

Step 6 - Don't Bother Listening - or Speaking for that Matter

Another step in creating organizational dysfunction is lack of listening and effective speaking.

This is probably the simplest step of the twelve and involves very little effort. For that reason, it is already widely used in the art of dysfunctional management.

The art of dysfunctional listening begins with knowing everything. Once a manager reaches his lofty position, he certainly knows everything – or at least much more than any of his subordinates. So why listen to them? When employees use the excuse of being “closer to the situation” than the manager, it is imperative for the manager to remind the subordinate of his vast knowledge, skill, and experience. This technique will not only take care of the situation at hand, it will also have the likely effect of preventing the pesky employee from bothering him in the future to tell him things about which he already knows.

The art of dysfunctional speaking takes on two forms. The first form is to tell employees something once (best in an email), and then jump all over someone who didn’t get the memo. This technique is also employed in the art of the staff meeting, where lazy managers think they are doing their best leading. The second is to play the mind-reading game. Since businesses are now equipped with state of the art enterprise management software, the clairvoyance module must certainly be installed. When clarity is lacking, the manager is well on his way to a dysfunctional organization. In fact, he is now half way through the twelve steps!

What’s the result? Teamwork is undermined by unclear expectations and the fact the employees all have a different idea of what the manager wants. Frustration abounds when problems can’t be solved due to a know-it-all manager that doesn’t listen, contradicts subordinates in public, and undoes their work.