

# Rapid organic growth syndrome:

The blight of medium-sized businesses

This leaflet includes information for  
business owners and managers

## Introduction

Rapid organic growth syndrome (ROGS) is a common condition affecting fast-growing small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).

## Symptoms of rapid organic growth syndrome

Rapid organic growth syndrome mainly affects business' back-office (administrative) processes but can affect any part of the business.

Businesses affected by rapid organic growth syndrome find that their business **can no longer keep up** with the volume of work needed.

Other symptoms can include:

- disjointed operations
- duplication of effort
- poor or slow access to information
- drastically increased overhead costs
- long working hours
- high staff turnover
- extreme spreadsheetism (a proliferation of spreadsheets)
- frequent mistakes
- confusion

If you feel your business can no longer keep up with the volume of work, you should contact Middlestone on 01892 570870 so you can confirm your diagnosis and get treatment to help with the symptoms.

People working for a business affected by rapid organic growth syndrome may experience:

- sleep problems, such as insomnia
- frequent headaches (metaphorical, or otherwise)
- fatigue (lack of energy or motivation)
- irritability
- anxiety
- low mood
- malaise (a general feeling of discomfort or unease)

## Causes of rapid organic growth syndrome

Rapid organic growth syndrome can be triggered when businesses outgrow their back-office (administrative) processes. Fast-growing businesses are most at risk of developing the condition.

Processes that were designed or evolved when the business was small no longer support the current business' size.

Other contributing factors include:

- changing business requirements
- poor visibility into day-to-day work
- knowledge lost due to key staff leaving
- lack of investment in systems

## Diagnosing rapid organic growth syndrome

Rapid organic growth syndrome can be difficult to diagnose because it has similar symptoms to other conditions such as:

- Software decision paralysis (difficulty choosing new software)
- Process inflammation (slow, painful swollen processes)

A process improvement specialist will examine the business, asking questions about the day-to-day work of front-line staff, before confirming a diagnosis.

Contact a process improvement specialist on 01892 570870 to confirm your diagnosis and start treatment.

## Treatments for rapid organic growth syndrome

Treatment usually depends on the cause and type of rapid organic growth syndrome.

Many cases of rapid organic growth syndrome can be improved with careful management, but a complete cure isn't always possible.

Treatments include:

- Process mapping to standardise operations and maintain knowledge within the business
- Process improvement therapy to reduce duplication of effort and improve efficiency
- Software implementation to safely upgrade business systems to support the business' current size and growth plans

## Complications of rapid organic growth syndrome

If left untreated, rapid organic growth syndrome can sometimes lead to complications.

Severe cases can cause:

- overtrading (engaging in more business than can be supported by the resources available)
- insolvency (being unable to pay debts owed), or
- business cessation

It is important that treatment is given early to avoid complications. Contact a process improvement specialist on 01892 570870 to confirm your diagnosis and start treatment.

## Further information

To learn more about how business process mapping, process improvement and new software could help your business, visit [www.middlestone.ltd](http://www.middlestone.ltd).

© Middlestone Business Analysis Limited 2020

Suite 165, 80 Churchill Square

Kings Hill

WEST MALLING

Kent ME19 4YU

01892 570870

[www.middlestone.ltd](http://www.middlestone.ltd)