

### FEEDBACK

This Instrument indicates your relative preference for a mechanistic versus organic organizational structure. Scores range in a continuum from 15 to 75 with 15 representing the maximum preference for an organic structure and 75 representing the maximum preference for a mechanistic structure. With a score of 53 out of 75, you appear to have an interest in elements of both mechanistic and organic structures.

Read the descriptions below to clarify which aspects of each system may appeal to you.

**Mechanistic structure:** An organizational structure with a narrow span of control and high degrees of formalization and centralization. They have many rules and procedures, limited decision making at lower levels, tall hierarchies of people in specialized roles, and vertical rather than horizontal flows of communication. Tasks are rigidly defined and altered only when sanctioned by higher authorities.

**Organic structure:** Companies with this organizational structure have the opposite characteristics: a wide span of control, little formalization, and highly decentralized decision making. If you work for a company with this structure, your job may have the following characteristics:

- Broader responsibilities that change as the need arises.
- Communication flows in all directions with little concern for the formal hierarchy. Emphasis is placed more on advice and sharing information and less on giving orders or directions.
- Decentralized and informal decision making.
- Expertise is highly valued.
- Employees use their judgment more than the rules to guide their actions and decisions.
- Obedience to authority is less important than commitment to the organization's goals. Employees interact more as team members and less as subordinates taking orders from a boss.
- Employees depend more on one another and relate more informally and personally.

### Comparing the two structures

Mechanistic structures work best in stable environments because they rely on efficiency and routine behaviors. For example, employees in such fast food restaurants as McDonald's typically perform routine tasks where methods of food preparation and customer service are clearly established. However, even in this seemingly routine environment, flexibility and responsiveness may be needed. A surge of customers may prompt an employee to temporarily shift from restaurant maintenance to food preparation or counter service. New technology, globalization, a changing workforce, and other factors have strengthened the need for a more organic structure that is flexible and responsive to these changes. Organic structures are also more consistent with knowledge management because they emphasize information sharing rather than hierarchy and status. This is reflected in the work environment at high technology startups, which are often characterized by open work areas shared by managers and their employees and informal, open communications.

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### Your rankings for each statement

You may find it helpful to review your responses for each statement in the instrument and see how it relates to the descriptions of mechanistic and organic structures. The statements are grouped under three factors: tall hierarchy, formalization, and centralization. The scores for each factor range from 5 to 25 with lower scores indicating a preference for organic organizations and higher scores indicating a preference for more mechanistic organizations.

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### Tall Hierarchy

Your score for this category: 18

A person's career ladder has several steps toward higher status and responsibility.

Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree

Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree

Your ranking: 5 - Strongly agree

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Supervisors have few employees, so they work closely with each person.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 3 - Neither agree nor disagree

Most work is performed in teams without close supervision.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Supervisors have so many employees that they can't watch anyone very closely.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree  
Your ranking: 2 - Disagree

Even in a large company, the CEO is only three or four levels above the lowest position.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 4 - Agree

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### Formalization

Your score for this category: 17

Employees perform their work with few rules to limit their discretion.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 2 - Disagree

Jobs are clearly defined so there is no confusion over who is responsible for various tasks.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree  
Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Job descriptions are broadly stated or nonexistent.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 2 - Disagree

Work gets done through informal discussion with co-workers rather than through formal rules.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Everyone has clearly understood goals, expectations, and job duties.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree  
Your ranking: 5 - Strongly agree

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### Centralization

Your score for this category: 18

Responsibility is pushed down to employees who perform the work.  
Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree  
Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree  
Your ranking: 2 - Disagree

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Senior executives make most decisions to ensure that the company is consistent in its actions.

Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree

Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree

Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Employees have their say on issues, but senior executives make most of the decisions.

Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree

Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree

Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Everyone's work is tightly synchronized around top management operating plans.

Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly agree

Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly disagree

Your ranking: 4 - Agree

Senior executives assign overall goals, but leave daily decisions to frontline teams.

Highest ranking for mechanistic structure: Strongly disagree

Highest ranking for organic structure: Strongly agree

Your ranking: 4 - Agree