



# Authority Gap Audit Worksheet

Find the roles that carry responsibility without authority — the gap where bottlenecks, overrides, and burnout are manufactured.

### WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this worksheet to map, role by role, where responsibility and authority have come apart — the gaps that create approval bottlenecks, override patterns, and the recurring 'people problems' that are really design problems.

## WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- When the same decisions bottleneck at the same desk every week
- When managers are accountable for outcomes they can't control
- When 'check with the owner first' is the real policy manual
- After a good supervisor quits citing powerlessness
- Before restructuring, and before blaming anyone

## WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Supervisors held accountable for teams they can't schedule, discipline, or reward
- Owner and ED bottlenecks that price every decision at days of delay
- Override patterns that teach staff to bypass their own managers
- Turnover of the capable people who tire of responsibility-without-power first
- Restructures that reshuffle boxes without moving any actual authority

*Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.*

## BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employee name and role	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of incident, request, or separation	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisor involved	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy or handbook section that applies	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prior documentation on file	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay records, if applicable	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision-maker name	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deadline, if applicable	



## AUTHORITY GAP AUDIT

For every role with responsibility, ask one question: can they actually decide the things they're accountable for? Where the answer is no, you've found manufacturing capacity for people problems.

### Part 1 — Role Responsibility vs. Actual Authority

One row per role. Be literal in the authority column — what can they decide TODAY without asking anyone?

Role	Held accountable for	Can actually decide alone	Must ask permission for	Gap (Y/N)

### Part 2 — Approval Bottleneck Inventory

Decision type	Who must approve	Typical wait	Cost of the wait (missed hires, stalled work, OT)
Hiring offers			
Purchases / spending			
Schedule changes			
Discipline steps			
Customer/client exceptions			

### Part 3 — Override Pattern Log

Overrides teach the organization who really decides. List recent examples where a manager's decision was reversed above them.

Decision made by	Overridden by	What happened	What the team learned



Decision made by	Overridden by	What happened	What the team learned

### Part 4 — Gap Diagnosis

Present	Pattern	Where
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supervisors accountable for attendance/performance with no authority over schedules, rewards, or discipline	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Titles that imply authority the org never actually granted	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval thresholds unchanged since the company was half its size	
<input type="checkbox"/>	One person approves so much that their vacation stops the organization	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff route around managers to the person who 'really decides'	
<input type="checkbox"/>	'Acting' or 'interim' roles carrying full responsibility with zero granted authority	

### Part 5 — Decision Delay Cost

<b>Most expensive bottleneck identified (from Part 2)</b>	
<b>Estimated monthly cost (delay × frequency × impact)</b>	
<b>Second most expensive</b>	
<b>What the top bottleneck-holder says they're afraid delegation would cause</b>	
<b>Evidence for/against that fear (actual error rates when others decided)</b>	

### Part 6 — Repair Plan

Role	Authority to grant (specific, written)	Guardrail (limit, report-after, review cycle)	Effective date



Role	Name / signature	Date
Audited by		
Authority grants approved by		

### STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- A supervisor is being disciplined for outcomes the audit shows they had no authority to affect.
- The override log shows the same senior person reversing the same manager repeatedly.
- Approval waits are driving quietly missed deadlines, hires, or bids.
- Someone 'acting' in a role for 6+ months carries its accountability without its authority.
- The repair plan grants authority verbally but nothing is being put in writing.

### MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

### COMMON MISTAKES

1. Blaming the bottleneck-holder's personality instead of the structure that routes everything to them.



2. Granting authority in a meeting and revoking it with the first override.
3. Writing job descriptions that describe responsibility and stay silent on authority.
4. Confusing delegation with abdication — guardrails (limits, report-afters) make delegation safe.
5. Fixing the org chart without changing a single approval rule.
6. Expecting managers to 'step up' into authority no one has actually granted.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

Take the two most expensive gaps from Part 5 and execute their repair rows this month — written authority grants with guardrails. Then watch the override log: the first post-grant override is the moment the repair either holds or dies. Re-audit in six months.

**Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.**

Call 210.446.8730 or email [thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info](mailto:thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info).



*If the same people problem keeps repeating, the issue is probably upstream. Faulkner HR Solutions helps employers find the system failure before they blame the wrong thing.*

## Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

**If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.**

**Call: 210.446.8730**

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**Website: [faulknerhrsolutions.info](http://faulknerhrsolutions.info)**

### DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.