STAGE 7

Sorting it out

50 to 99 employees

For the owner of a company with three layers of leadership. The fundamentals you should have, and how to keep them alive.

YOU ARE HERE

Nobody can find anything

Every system in the company is overloaded at once: documents, data, passwords, employee records, budgets, hiring. You know your business better than anyone. What I bring is how companies this size get sorted, and what keeps them that way.

What you are carrying

Three layers of leadership. You are far from the work but still the person who knows where things are, and you still approve the spending and the senior hires.

What breaks first

Every system is overloaded. Documents, data and passwords are everywhere. Employee records live in many places. Departments spend without limits. Hiring is slow and good candidates take other offers. The customer team fights fires all day. Improvements stall because everyone is fixing something different.

How it sounds

“Nobody can find anything.”

“We lost two good candidates because it took us a month to call back.”

“Every department spends like it’s their own money.”

“Customer service is putting out fires all day.”

“I don’t know who does what any more.”

“We have five versions of the same form.”

> If two or three of these sound like your quarter, this is your guide. The work at this stage is sorting: everything into groups, each group with one home and one owner.

Where this stage sits

A company grows through stages by the number of people it employs. Each stage has one thing that breaks first, and one piece of ground that has to be laid before the next stage can hold. The ground is mostly paper: who does what, how the work is done, how people start, how they are reviewed, who decides what.

STAGE	NAME	PEOPLE	WHAT BREAKS FIRST	THE GROUND TO LAY
2	Doing it all	The owner, with part-time help	Quality rises and falls with your week	A checklist for the core job, paperwork for every helper, business money kept apart
3	Getting help	1 to 4 employees	More work than one person can carry	The important tasks written down, and the first two weeks for every new hire
4	Choosing what matters	5 to 9 employees	The work is pulled in every direction	The basic rules, a hiring process, one customer record
5	First managers	10 to 19 employees	Good doers promoted with no training	Managers who know what they own, one service standard, a budget
6	Better, not more	20 to 49 employees	More people have made the work worse	One change at a time, measured performance, an operating rhythm
7	**Sorting it out You are here**	**50 to 99 employees**	**Every system is overloaded**	**One home and one owner for people, applicants, customers, money and data**
8	A team for each job	100 to 249 employees	No one person can know every part	Specialist roles, one hiring process, a real performance system

Stages 0 and 1 come before steady paying customers and a team, so the stages here start at 2. After stage 8, stage 9 runs from about 250 to 500 people. The counts are employees; at the edge of a band, read the work, not the number.

Stage structure after Alex Hormozi and Leila Hormozi, $100M Scaling Roadmap (acquisition.com). Words and names are Delphine Group's.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON

Eight pages that put it in order

These are the fundamentals at this size. If one is missing, build it first. If it exists, the work is keeping it true across three layers.

> Start with the index. Sorting begins with knowing what exists and where; every other page here fills a home the index names.

1. **A system of record for people**
   One record for every employee, in a human resources information system. Move every file into it, then close the other places they lived.

2. **A system of record for documents and data, with an index**
   One central store, with a written index of what lives where and who owns each part. If it is not in the index, it does not have a home yet.

3. **An organization chart with a role description for every seat**
   Who does what, who answers to whom, and a short description for every seat, including the empty ones.

4. **The decision rights matrix, third version**
   By department now, with spending limits and approvals: what each leader can spend, on what, and who approves above it. Each department works to a budget.

5 **A hiring pipeline tracker and a scorecard for every open role**
Every applicant in one place, every open role with a scorecard, and a set time to answer each candidate at each step, so good people are not lost to a slow reply.

6 **An operating rhythm across three layers**
The weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings for each layer, and how what is found at one layer reaches the next.

7 **An operations manual**
Every written procedure, indexed in one place, each with its owner and the date it was last checked.

8 **A customer problem prevention plan and a renewal check**
The problems customers raise most, the step that prevents each one, and a check before every renewal. Each team works on one problem at a time.

Your plan

THE PAGE	WHO OWNS IT	DONE BY
A system of record for people		
A system of record for documents and data		
An organization chart with a role description for every seat		
The decision rights matrix		
A hiring pipeline tracker and a scorecard for every open role		
An operating rhythm across three layers		
An operations manual		
A customer problem prevention plan and a renewal check		

Much of this stage's work is also in sales. That is outside Delphine Group's lane, so this guide leaves it out.

SIGNS YOU ARE DOING IT RIGHT

Do these exist, and are they alive?

You should have these fundamentals. If one does not exist, fix that first. If it does, the question is how it is kept alive across three layers. Tick each column honestly.

THE FUNDAMENTAL	IT EXISTS WHEN	IT IS KEPT ALIVE WHEN
Performance management	☐ Every role has written measures, and reviews are on the calendar in every department	☐ Ratings mean the same thing from one department to the next
Written procedures	☐ Every procedure is in the operations manual, with an owner	☐ Each has a date it was last checked, and none is older than a year
How requests come in and get answered	☐ Each department has one way to receive requests	☐ Requests are answered in a set time, and the late ones are visible
The few numbers that matter	☐ Each department has its few numbers, rolled into the company's	☐ Department numbers are read at the monthly meeting and acted on
The system of record	☐ One home each for people, applicants, customers, money and data	☐ Nobody keeps a private copy, and there is one version of each form

For this stage

- ☐ There is one record for every employee.
- ☐ Every applicant is in one tracker, and answered within a set time.
- ☐ Every department has a budget, with spending limits and approvals.
- ☐ Each team is working on one problem at a time.

A tick in the first column and not the second is common at this size: the tool was bought, and nothing was written into it. The fix is an owner and a date.

HOW YOU KNOW YOU HAVE GRADUATED

You are ready for stage 8 when

- [ ] Everything is sorted into groups, each with one home and one owner: people, applicants, customers, money, data.
- [ ] One central store holds the documents and data.
- [ ] Every employee has one record, and every applicant is tracked.
- [ ] Department budgets have spending limits and approvals.
- [ ] There is a plan to prevent customer problems, not only chase them.
- [ ] Each team works on one problem at a time.

> One test: ask three people in three departments where to find the current version of a form. They give the same answer, and it is right.

If this feels hard, look back. A tool only holds what is written into it. If the procedures from the earlier stages were never written, or the choices never made, the new systems have nothing to hold. Write the paper, then sort it.

WHAT IS NEXT

Stage 8: A team for each job

From 100 to 249 employees, with four layers of management. No one person can know every part of the business any more. The ground that holds it is specialist roles, one hiring process for the whole company, and a real performance system. The homes and owners you set here are what the specialists will run.

Want this done for your company? Book a free 20-minute call.

https://calendar.app.google/Bc2S9wSpveFS1b6c6

Everything in this guide is yours to use on your own. It is complete enough to do without me. If you would rather have it built for your company, with your team, that is what the call is for. If we're not a fit, I'll tell you and give you the path to get there.

The work is built to end: set it up, stay a few months to make sure it holds, then your company runs it without me. Every engagement says how it ends before it starts.

> Not sure this is your stage? Take the free stage quiz: **https://tally.so/r/Zj44Ke**

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This guide rests on Delphine Group's stage model, itself a draft. The lines under "How it sounds" are common phrasings, not quotes from anyone. This is general information, not legal, tax or accounting advice; where a page says to ask an accountant or an employment lawyer, do.