

[Areas of Responsibility \(AORs\)](#) (2 min)

"Tragedy of the commons." When several people share responsibility for an action or process, often that action doesn't get done well or at all.

To prevent this from happening, group tasks into categories and assign each category to one—and only one— person. These are your Areas of Responsibility. Apple is famous for having pioneered AORs in Silicon Valley, but most successful tech companies now use this method.

Create a document listing every possible function in the company. Next to each function, list the responsible person. This is the AOR list. It serves as a company directory and ensures that no functions fall through the cracks. Ensure everybody in the company knows how to access the list and update it as new functions arise or responsibilities shift.

For an example, see [sample AOR](#).

No single point of failure

A single point of failure is a function that one person performs when no one else has full knowledge of how that function works. If that person becomes sick or leaves the company, functionality suffers. A well-run company has no single point of failure. To create a team with no single point of failure, do two things:

1. Write down all processes. As soon as you or your team members find yourself doing something for the second time, you should write down exactly the steps of that process. Here is a [Process Template](#). Place these written processes in a firm-wide Wiki.
2. Cross-train a second person for each role. Map each function in the company (from the AORs) to a backup person. Have the backup person co-work with the primary until the backup knows how to perform the role. (Of course, having all of the processes already written down will vastly improve this training process. So have your team write down all the processes first.)

Implementation

An easy way to implement writing down the AORs and then writing down the Processes is this:

1. CEO writes down her Areas of Responsibility in the [AOR template format](#) and writes out (in a Google Doc) the process for one of her functions and links it to the AOR list. CEO shares with the exec team so they can see what the example looks like.
2. CEO carves 45 minutes out of the next Exec Team meeting or Quarterly Offsite.
 - a. Why do this live and not asynchronously? Because many people will "not know what to do" and will get frustrated if they have to do this offline without the ability

- to ask questions in real-time. They don't want to do it wrong, and without the ability to have their work reviewed in real-time, they fear that they will get it wrong. Many will choose not to do it all rather than risk getting it wrong.
- b. [15 minutes] Asks all members to write down their AORs in the same template format as well, in real-time.
 - c. [15 minutes] All members review each other's writings and point out conflicts.
 - i. For each conflict, if it can be resolved in 2 minutes or less, great.
 - ii. If not, ask that the participants create a written [Issue/Proposed Solution](#) to be decided in the upcoming Exec Team meeting or later that day if at an Offsite.
 - d. [15 minutes] Ask each Exec Team member to pick one function and write out (in a Google Doc) the process for completing it (or as much as they can write in 15 minutes), and link the doc next to the function in the AOR list.
3. Now all exec team members have the experience of implementing both the AORs and a process, ask each to their teams to
- a. Complete the AOR list
 - b. Each team member writes down one process per week.
 - i. If this happens, every process in the entire company will likely get documented, and with a minimum of pain.

★ Interested in coaching or software to help implement the Mochary Method at your company? Please fill out our interest form [here](#), or book a discovery call with Nancy Xu [here](#).