BUILDLOGIQ

Built on trust. Run on precision. Elevated by intelligence.

BI PEOPLE 03

A Title Isn't a Lane

Published by BuildLogIQ Group, Inc.
Orange County, California
buildlogiq.ai

Most confusion inside a growing company isn't about ability.

It's about lanes.

Everyone on the team can usually do their job. What they can't always tell you is where their job ends and someone else's begins. Who approves the change order. Who talks to the client when something goes wrong. Who decides if a sub gets a second chance.

When the answer is "it depends" or "whoever notices first," the lane doesn't exist yet, no matter what the org chart says.

A lane isn't real until it's defined, enforced, and reinforced.

Skip any one of the three, and it collapses back into the owner's inbox.

Defined Means Specific, Not Titled

Most owners think they've defined a lane because they've given someone a title.

A title tells the world what to call a person. It doesn't tell that person what they can decide without checking.

Those are different things, and the gap between them is where confusion lives.

A defined lane answers a specific question: what can this person decide, act on, or approve entirely on their own, without asking the owner first?

"Project manager" is a title.

"Can approve change orders under $2,500 without sign-off, must escalate anything above that within 24 hours" is a lane.

One of those actually changes behavior.

The other just changes the business card.

If you can't write the boundary of someone's lane in one sentence, they don't have a lane. They have a job description and a lot of guessing.

Enforced Means the Owner Doesn't Step Into It

Defining a lane is the easy part.

Enforcing it is where most owners quietly undo their own work.

A lane only holds if the owner stays out of it once it's drawn. The moment the owner jumps in and makes the call that belongs to someone else, even with good intentions, the lane stops meaning anything.

The person who owned that decision learns their ownership was conditional, good until the owner felt like overriding it.

Everyone else watching learns the same thing.

This is the fastest way owners erode the structure they just built. Not through a memo reversing the policy. Through one moment of stepping back into a lane they'd already handed off, because it was faster, or because they weren't sure the other person would get it right.

Enforcing a lane sometimes means watching someone make a call you wouldn't have made, and letting the decision stand anyway, because the alternative teaches the whole company that lanes are optional.

Reinforced Means the Lane Doesn't Quietly Drift

A lane defined once and never revisited doesn't stay accurate for long.

People leave. New hires arrive without knowing what was agreed months ago. The company grows, and a lane that made sense at $3 million in revenue doesn't fit at $8 million. A superintendent who used to own scheduling decisions for one job now owns them for four, and nobody's confirmed whether that lane still fits the load.

Lanes drift the same way anything unattended drifts.

Someone picks up a decision because no one else did. Someone else stops making a call because they assumed it moved to a different desk. Six months later, three people think they own the same thing, and two other things have no owner at all.

Reinforcing a lane means checking it on purpose, not waiting for the confusion to surface on its own.

A quick conversation every quarter, or every time a role changes, keeps the lane matched to the company it has to serve.

What Happens Without Lanes

A company without defined, enforced, and reinforced lanes doesn't look chaotic from the outside.

It looks busy.

But every decision without a clear owner eventually routes to the same place: the owner's desk.

Not because the owner wants it there.

Because nobody else was ever given the standing to make the call, or they were given it once and watched it get taken back.

That's how an owner ends up approving change orders, settling scheduling conflicts, and fielding client complaints personally, in a company with a full org chart and titled roles for every one of those jobs.

The titles exist.

The lanes don't.

What This Actually Means

Lanes aren't a one-time exercise you finish and move past.

They're a standard that has to be set, held, and checked again as the company changes shape.

Can each person on the team name a decision they can make without asking you first?

Do you actually stay out of that decision once you've handed it over?

Have you checked in the last quarter whether the lanes you drew still match the company you're running now?

A company with real lanes runs on more than the owner's attention.

A company without them just looks like it does, until the day it can't.