, this type of a structure comes at the cost of flexibility. The problem arises when one of the following conditions holds true:

- An important employee leaves the job.
- The employee is absent for some time due to health problems or any other personal problems.
- The employee is out on some official work.
- A situation demanding immediate attention emerges while the employee is busy with another official appointment.

The above-mentioned situations may cause significant loss to the organization in the following ways:

- Any situation requiring immediate attention, if unattended, may cause significant loss in terms of money and reputation.
- Delay in day-to-day transactions and tasks may cause further delay in other processes affecting the functioning of the organization.
- Temporary absence of an employee may lead to loss of important clients and cause inconvenience to customers and suppliers.
- If an employee at the managerial level leaves his/her job, it might be difficult to find a replacement immediately, and, even if it is done, it would take time for the new manager to become fully functional.

Organizations expect employees to have inter-disciplinary knowledge as well as knowledge about the functioning of other departments as it would help them to visualize the overall effect of their decisions on the organization. Further, they would feel that they belong to the organization as a whole rather than to a department. Mastenbroek (1987) finds that "systematic horizontal job rotation for managers" can be helpful in balancing “stimulation of autonomy with closer interdependency.”

It is in this context that this paper discusses a new concept called ‘pair management’ which aims to improve the workflow in the organizational hierarchies without disturbing their original structure.

**PAIR MANAGEMENT**

‘Having one extra’ is a concept which we practice in our daily life. For example, we normally keep a copy of our important files on a computer as it prevents loss of files in case of a system failure or accidental deletion of files. To cite another example, while driving a vehicle for long distances, we prefer to keep an extra tyre, so that, in case...

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**Figure 1: Traditional Hierarchies**

![Diagram of Traditional Hierarchies]

*Note: Shaded circles denote the nodes.*
of a tyre damage, it can be replaced. Suppose the probability, that during a journey, one of the tyres fails is 0.1 and assuming there is no substitute tyre, the probability of failure of the vehicle would be 0.1, because the failure of one tyre is enough to bring the system down. But, if we have a substitute tyre, the chances of failure of the system would be 0.1*0.1, i.e 0.01 (as two tyres need to fail to bring down the system).

However, this concept cannot be directly applied in an organization, as keeping an extra employee for every position is certainly not practical and would lead to underutilization of human resources. We, therefore, use a similar concept, without requiring a separate substitute, but still having an alternative, to solve the problems mentioned above.

Figure 1 shows an organization having a traditional hierarchical structure. Let us assume that there are $n$ nodes at a given level (for example, in Figure 1, the nodes are six at level 1) with probability of failure of a node to be $p$ (for simplicity, we take the probability to be the same for all the nodes and this can be extended to dissimilar probabilities). Hence, the probability of system to malfunction is $1-(1-p)^n = 1-q^n$, where $q = 1-p$. $q$ is the probability of the node to work properly. For the system to work efficiently, all nodes should work without failure. The probability of the system to work properly is $q^n$. Hence, $1-q^n$ gives us the probability of malfunctioning of the system.

We may apply the pair concept to solve this problem. A pair consists of two employees or managers of similar or related fields (may not be the same) who have a good understanding between them. Both the individuals work at their respective positions as in the case of traditional hierarchies. In addition, the pair exhibits the following set of characteristics:

- **Sharing of responsibility**: The pair would be responsible for both positive and negative matters arising in any of the two departments or areas of work. But, this sharing of responsibility is subjected to the degree of pairing as discussed in later sections.

- **Sharing of information**: Both the individuals would share the information related to functioning of their departments or their own work periodically. However, the kind and depth of the information being shared may vary depending upon the level of pairing and coordination expected from both the partners.

- **Tackling emergencies**: If a situation requiring imme-

diate attention arises in the absence of one of the managers, the second person should temporarily handle this situation. This reduces the chances of malfunctioning of any of the two departments.

- **Mutual adjustment**: The pair would have certain amount of autonomy in scheduling the appointments and tasks by mutual adjustments.

Thus, the pair concept helps the employees to manage their official work and personal work better and make them loyal to the organization. Friedman, Christensen and DeGroot (1998) support the idea of helping employees to manage their personal and professional life.

Figure 2 shows the emerging hierarchy after pairing of the managers. The number of nodes depicted by small shaded circles is now halved as compared to Figure 1. With the decrease in the number of nodes, the chances of failure have also decreased. Anode, as depicted in Figure 2, represents a point of reference to the pair consisting of two sub-nodes representing the two managers. It encapsulates both the sub-nodes to a desired degree. For the system to malfunction, both the sub-nodes comprising the node have to fail. However, if only one sub-node fails, the other one takes the responsibility and hence the system does not malfunction. The probability of failure of a sub-node is $p$. Hence the probability of failure of a node is $p^2$, because both the sub-nodes have to fail to bring the node down. Hence, at level one, we can calculate the probability of the system to malfunction in the following way. The probability of failure of a node is $p^2$. Hence, the probability for this node to work properly is $1-p^2$. The probability of the system to work properly is $1-(1-p)^{n/2}$, here $1-p^2$ can be denoted by $q'$, where $q'$ is the probability of the node to work properly.

The probability of the system to malfunction becomes $1-(1-p^2)^{n/2} = 1-(q')^{n/2}$, where $n$ is even. We can define a ratio $C$ as the improvement achieved by applying the pairing concept as: $C = \frac{1-(q')^{n/2}}{1-q^n}$. $C$ defines the cushion provided by the formation of virtual hierarchies, which are formed as a result of pairing. Virtual hierarchy is a temporary arrangement in the organizational hierarchy which becomes alive in the absence of a manager and becomes dormant when the normal state is restored. For example, the probabilities of the system to malfunction in Figures 1 and 2 at level one are respectively $1-q^n$ and $1-(q')^2$, where $q = 1-p$, and $q' = 1-p^2$. Table 1 shows the values of $C$ for different values of $n$ and $p$. $n$ denotes the number of nodes in case of a traditional hierarchy or the number of sub-nodes in a hierarchy when we apply pair-
The surface below the $C$ value as 1 is a useful range of applying the pair concept. We can see that lesser the number of employees or probability of failure, the more useful is pairing. Table 1 shows the improvement achieved by pairing for a given number of employees at a particular level. Hence, at every level, there would be an improvement based on the number of employees existing at a particular level. There are a few points which should be considered while analyzing the chart shown in Figure 3.

- The probability of failure is assumed to be constant but it may differ from time to time.
- Pairing should be applied to like-minded employees.

Booch (2000) explains ‘coupling’ and ‘cohesion,’ with relation to ‘objects.’ In the present context, ‘coupling’ refers to the dependence of an employee on another employee and ‘cohesion’ means employees working together in synergy to achieve common goals. Pairing should lead to ‘cohesion’ and not ‘coupling’ and this can be taken care of by defining the roles of both the managers clearly and adjusting pairing to a right degree, as per the number of employees.

### Table 1: $C$ Values for Different Values of $p$ and $n$

| $n$   | $P=0.1$ | $P=0.2$ | $P=0.3$ | $P=0.4$ | $P=0.5$ | $P=0.6$ | $P=0.7$ | $P=0.8$ | $P=0.9$ | $P=1.0$
|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------
| 2     | 0.053   | 0.11    | 0.18    | 0.25    | 0.33    | 0.43    | 0.54    | 0.67    | 0.82    | 1.00    
| 4     | 0.058   | 0.13    | 0.23    | 0.34    | 0.47    | 0.61    | 0.75    | 0.87    | 0.96    | 1.00    
| 8     | 0.069   | 0.18    | 0.33    | 0.51    | 0.69    | 0.83    | 0.93    | 0.98    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 16    | 0.095   | 0.29    | 0.53    | 0.75    | 0.90    | 0.97    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 32    | 0.150   | 0.48    | 0.78    | 0.94    | 0.99    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 64    | 0.280   | 0.73    | 0.95    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 128   | 0.470   | 0.93    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 256   | 0.720   | 0.99    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 512   | 0.920   | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 1024  | 0.990   | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    
| 2048  | 1.000   | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    | 1.00    

Figure 3 graphically represents the values of $C$. The probability of failure is assumed to be the same for all employees. We have done it for simplification of calculations which can be scaled to support different probabilities. In that case, the cushion factor $C$ would become:

$$1-(1-p_{i1}p_{i2})(1-p_{i3}p_{i4})...((1-p_{mi}p_{m2})/(1-q_{1}q_{2}q_{3}...q_{n}))$$

where, $m=n/2$, $p_{i1}$ and $p_{i2}$ are the probabilities of failure of the two sub-nodes of the node $i$ (in case of a hierarchy consisting of pairs), $i$ ranges from 0 to $n/2$ and $q_{j}$ is the probability of failure of node $j$ in case of a normal hierarchy, $j$ ranges from 0 to $n$. The factor is defined for one particular level.

- The probability of failure is assumed to be constant but it may differ from time to time.
- Pairing should be applied to like-minded employees.

Booch (2000) explains ‘coupling’ and ‘cohesion,’ with relation to ‘objects.’ In the present context, ‘coupling’ refers to the dependence of an employee on another employee and ‘cohesion’ means employees working together in synergy to achieve common goals. Pairing should lead to ‘cohesion’ and not ‘coupling’ and this can be taken care of by defining the roles of both the managers clearly and adjusting pairing to a right degree, as per the number of employees.
discussed in later sections. Mastenbroek (1987) favours “a culture of both individual prominence and strong ties” which means achieving high ‘cohesion’ with least ‘coupling.’

Apart from the cushion effect, there are many advantages of pairing which are as follows:

- A pair incorporates the qualities of a ‘self organizing group’ (Mazda, 1999). This is because of the fact that both partners in a pair have a certain amount of autonomy to manage their work and make their own decisions based on mutual understanding.
- Pairing provides ease of functioning to the employees as they can adjust their time schedules better. However, this would depend upon the degree of pairing between the two as explained in later sections.
- Pairing facilitates objective problem-solving as a problem can be looked at from two different perspectives.

Both the managers are generalized in their functioning to some degree and hence the absence of one of them would not necessarily mean failure of that particular node. It also means higher ‘cohesion’ as both the individuals now work together and have common goals, viz., achieving higher efficiency in work as well as getting recognition and rewards for the pair as a whole.

Sharing of information between managers regarding functioning of the departments is an integral part of pairing. Mastenbroek (1987) finds “a systematic exchange and comparison of results of units” as an important way of “strengthening the organization.”

The pairing concept, which has been discussed so far, is horizontal pairing comprising employees from the same level. In such a situation, the important issue is how to minimize the pressure on a person when his/her partner is absent or if he/she does not have a horizontal partner either due to odd number of nodes or due to the fact that the functioning of his/her department is very different from that of others. In such cases, we can apply vertical pairing. This is, in fact, already in use and involves transferring responsibilities to one of the subordinates.

VIRTUAL HIERARCHIES

Formation of virtual hierarchies is an implication of pair management. As already mentioned, virtual hierarchy refers to a temporary arrangement in the organizational hierarchy, which becomes alive in the absence of a manager and becomes dormant or hidden when the normal state is restored. Figure 4(a) describes the normal state of the hierarchy whereas Figures 4(b) and Figure 4(c) show the two possible virtual hierarchies in the absence of one of the two managers. As we can see, both the configurations cannot be alive at the same time. When the state of the system deviates from the normal state, these work as a cushion thus absorbing the disturbances (absence of a manager or a critical situation).

MAKING PAIRS

Pairing should be done carefully so as to achieve maximum efficiency, and at the same time, taking care of the concerns of the employees. It should be done between two employees who have maximum compatibility to work
together. There can be many factors on the basis of which compatibility among various employees may be established. There can be two types of factors, S-factors (factors, which need to be similar) between both the employees, for example, the fields in which both the employees are working and D-factors (factors, which need to be dissimilar), for example, time instants at which they are absent. However, it depends on the needs of the situation whether a factor should be considered as S-factor or D-factor. While it may be desirable to have both the partners from similar fields, in some situations, it may not be possible. Similarly, it may be desirable to pair up an inexperienced, young manager with a very experienced manager to make him more effective in the organization. Figure 5 describes the two types of factors.

Absence may be described as temporary or permanent unavailability of an employee for a freshly emerged situation due to a personal reason or an official work. In other words, if a manager can handle a newly emerged situation, he/she can be described as present, otherwise, he/she should be considered absent with respect to the newly emerged situation. For example, if a situation requiring an immediate attention emerges while the employee is busy in a meeting, he/she should be considered absent with respect to this situation. The efficiency of pairing depends on mutual adjustments to a considerable extent.

**Achieving the Right Balance**

Pairing requires a high degree of coordination and cooperation from both the partners. Mastenbroek (1987) defines the ‘tension balances’ among units in an organization and describes the trade-off between ‘combined strength’ and ‘autonomy.’ Pairing may also lead to similar ‘tension balances’ among the partners. In the light of the above, a model is proposed which can be used to make a trade-off between positive and negative implications of pairing (Figure 6). If both the partners work in synergy, productivity and efficiency of both would increase due to teamwork. However, to achieve this, if we shift the slider more towards the left, this may lead to ‘coupling,’ which means too much functional dependence upon one another. This may arise due to overlapping or very closely related roles. This may also lead to
conflicts. Moreover, the modularity, which in this context implies the independent functioning of a manager without depending much on the other partner, would be negatively affected. But, if we shift the slider to the extreme right to achieve modularity, the pair would no longer exist. This necessitates a good balance while defining the roles and responsibilities of both the partners. The position of the slider may vary depending upon the personal characteristics of the managers and the degree of pairing desired.

The position of the slider can be estimated by preparing an analysis chart based upon the periodic analysis of two managers mentioning their personal characteristics along with weights associated with them, and then comparing them. As given in Figure 5, the S-factors should be similar for both the managers and the D-factors should

Figure 5: S-and D-Factors

![Diagram of S-and D-Factors]

Note: Figure shows some of the possible S-and D-factors.

Figure 6: Trade-offs Involved in Pairing

![Diagram of Trade-offs Involved in Pairing]
be dissimilar. Strong S-factors and D-factors may have higher weights as compared to others. But, the characteristics to be compared and the associated relative weights depend upon goals expected, kind of work the managers do, and the working culture of the organization. A hypothetical case is described in Box 1.

**Defining the Roles**

Pairing two managers requires defining the roles and demarcating the boundaries of their functioning clearly. This depends, to a large extent, on the personal characteristics of the managers. Ellis and Fisher (1994) define the role of a member with respect to the group as “a set of communicative behaviours performed by an individual and that it involves the behaviours performed by one member in light of the expectations that other members hold toward those behaviours.” While defining the roles of the partners, it becomes necessary to analyse the managerial styles as well as the characteristics of the managers. McGregor (1960) defined Theory X and Theory Y as two styles of management. A manager following Theory X style of management may dictate or try to force the tasks on the employees and this can have a negative effect on the work culture, whereas, a manager following Theory Y may be more successful in motivating his/her employees by respecting their freedom and motivating them to achieve goals. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001) compare these two styles and find Theory Y style of management to be more efficient but warn that it may not be true in all situations.

These styles of management come under S-factors because, the dissimilar managerial styles may lead to a communication gap between the two as both of them work differently and may not be able to adjust with each other. Moreover, they may form antithetical opinions while solving a particular problem. But, personal characteristics may come under D-factors. Glass (1977) explained the differences between ‘Type A’ and ‘Type B’ behaviour patterns. Baron and Byrne (1981) explain Type A people as extremely competitive, aggressive, and being always in a hurry and Type B people as those who are relaxed and easy going. It would be desirable to group a manager of Type A with a manager of Type B as two Type A managers may get hostile at times and may try to pull each other down to get ahead of the other partner. Similarly, two Type B managers may prefer to take lesser responsibilities and the objective of pairing may be defeated. However, pairing Type A manager with Type B manager may help both of them to learn from each other and, at times, compensate for each other’s shortcomings. Apart from increasing the efficiency of both the managers, chances of conflicts in this case would also be less. Hence, the slider

### Box 1: A Hypothetical Example Showing How to Decide the Position of the Slider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Weight*</th>
<th>Manager A</th>
<th>Manager B</th>
<th>Compatibility</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial style</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Near to Theory X¹</td>
<td>Between Theory X¹ and Theory Y¹</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of expertise</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>Webservers, Application</td>
<td>Webervers, Data warehousing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, interests</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>Tennis, Bird watching</td>
<td>Cricket, Basketball</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality type</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Between type A² and B²</td>
<td>Close to type A²</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>32.50</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The weights are dependent upon the goals desired, type of work done by the managers, and the work culture of an organization. These weights might be heuristically determined based upon priorities as shown above.

¹ Theory X and Theory Y for management are defined by McGregor (1960).
² Glass (1977) compares and describes differences between Type A and Type B kind of people.

In the table given above, the maximum possible compatibility is 32.50 whereas the compatibility of the managers is 20. Hence, the position of the slider is (20/32.50) = 0.62 of the distance from the right of the slider as shown in Figure 6. The position of the slider will help in defining the protocols for coordination and communication between the partners.

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as shown in Figure 6 may be shifted more towards left as this implies that managers’ roles can be defined more closely and they can share responsibilities and tasks more closely, and even negotiate scheduling their daily activities. But, it is necessary to monitor that Type A manager does not try to overshadow Type B manager. Although it would be better to pair up two individuals having different personality types, people of similar characteristics may also be grouped together. However, people having conflicting characteristics should not be paired together, and if they are, the slider has to be kept more towards the right. In this case, the interaction between the two would be formal, task-oriented, and limited to sharing the information regarding functioning of each other’s departments periodically and managing the crisis situations together. In fact, managers with moderate characteristics would not find much difficulty in getting paired up but those with high motivation for power may not pair well as they might develop mutual competition and conflicts. In such cases, the slider in Figure 6 should be kept towards the right to increase modularity in functioning thereby demarcating the roles clearly to minimize conflicts. The position of the slider may also depend upon the geographical location of the managers. If they are located in different cities, then the slider has to be kept more towards the right.

**Overlapping of the Roles**

In pairing, some roles might overlap. For instance, handling a small task to avoid delay in the absence of a manager (for example, ordering new office equipment). But, it is necessary for the person handling the task to give proper information about the transactions to the partner who has been absent. In a normal scenario, there may be two circumstances when the partner should handle the newly emerged situation: firstly, when the manager is absent and secondly, if he/she has explicitly requested the partner to do so or they have agreed upon division of some tasks.

Overlapping depends mainly upon the degree of pairing intended. In case of small degree of pairing, overlapping may be very less. But, uncontrolled overlapping of the roles might lead to conflicts and, hence, the formal processes as defined above should be carefully implemented to avoid conflicts.

**Who Defines the Roles?**

It is the job of the senior management to analyse and decide upon the position of the slider (Figure 6) while defining the roles for the pair. The senior management to whom the pair reports in agreement with both the individuals forming the pair defines the formal roles for a pair. For example, if one of the partners faces a critical problem, it is essential for him/her to inform the partner and it is the responsibility of the partner to help him/her. The pair should also be given enough freedom to make mutual adjustments and schedule their tasks. Well-defined protocols are necessary to ensure regular communication and periodic meetings and exchange of reports regarding the functioning of their departments might help in keeping both the partners well informed.

**STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Post and Anderson (1998) explain the ‘feedback loop’ wherein processes are defined to achieve certain goals and are evaluated to provide feedback to make modifications in the system. Implementation of pair management also requires defining goals and processes clearly and consistently analysing the performance of the pair. The following model defines the process of implementing pair management (Figure 7).

**Step 1: Defining the Goals for the Pair**

The following examples may be defined as goals for a particular pair:
- Reducing the number of suspended/pending tasks.
- Increasing the quality of service/product.
- Increasing the number of clients to be handled.

**Step 2: Defining the Processes for Implementation**

The processes for implementation consist of the following:
- Deciding the position of the slider as defined in Figure 6 depending upon the personal characteristics (attitude, style of management, etc.) of the managers. It also depends upon the consent of the individuals forming the pair. The next two points are dependent upon the position of the slider as discussed.
- Defining communication protocols, for example,
exchange of monthly reports about functioning of the departments and periodic meetings.

• Defining roles, for example, helping each other if one of the partners is facing a crisis.

**Step 3: Evaluating the Pair’s Performance**

Evaluation consists of the following aspects:

• Evaluating whether the process is working effectively by measuring:
  ➢ Number of meetings conducted by the managers together and analysis of the outcomes of the meetings.
  ➢ Number of cases solved together.
  ➢ Number of cases temporarily handled by an individual on behalf of the other partner.

• Finding out whether there has been any conflict between the managers. They can be asked periodically whether they want any modifications in their roles or changes in the communication protocols. This could be done through questionnaires or by conducting periodic meetings.

**Step 4: Providing Feedback to Step 1 and Step 2**

The evaluation done in the above step should be used to provide feedback to step 2. If there are serious conflicts between the pair, goals may be redefined to achieve optimum performance from the pair. The pair may also be dissolved if required.

**ANALYSING THE WORK SCHEDULES OF MANAGERS**

An analysis of the work schedule of a manager indicates whether pairing can help in increasing work efficiency or improving the balance between personal and official appointments. Table 2 gives an analysis of the work schedules of four managers who belong to different departments and hierarchical positions from two different organizations. Their work schedules were analysed based on the questionnaire* filled by them which were given to them personally.

*Questionnaire is available on request.

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**Figure 7: Implementation of Pair Management**

- Define the goals for the pair
- Analyse S-Factors and D-Factors for the managers and decide the maximum distance by which the slider can be moved towards left
- Define the process and communication protocols for the pair
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the process
- Find out conflicts and differences between the managers, if any
- Feedback
Based on the information given in Table 2, we can individually analyze each of the cases as given in Table 3. The analysis shows that pair management can be very much beneficial to Manager 3 primarily because he/she has some gap in the work schedule. But, on the other hand, many of the activities or appointments contend for the same time slot in the work schedule. Also, the fluctuations in work are relatively higher than others. Manager 4 does not seem to derive benefit from the concept because the value attached with two aspects is zero. But, as described, the third important aspect of pair management and the value corresponding to it can be calculated only after considering the internal details of his/her role and functioning in the organization. Nevertheless, there are two ways in which Manager 4 can be benefited. Firstly by forming a pair with one of the peers which would be very helpful to him/her in dealing with occasional but critical situations and also while making crucial decisions. Further, it would help in learning from the experiences of the other partner and hence becoming more aware of the functioning of the organization and having better experience in dealing with day-to-day activities. Both these benefits also depend on the internal details of the role of Manager 4 in the organization. Benefits for Manager 2 and 3 are apparent from Table 3.

### COMPARISON WITH OTHER EXISTING CONCEPTS

‘Job sharing’ is one of the concepts which has emerged in recent times. Franklin (2002) discusses some of the important aspects of this concept which involves two people working together to fulfill the responsibilities of a single employee. They share the salary, responsibilities, and benefits as agreed upon by them. Though it requires a high degree of coordination between the two partners, its success proves that it is feasible to bring two different people to cooperate and work together. Similarly, pair management would also prove to be a practical concept as we can keep two partners as much close or apart as required to obtain optimum performance with minimum conflicts and this adds to its feasibility. The similarities and differences between the two concepts are discussed in Box 2.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Pair management aims to increase the efficiency of the managers and to maintain a robust workflow without affecting the basic hierarchies already existing in an organization. Virtual hierarchies are formed as a result of pairing which act as cushions to absorb the disturbances in the workflow. Implementation of pair management

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**Table 2: Primary Information about the Working Schedules of Managers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Response of Different Managers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for improvement in information sharing in his/her organization in the current hierarchical configuration (on a scale of 100)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How busy is the working schedule (in percentage)</td>
<td>75*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clashing/Overlapping of two or more important or personal or official events at the same time (on a scale of 100)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluctuations in working schedule (on a scale of 100)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems faced due to absence of peers/juniors/seniors due to their personal or official appointments</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal opinion on information sharing and application of pair management</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Value is more than 75%.
** Value lies between 0% and 33%.

**Table 3: Applicability of Pair Management in Case of Different Managers as Described in Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Considering the Aspects Given, How much is Pair Management Beneficial in Case of the Following Managers (Relatively) (This Value is Given in Points on a Scale of 0 to 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling personal and official appointments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making crucial decisions or handling critical decisions</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** The value attached with the given aspect depends upon the department, the hierarchical level of a person, and also factors internal to the functioning of the organization.
concept can help managers in handling critical situations and also in managing their work schedule. Pairing requires good cooperation and coordination between the partners and well-defined protocols to ensure regular communication. The degree of pairing depends upon the managerial styles, work schedules of the managers, their personal characteristics, and working culture of the organization. Therefore, while implementing this concept, organizations should find the optimum degree of pairing to achieve maximum efficiency.

### References


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*Every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great and original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished.*

**Letter to Lady Beaumont**