



RYP QUARTERLY

Well Intended Incompetence: - The Disease that Kills Cultures and Makes Good Staff Leave

By David Stewart Principal RYP International

Managers generally never set out to kill or sabotage a brand or a culture, but their incompetence sure has a huge set of unintended consequences.

I was in a large public listed financial institution talking to a senior leader on how they could address their high staff turnover (76% per annum) and poor morale as measured by their staff engagement score. During our discussion he let it slip that he was through hiring Generation Y's because they "have no work ethic or loyalty." At that point my suspicions started to form that the problem was the Leader and his Management Team. Then I was staggered to learn that he had implemented a policy that forbid any team member to talk to another colleague between 10am and midday. He just wanted his staff "to do their job!".... Really??!! Today? I was even more astounded to learn that this was deemed acceptable by the rest of the Management Team.

THE DISEASE OF Wii (WELL-INTENDED INCOMPETENCE)

There are countless examples of Wii in every workplace. The issue is how to identify and 'what to do?' In actual fact it is the number 1 reason why strategies fail to be successfully implemented.

Suspensions of Managers and Leaders who suffer the disease of Wii often start with their language and storytelling. An early alert is people who speak in platitudes but never deliver, or those who make broad sweeping statements or label people with comments such as:

"Staff need to be self-motivated to work here".

"People don't like change".

"My Staff don't like to be held to account."

"Young people don't like to work hard, they want it now."

"Older staff cannot keep up with technology."

"Staff need to take ownership for their Work".

"Don't hire Millennials you are only asking for trouble".



Well Intended Managers are usually pleasant people but live and breathe mediocrity. They are always the “critics in the stand” and rarely “the players on the field”

“Guess I missed the job description that required me to work for a manager that is 100% stupid and scattered with incompetence”

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF Wii

What follows are some common recurring symptoms of the disease of Well Intended Incompetence:

1. High Staff Turnover: Good staff will leave, as life is too short to spend it with an incompetent person.

2. Broad Sweeping Statements, Labelling of People and Generalisations: All people are different, and any successful manager today must be able to understand diversity, harmony, and respect

3. Unbalanced Outbursts: Managers who are unstable and prone to emotional outbursts are dangerous and kill any team culture. Outbursts usually arise when the team is under pressure, just when you need the team to be confident, connected and collaborative.

4. Best Intentions, But an Inability to Execute: This is a common one. They talk the talk but cannot walk the talk. They always will demotivate good people through their inept inability to execute.

5. Bystander Syndrome: Unacceptable performance or behaviours are ignored. It is understood that it is easier to do nothing and face up to why good people or customers are allowed to leave. The *standard that people walk past is the standard that is accepted*. Poor standards and disciplines always lead to poor performance.

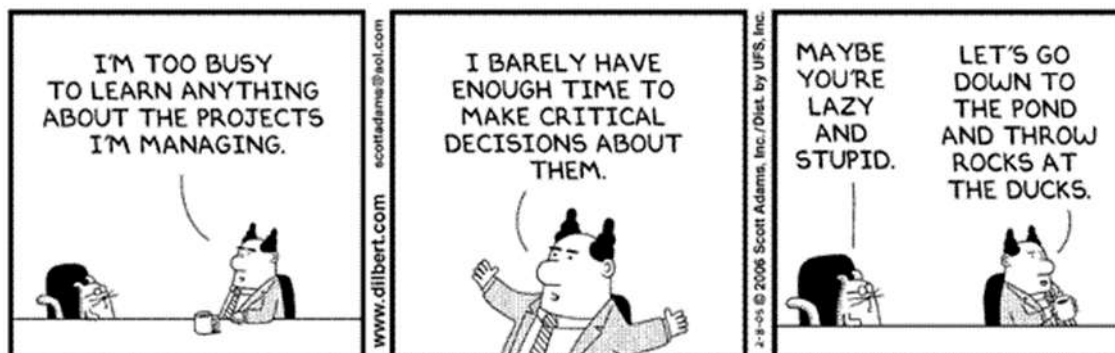
6. “Below the Line” Thinking: The focus is always on the negatives or looking for fault. Rarely, is the focus on rewarding and recognising the pursuit and achievement of good performance. This kills confidence, volunteerism, and a positive team culture. There is no focus on solutions but more one of compliance and protection.

7. Deflect Accountability: It is always someone else's fault. There is more interest in protecting self-interests and ego’s rather than solving problems and being transparent in dealing with clients and staff. There is a prevailing culture to justify or lay blame on someone else.

8. Out of Depth: Often this symptom presents as people overstepping their skill set, attributes or area of expertise, but somehow job titles, roles or responsibilities mean they suddenly think they know it all

9. Pseudo Expert: This is where a manager espouses opinions and commentary as a subject matter expert with only a small piece of knowledge, experience or understanding. It reveals itself when there is rarely any real evidence to back up a point of view, statement or “fact.”

10. Wisdom-less Managers & Staff: There is no substance, evidence, stories, or facts to support what it is being pushed, promoted, or pursued. Wisdom-less Managers cannot link how the wider vision, strategy and culture of the organisation connects to their team and personal performance. The story of why is central to performance and prioritisation.



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COMMON WII MANAGER TRAITS TO LOOK OUT FOR: They.....:

1. **Recruit - Select - Promote the Wrong staff.** Rule one; surround yourself with a diversity of good talented people. If they promote, reward, and recognise mediocrity then the team is being set up for failure. If a manager surrounds them-self with mediocre under performers, **LEAVE!** They have the disease of Wii!
2. **Have no ability to engage, build or unite a team** through their actions, behaviours, and mindset. Building a team takes time, effort, commitment and above all energy & enthusiasm. If this is absent, **LEAVE!** It will not get any better. A manager must have an innate passion to create a positive team environment. If they can't, then they have the disease of Wii!
3. **They think staff development is sending people on a training course.** The research is clear, most positive staff development happens on the job through experiential learning. Building wisdom and skill happens through trial, error, feedback, and coaching. If your manager cannot do this or understand this, **LEAVE!** They have the disease of Wii!
4. **They are devoid of staff retention ability.** These types of Managers tolerate inappropriate standards and behaviours in the workplace. They have an inability to enforce staff policies and procedures, cannot engage staff or help guide them in their career, and they usually are oblivious to the warning signs of staff - customer dissatisfaction with the current status quo. They have no concept of Managing by Walking Around or they think they must do everything by micromanaging.



5. **They are in denial.** They are the only one who thinks they are doing a good job; they deny that what they are and aren't doing is the reason good staff leave. **Good staff do not leave an organisation, they leave a poor manager.**

"The feeling that you are repeating a task because someone else cannot do their job is not deja vu.....it's incompetence"

A CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY A MANAGER WITH Wii

What follows are personal attributes which left unchecked, will ensure good staff leave.

1. **Managers always take the path of least resistance**, have no concept or appetite to pursue excellence.
2. **The Leaders Live in a glass bubble** oblivious to the world around them, including what people think of them and the opportunities they are missing.
3. **A Manager Gives up easily.** They have little or no resilience or a persistent belief system.
4. **They Happily Waste other people's time.** They are pretenders, do not stand for anything, sit on the fence and rarely, if ever, make bold independent decisions themselves. They require sign off!
5. **Think and see only problems**, rarely solutions. They Do Not have a Growth Mindset – are not Curious.
6. **They Talk more than they listen.** Often, they are ill informed, naive and oblivious to the world others live in (staff, suppliers, customers, colleagues, friends)
7. **Always Bring others down to their level.** They are envious of other people more skilled or capable than them. Rarely take or act on advice
8. **Act before they think.** Often oblivious or blind to the consequences for their actions or in-actions
9. **Are bystanders.** Rather than be involved, they walk past poor standards. Ignoring issues or doing nothing is their modus operandi.
10. **Great on Platitudes but have no substance.** Ever! You will never see them stand up and fight for a matter of principle. They will commentate – but rarely act or lead the charge.
11. **Tolerate mediocrity**, near enough is good enough.
12. **The Deflect Decision Making** – Defer to others and more senior managers to make decisions – Stand for Nothing

Too often the title of Manager is doled out as a reward for tenure, or some performance that demonstrates no particular ability to lead people



Facta Non Verba – Deeds Not Words

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