



SM 432 Capstone Project

Dr. Adriana Phelan

By: Josh Broner, Carl Faraon, Ryan Fellman,

Lamontre Jackson, Allison Skaggs, and Vinny Tafuto

Organization Background

The Florida Panthers are a professional hockey team based in South Florida in the Miami Metropolitan area. The Panthers are in the Atlantic Division of the Eastern Conference of the NHL. They were founded as part of the 1993 expansion draft, along with the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim. They have previously played in Miami Arena, along with the Miami Heat and University of Miami Basketball teams, from 1993 to 1998 (NHL.com).

The Panther's current home arena is the BB&T Center, which was completed in 1998 and solely home to the Panthers. The Panthers are currently owned by Sunrise Sports and Entertainment (SSE), which is run by chairman Vincent Viola. SSE's operating entities include the Florida Panthers Hockey Club (NHL) and the BB&T Center, one of the premier entertainment venues in the United States (NHL.com, 2015). Viola took over management in September of 2013. Viola made his fortune from the electronic trading firm known as Virtu Financial and was selected by the Trump administration to be the next Army Secretary.

Currently, the Panthers finished the season with a record of 35-36-11, missing the playoffs. Their former head coach, Gerard Gallant, was fired in November of 2016. The interim head coaching position was being filled by the General Manager, Tom Rowe, until the end of the 2016-2017 season, as the team has indicated it plans on hiring a new coach for the upcoming season. The organization is currently undergoing an administrative standstill and needs to wisely fill the vacant positions.

Industry Background

NHL

The Florida Panthers play in the National Hockey League (NHL), which is run as a much different business than most. The NHL has 30 teams in the league, 23 of which play in the United States and 7 that play in Canada. However, the NHL is considered the premier professional hockey league in the world. The NHL is unionized, meaning that they operate under a collective bargaining agreement between the players of the NHL and the owners of its teams. A CBA is a contract signed between the two sides that outlines the working conditions and labor laws of the league. The current CBA will run through the 2021-2022 season. If a collective bargaining agreement cannot be agreed upon between the players and owners, a lockout can occur, meaning that no hockey games will be played. Due to a lack of agreement, the entire 2004-2005 NHL season was cancelled due to not agreeing on a CBA. The NHL and its CBA are a unique business because the league allows revenue sharing amongst its teams. Teams share revenue generated from league TV rights, and lower earning teams in terms of revenue receive money from the higher earning teams.

The NHL is headquartered in New York City. The league is headed by commissioner Gary Bettman, who leads the owners in collective bargaining, and appoints league officials. The NHL operates under a salary cap, meaning that the industry is technically not a free market. There is a limit to how much teams can spend on their team, and there are maximum and minimum salary requirements that need to be met for its players.

Industry Trends

The Florida Panthers are at a disadvantage playing in the NHL, due to their location. They play in sunny south Florida, which isn't a place that many people would associate with ice hockey. From a non-hockey perspective, the Florida Panthers' home city of Sunrise, Florida is the 29th largest city (in terms of population) among those with an NHL Franchise. Couple that

with the fact that there are barely any hockey fans in south Florida, and you get a recipe for a team that struggles to make profits. Smaller markets in the north, such as the Penguins (24th), still manage to succeed because of their continued success and the fact that hockey is so popular in that region. Florida struggles to retain a loyal fan base, often only filling out arenas in years that they have huge success. People don't want to root for a losing team, especially if they aren't too particularly interested in the sport in the first place.

Although the Florida Panthers recently locked up their stay in south Florida for the next decade or so, there is always the looming threat of relocation in the future. Furthermore, there is an expansion draft occurring this year, with the Las Vegas Golden Knights getting set to start out in Las Vegas. This means that the Florida Panthers are susceptible to losing players on their roster, along with talent in their back offices. The Las Vegas Golden Knights are going to be looking to recruit employees from other NHL organizations in the near future, so it is important the Florida Panthers' employees are happy and don't get outbid by the new franchise or other NHL franchises.

As previously mentioned, the Florida Panthers recently fired their head coach, Gerrard Gallant. There were a lot of issues between Gallant and the front office of the Panthers (including President of Hockey Operations Dale Tallon, President & CEO Matthew Caldwell, and Owner Vincent Viola). There is a lot of turmoil going on within the organization, as it is believed that Gallant was fired for trying to coach his own way, and not directly following the orders of ownership. The majority of leadership and front office of the Florida Panthers comes from a military background, specifically West Point. Panthers owner, Vincent Viola, was recently appointed Secretary of the Army by President Trump. He turned down the position, but the offer confirms his militaristic experience and background.

Florida Panthers Organizational Issues

The Florida Panthers face the HRM issue of treating their employees poorly/unjustly, and also have a tremendous disconnect between the team owner/upper management and the rest of the company's employees within their organization. The organization's top level workers have a sense of tyranny, in other words.

Militaristic Style of Leadership

The root cause of the HR problems that exist within the Florida Panthers organization stem from team owner, Vincent Viola. Viola comes from a family with a military background, and served in the United States army for several years after graduating from the United States Military Academy in 1977. After he bought the Panthers in 2013, he employed a military style of culture and strategy onto the team and its employees. As Casey Schmidt, a former Senior Manager of Retail Operations for the Panthers said, "The team is run in a very militaristic way. It is either their way or the highway (See Appendix A)." She said that employees were scared to speak up to management if they had a problem with the way things were being run because of the repercussions they might face for expressing their opinion or concerns. If your idea does not follow what the owners and management believe in, then you were automatically wrong.

Lack of Communication Between Management and Employees

All of our issues stem from a disconnect between the team owner and upper management, and the rest of the employees within the organization. Since management does not care about their employees and are strictly profit driven, workers pay is very low. Both Schmidt and our other interviewee, Nick Houser, said that they were often working overtime but were not being paid for it (See Appendix B). Management would assign these employees more work than they could individually do, and would expect it all to be completed. Employees were never offered

bonuses or overtime pay, and would risk losing their job if they didn't work a tremendous amount of overtime. Communication within the organization is very poor, and it is difficult to contact those in high positions with the team.

Lack of Adequate Compensation

Another problem we discovered within the Panthers organization is a lack of adequate compensation. Our interviewees said that they would often be given much more work than they were able to complete, and were not given any guidance/assistance on these projects. Employees would have to work long hours of overtime to complete these tasks, but are not compensated for overtime hours. This is not fair to the employees of the organization as they are not being compensated for the work that they complete.

Employees are Given More Work than they can Handle

One of the problems all of our interviewees said within the organization is that they are constantly assigned more work than they can accomplish. Since they are given more work than they can handle, they must often work overtime. The issue is that they are not being paid for overtime work, as stated above. Casey Schmidt said that she would often be given the work of three people all to herself, and would be expected to complete it. If she is given triple the amount of work that she can do, then she will do her job poorly and rushed. This hurts the efficiency of work done at the office, as people will do a worse job when they feel that they have an overwhelming amount of work to do.

Employee Performance

As a result of the perception of unjust treatment amongst the employees, the performance of employees has experienced a decline. Casey Schmidt is a former employee of the Florida Panthers who worked in Operations Management. We briefly spoke with Casey in an

introductory interview to gain an insider's perspective on how things were run from an organizational standpoint, and why she decided to leave the Florida Panthers.

We have gathered that the company culture is not an environment that fosters motivation. “Managers who complain that their workers are not motivated might do well to consider the possibility that they have installed reward systems which are paying off for behaviors other than those they are seeking” (Kerr, 1975). Casey explained that the workplace morale was often very low based on the dictator style of leadership in upper management levels. The militaristic leadership style is not only influencing employees to leave the organization, but inhibiting motivation amongst the employees. This lack of motivation to meet performance needs stems from the lack of compensation/ benefits from performing overtime work. Schmidt explains that her position as the Senior Manager of Retail Operations required that she take on numerous roles without the assistance of coordinator level employees, due to lack of efficient hiring in the retail department. As a result of Schmidt’s overwhelming responsibilities, she was unable to perform her job to the best of its ability. Austin Reed, a Business Analyst for the Panthers, told us that the Panthers run things “inefficiently” in the office (See Appendix C).

Under these conditions, we can infer that ideas and other means of improving operations were suppressed due to the poor communication. The problem of poor communication within the Panther’s organization stemmed from the militaristic culture and the importance of a hierarchal system. The lack of communication within the levels of management not only wasted time, but stifled the creativity of the lower level employees. This lack of communication also led to the employee's second guessing every decision they made and a constant fear of job security.

HRM Issues

Poor Employee Treatment

The Florida Panthers face the HRM issue of treating their employees poorly/unjustly, and also have a tremendous amount of disconnect between the team owner/upper management and the rest of the company's employees within their organization. The organization's top level workers have a sense of tyranny, in other words. The owner of the Florida Panthers, Vincent Viola, employs a militaristic style of culture onto his organization. As Casey Schmidt, a former employee who quit because of harsh working conditions, said, "The team is run in a very militaristic way. It is either their way or the highway" (Schmidt, 2017). Lack of communication between employees and management is a major issue within the organization, and our group has come up with some practices and interventions that will help create a much more fluid and successful organization.

Compensation/Benefits

Our interviewees said that the Panthers were run in a militaristic way, stemming from team owner Vincent Viola. Employees were expected to work very long hours, and would not be compensated for overtime work. Nick Houser, current Hockey Operations Assistant for the Panthers, told us, "we were working a lot of overtime but were not being paid for it" (Houser, 2017). Employees are constantly given tedious tasks that seem impossible for one individual to achieve, and are given no help on these projects. Schmidt told us that she was often given tasks built for three people, but had to do them all by herself. We suggest that the Panthers introduce a new rewards and benefits program for all employees. Employees should be paid for their overtime work, as it will help their performance. All of our interviewees seemed upset with the current compensation practices within the Panthers organization, and introducing a new benefits package will increase employee satisfaction, and also improve their level of work. If employees are happy and feel that their work is being recognized, then they will perform and be motivated

to do better in the office. “Rewards plays a huge part in encouraging positive behaviours and cementing values in the workplace” (HR Magazine, 2014). Simply put, Panthers employees are not being given benefits that are normal to modern day companies, and that needs to change. As learned in lecture, there is a lack of equity between management and employees in the Panthers organization. Equity is an employee’s perception that compensation received is equal to the amount of work received, which the Panthers clearly lack (Phelan, 2017). Introducing benefits will help alleviate employee concerns over their pay.

The Panthers should introduce both individual and team based benefits/incentives within their organization to help foster employee production. The new benefits and compensation packages should include both team and individual incentives so that one can have collaboration without free riding. As learned in a class about organizational behavior, rewarding only the individual can cause conflict and competition within a team/organization (Heinze, 2016). If you only reward team based incentives, you can produce process losses, as there may be free riding/social loafing employees (Heinze, 2016). Employees will be happy if the organization instills both methods of benefits, as they both increase individual motivation to work harder yet also foster a closer and overall improved office culture. Team based incentives force employees to collaborate and work hard together, which creates a closer and well connected workforce. It is proven that team based rewards are on the rise and in some cases performance can “Be more accurately assessed by measuring the performance of larger units within the organization (DeMatteo et. al., 1998).

The current compensation packages and office culture forced Schmidt to quit her job, which is costly to the company. As Johnson said, “Retaining productive employees is critical to running a successful business. Retaining employees saves companies money in training costs and

helps maintain an efficient and knowledgeable workforce” (Johnson, 2012). If the Panthers continue to underpay their workers and treat them poorly in the office, then they will continue to see constant turnover in the organization. Constant turnover and the rehiring of employees is very costly to a company, “...but a high turnover rate can cost your business money and lead to a dissatisfied and unproductive workforce” (Magloff, 2011). With constant turnover, the Panthers will always be in the process of re-hiring new employees. They will constantly have to pay employees in HR to seek out new employees, and then pay to train them. The Panthers are minimizing financial efforts to constantly train and hire new employees, and do not pay to compensate current employees for their valuable work to the organization.

There are both strengths and challenges that the Panthers will face with a new benefits/compensations package. The benefits they receive will be increased employee satisfaction, higher performance, and less turnover within the organization. Increasing pay or giving employees both individual and team based incentives will increase the motivation of the Panther’s workers and improve their performance. Monetary incentives can increase productivity and reduce problematic behaviors while increasing employee attitudes and improving the working atmosphere (Miller, 2015). When people feel that they are being compensated correctly, then they will work harder at their job. If they are given incentives and goals to reach within their work, then they will be motivated to reach those specific goals. Introducing this benefits package will alleviate many of the Panther’s employee’s dissatisfaction with their job and workload they are given. The challenge that the Panthers face in instilling this method is that it will cost the organization more money to offer bonuses and incentives to their employees. However, they are currently wasting a lot of money to fire, hire, and train new employees. If they were to remove the constant turnover with our benefits package, then they

could use the money they spent to train new employees on the bonuses and incentives to their current employees. It would be a big change in the organization, but would definitely be worthwhile.

In addition to compensating the current employees for their overtime efforts, we also recommend for the Florida Panthers to hire additional lower level employees to distribute the workload in certain departments. Casey Schmidt, a former Senior Manager of the Florida Panthers claimed that while working for the organization she “...ran the whole show. From budgeting, to orderings, customer service, and managing the store. There were no employees at the coordinator level to assist me full time” (Schmidt, 2017). By adding more lower level employees to each department, the workload will be more manageable and the organization’s department goals will be more achievable. Based on this account from Schmidt, an important Human Resource practice that should be implemented into the Panther’s organization is the maintenance of work-life balance (Smith & Mazin, 2011). Additionally, having a clear, crisp idea of what they want to accomplish will go a long way in establishing duties and setting achievable, productive goals. According to Dave Ulrich of Forbes, “there is an individual malaise as people seek to finding settings where they can find meaning and purpose. Organizations can become that setting. When people find meaning from work (see book Why of Work), they are more productive.” (Ulrich, 2017).

An increase in staff will allow Senior Managers, like Casey Schmidt, to complete her duties in a realistic timeframe and limit her from working hours in over time. According the the HR Answer Book, “Employers are finding that helping workers create and maintain a balance between their home and work lives is key to retaining the best employees” (Smith & Mazin, 2011). The Panthers would greatly benefit from adapting family-friendly programs and other

alternative work arrangements. These techniques may include job sharing, which allows two or more people to share the duties of one job. Although the implementation of adding additional staff will prove as financially challenging, the benefits will outweigh the costs of new hires as a result of increased productivity and strength of organizational culture teamwork.

Recommendations/Solutions

New Benefits/Compensation Program

Our proposed solutions and recommendations will fit well within the Florida Panthers overall business and HR strategy. Our first solution is for the Panthers to introduce a new benefits and incentives plan to all employees. Employees of the Panthers complain about being underpaid and not being paid for overtime while working tremendously long hours, so we think this solution will help improve the organization. The Panthers must pay their employees for overtime work. The Panthers play in the NHL, a competitive professional sports league. As a competitive sports team, the Panthers want the best out of all of their employees, not just the players on the ice. But, with their current compensation packages, the Panthers are not getting full effort from their employees. The employees aren't very happy with the organization, and feel like they should be rewarded more for their hard work. So, offering new benefits, bonuses, and incentives to employees will help improve employee performance and help generate new motivation amongst their workers. Offering more competitive salaries will make the organization run more smoothly, as you will be getting more out of every employee within the company. Individual bonuses/incentives can help increase motivation, and will allow the Panthers to get the most out of their organization. Every different department can set high goals for their employees to reach, which will make them work harder to achieve these goals. The team should also employ team/group based incentives to help foster a teamwork environment in

the office. Team incentives do not have to involve additional pay, and can involve teamwork activities. A fun team based activity is bowling night or a night out at the bar to network, talk, and have a good time.

Adding Additional Employees

Our second recommendation calls for the Panthers to add numerous lower level workers to their organization. Our interviewees stated their displeasure with the number of tasks and work given to individuals without guidance, so we think the Panthers should add more entry level workers to help distribute the workload. Having these employees will add value to the organization because they will allow the maximization of work done at the office and will increase the Panthers efficiency. Workers are often given three times the amount of work as they should, so hiring more employees will decrease the stress of current employees and will allow the work to be done better. Stressed employees will rush their work if they have too much to do, so hiring a few more employees will help all work to get done to the best of its ability. New employees will add to the competitiveness of the organization because having multiple employees in a department fosters competition. In our interview, Schmidt told us that she has no one else that worked in her department by herself. If she had other employees working in her department, then there would be competition amongst them to try and be the best worker in the department.

Add Communication Consultant Position

Our final recommendation would be the hiring of a new employee to the HR department, with the title "Communication Consultant." While our team looks at the Florida Panthers organization, we feel that the management and communication issues are significant enough to hire a full time Human Resources employee to assist and help relieve these problems. This

Communication Consultant will essentially be a full-time communications liaison between management and the organization's employees. His/her main job will be to sit-in on meetings between office managers and any employee that wants to have their voice heard. This will ensure that the employee truly feels like his/her requests are being heard, and that the office manager can't just ignore what the employee has to say. We also recommend that once a week, each department at the Panthers has a general meeting with all employees, managers, and the Communication Consultant. Here, anybody can voice their concerns and be addressed back directly by management. This will help foster an open and welcoming environment, removing employees' fears of getting in trouble for speaking out. Also, this will give those employees the opportunity to speak that wouldn't normally ask to have a one-on-one meeting in the first place.

The Communications Consultant will increase the efficiency of the Panthers Organization. Since the person in this position will be overseeing department meetings and communications within the office, he/she will be able to assess how things are run in the office. If the person in this position sees that people are being overworked like they are, then they will be able to propose changes to even out and distribute the workload throughout the office. This person will be able to suggest to management that the organization should hire additional employees to even out and distribute the workload so that the work in the office is completed to the best of its abilities.

One of the biggest challenges with hiring this Communication Consultant is that there exists the possibility that either employees and/or office managers feel like they are being babysat. Panthers employees (both front office and entry-level) very well could come to the conclusion that the Communication Consultant is there because the employees aren't capable of doing their job on their own. Although this isn't true, this could pose an issue for the culture of

the Florida Panthers organization. It's important that when the Communication Consultant is brought in, it is carefully explained what his/her role is and what exactly he/she will be doing. This will help prevent any negative connotations associated with the new position, and help show the employees that this person will be able to help the organization's communication. Also, another cost to this recommendation is obviously the salary of this communication consultant. However, we feel that the productivity gained from the improvement in communication due to this Communication Consultant will heavily outweigh the cost of hiring him/her. All in all, according to Eric Dontigney of Chron Small Business, "rather than provide or compel a solution, the Communication Consultant works with both parties to promote open communication in an attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution" (Dontigney, 2011).

Currently, the Panthers only have one employee in their HR department, and we see this as one of the reasons for a lack of communication between management and employees in the organization. This recommendation would fit their business strategy because it will allow for a more improved culture at the office. A big part of HR is establishing a well-connected employee base and fostering a positive working culture, which the Panthers are clearly lacking. With the addition of this employee, workers will now have an avenue to express their concerns which they previously didn't have. It will add value to the organization's performance because employees currently do not feel like they have a say in the doings of the organization. If employees feel like they have more of a say in the organization, then they will start working harder and feel more comfortable in their role. If they start working harder, the office will become more competitive, and the organization will succeed more as a whole.

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Appendix A

Casey Schmidt

1) What was your job title with the Florida Panthers?

I was Senior manager of retail operations for the Florida Panthers.

2) What did your job in this department entail?

Running the pro shop at the Panthers practice arena. We sold equipment, skates, clothing and accessories as well as sharpen skates and fix equipment.

3) What responsibilities did you have as the Senior Manager? I ran the whole show. From budgeting, to orderings, customer service, and managing the store. There were no employees at the coordinator level to assist me full time.

4) Are there any other positions you have held with the Panthers other than the Senior Manager?

I started in the store as a sales associate, then became the assistant manager then the manager.

5) Have you been treated differently by your bosses as you had different jobs/roles?

The only difference came when there was a change of upper management. Treated okay until the management changed and it became a more militaristic style. This is one of the reasons I left the organization.

6) What challenges did you face in your position?

I was expected to do a job of 3 full time people, alone and while staying under 40 hours per week. I was given the responsibilities of all levels of management that were required to fulfill the operations of the store while fulfilling orders and managing customer service.

7) Are there any pertinent issues that you notice within the organization?

With management it is their way or the highway. If it's not their way, you are wrong. Very military style. Does not leave you individual room to create and grow, because you have to be extremely compliant with their methods.

8) Did you feel comfortable speaking up to your coworkers and boss when you didn't agree with something?

My co-workers yes, but not my bosses. At first I did, but then I got tired of being told I was wrong. Not an environment to grow and learn because I was not given the opportunity to be creative in my position.

9) How would you describe the organization's culture?

Very military. It comes from ownership to upper management, they are all West Point grads.

10) How do employees communicate with each other in the workplace?

Communication was poor. Most mistakes made were due to miscommunication.

11) How did you recruit new talented members/employees?

We posted jobs on the websites and brought them in for a 3 interview process.

12) How did you make important decisions?

I would have to get the okay by one of the upper management people before making any important decisions. So I could make suggestions, but never really got the opportunity to make my own decisions.

13) What does the management hierarchy look like? (order of who reports to who, who makes the decisions)

Each department has a manager who all report to the Upper Management.

14) Do different departments coordinate successfully, or is it extremely separated depending on department?

Not really. Everyone is so spread thin all they do is worry about their department and try to throw things on other ones.

15) What is your organization's main goal/mission?

To create a fun and safe environment for all kinds of skating. We want to grow the sport of hockey in the south Florida area.

16) What caused you to leave the Florida Panthers?

Management kept putting me down, waving being able to fire me in my face, knowing I had a lot on my plate and still throwing on more. I was underpaid, and overworked.

17) How were you additionally compensated?

We were not. We were not paid in overtime and were given too many responsibilities to fulfill that requirement.

Appendix B

Nick Houser

1) What is your current job title with the Florida Panthers?

Florida Panthers Hockey Operations Assistant

2) What does your job entail? What responsibilities do you have?

- Assisted and oversaw daily hockey operations related to the Panthers Ice Den youth and adult programs
- Developed new standard of operations with team to ensure success
- New coaching philosophy
- Baseline evaluations, performance metrics, and testing for players and coaches
- Assisted in creating and developing plans for youth AAA program and Junior A hockey team
- Assisted in scheduling and coordinating travel hockey tournaments and house leagues
- Coached a Florida JR Panthers AA travel team
- Created new tournament and clinic ideas for the arena
- Oversaw Panthers Ice Den Hockey budget
- Coordinated apparel completion and distribution

3) What different positions have you held in the past?

None

4) Have you been treated differently by your bosses as you had different jobs/roles?

My role has definitely increased over the few months I have been here. I have been given increasing responsibilities and duties. I am now a main contact point for many duties and customer interactions.

5) What challenges do you face? Are there any pertinent issues that you notice within the organization? Do you feel comfortable speaking up to your coworkers and boss when you didn't agree with something?

- My main issue right now pertains to my motivation and employee encouragement. I was tasked with my increasing duties, almost doubling my workload and hourly commitment, but was denied any excess pay or benefits.
- I am definitely intimidated when talking about this issue, as I was told that I would not receive any more money and if I didn't help them out now, then I wouldn't have a full time job when my contract ends in the Spring.
- From taking many courses related to employee satisfaction and managerial tactics, I am positive that this is the wrong way to treat employees.

6) What are some successful/unsuccessful techniques for communicating?

Being transparent and willing to compromise and listen to the other party's concerns is very important. That is the biggest issue with management here. Also, different communication styles affect different people in different ways.

7) What is your organization's business environment like? Is it formal, highly structured?

We have what is considered a flat organization, meaning that all decisions are technically supposed to pass through every employee and that there are no levels of importance. I do not agree that is the case, but that is what it is considered.

8) How are you compensated?

I am compensated hourly along with a coaching stipend per month. My contracted pay is based on my hours before the new workload, leaving me almost under minimum wage for my current hour structure.

9) Is there a bonus structure intact?

I have no bonuses in my contract.

Appendix C

Austin Reed

1) **What was your most recent job title?**

Business Analyst

2) **What does your job entail?**

My job is multifaceted. I was hired into the company to help with data analytics projects in multiple departments. I currently am in charge of all Email marketing initiatives in our marketing department, from strategy to execution to analysis.

3) **What responsibilities do you have?**

Build, execute, and analyze email marketing initiatives. Work inside our internal customer database of ticketing and consumer information. Work with marketing, sales, creative, finance, analytics, and other departments to help improve efficiency and get projects completed in a timely manner.

4) **What different positions have you held in the past?**

Marketing intern throughout college

5) **Have you been treated differently by your bosses as you had different jobs/roles?**

Each boss has their own style, from marketing to sales to whatever. I haven't been treated differently, however the techniques and tactics to drive revenue and move the business forward definitely vary from department to department

6) **What challenges do you face?**

Although we operate very leanly, we still face some process inefficiencies. For example, sometimes it simply takes too long to approve a promotion or initiative. We walk a line between being having the time to brainstorm/ideate/innovate and having to alter strategy at any point given breaking news, etc given the nature of working in sports.

7) **Are there any pertinent issues that you notice within the organization?**

How data is controlled, analyzed, and warehoused is an emerging issue in many organizations. Figuring out how to know your consumer is what every organization wants, but in order to do that you have to have a clean database of accurate information. We also struggle with hiring given budget constraints, alongside many other franchises across all teams and leagues.

8) **Do you feel comfortable speaking up to your coworkers and boss when you don't agree with something?**

Absolutely. We know that in order to push forward, there will usually be constructive conflict, and we use that to bring out the best in each other in meetings and during brainstorm sessions.

9) **What did the relationship between managers and employees look like?**

Managers hire the right people to be able to set them free to do their job. Managing upward, while normally is viewed as a challenge, is somewhat easy within the Panthers. Again, we try to put the hierarchy aside to accomplish goals.

10) **How would you describe the organization's culture?**

Open, family-oriented, with distinct values and a passion to grow the sport of hockey in South Florida.

11) **How do employees communicate with each other in the workplace?**

Level, and Club Level, and we are able to communicate very well in-person on each level. If we need to, we can always call/email/walk to other floors to conduct meetings or have conversations.

12) **How do you recruit new talented members/employees?**

We use online sources like Teamwork, as well as promoting from within, and using recommendations.

13) **How do you make important decisions?**

Important decisions are almost always a group effort. We take the time to hear everyone's opinion and try to accommodate everything into the final product. I try to sit in on as many meetings as possible to hear from all angles of the business.

14) **What does the management hierarchy look like? (order of who reports to who, who makes the decisions)**

Executive Chairman >> CEO/President of Business >> EVP/VPs >> Directors >> Managers >> Employees

We use a traditional hierarchy, but day to day business is conducted in a very flat fashion. It helps to have our CEO sit down next to an entry-level employee to make sales calls, or our VP of marketing to sit right next to me to help with my daily efforts.

15) **Do different departments coordinate successfully, or is it extremely silo'd (separated by department, extremely independent of each other)?**

We coordinate successfully most of the time, but sometimes we revert to being siloed/independent of each other. Sometimes we get stuck in the weeds and have to fly at 30,000 feet to be able to coordinate effectively.

16) **What is your organization's main goal/mission?**

(unofficial in my own words)

- Deliver an elite product on the ice
- Grow the sport of hockey in south florida
- Invest in youth hockey and grow organically/in house
- Win the Stanley Cup

17) **Are you additionally compensated?**

I work 40 hours per week