

Step 3 - Process Imbalance - Too much and Too Little

Another step in creating organizational dysfunction is throwing process out the window.

When every situation is an exception and employees have to run the proverbial daily fire drill, dysfunction follows rapidly.

Business processes that are understandable, easy to follow, and which have proven results are the enemy of organizational dysfunction and should be avoided if the goal is chaos and dysfunction. The manager can swoop in and solve daily problems when employees don't have a way to do it themselves. This makes the manager feel more important and secures the respect of his subordinates – or so he thinks.

The reality is that employees are constantly working under stress. Work performance and absenteeism suffer. Most importantly, however, is that constant emergency creates a condition of numbness. Real emergencies can't be treated as such because there are so many fires burning out of control to effectively handle the real calamities. When real calamities aren't handled effectively, or even when non-emergencies are handled poorly, management has the opportunity to blame employees that are trying to tread water on a daily basis. The managers most effective at creating dysfunction take the opportunity to state that an employee lacks a sense of urgency, which is one of the author's most favorite motivation methods in the quest for dysfunction.

Results are widespread. Employee burnout is very common. Physical manifestations of stress and mental anguish cause higher absenteeism. Finally, the effect on company customer service can be seen. When customers are ultimately affected by organizational dysfunction, you'll know you've arrived as the master mismanagement.

The flip-side of too little process is too much process, which is just as effective at creating organizational dysfunction. Instead of letting people engage in the activities that contribute most to good results, they are mired in bureaucracy. Employees become frustrated by their inability to do what they do best and make good things happen, they are stuck with requirements that cause them to major on the minors. Management in large companies seem to most guilty of this dysfunction, but not to worry, you can see this trait in small companies too. The worst outcome on this end of the process dysfunction spectrum is simple - bad business results. The process, procedures, and policies can be flawless but when overdone, they kill results.