



A short story from the workplace by John Watts

Introduction: The breakdown of a company in its entirety

A company with a great new product has established itself within the industrial market place. But something is emerging from the company start up.

Negative forces are arising, caused by the founders that are being created within the company's culture.

Once the culture has been created it's almost impossible to change it.

Even new management cannot influence the culture that has been created by the founders. Their personality's, attitudes and decisions spread like wild fly as soon as the first employees start to work. Even when the founders are dead and gone and their self-portraits still hang on the wall, the workers have the same attitude. These forces are instantly active right from the start. Negative forces ultimately contribute to communication breakdown, misunderstandings- less productivity- lack of innovation and the sense of purpose for the company.

Even outside consultants are affected by the culture of the negative environment. If something is not done quickly even though the product is moving well. This company will cease to exist within the forth-coming years.

So what can be done to turn this company around?

Total (Company) Wipeout

A great, promising product successfully launched into the marketplace can unknowingly be sabotaged from the get go: the negative forces put into play by the founders of the company can unsuspectingly doom its prospects.

Company founders play a crucial role in setting up the entire mood and attitudes of their business's culture. This culture forms the basis from which the company will continuously thrive and operate upon within every level: management, administration, communications, sales, etc. Negative influences such as bad attitude, self-righteousness, selfishness and disrespect trickle down from the top and flow on down the ranks. The effect of all this negativity "poisons" the company.

Years of said poison creates a business atmosphere that is unbearable and seemingly impossible to change or turn around for the better. Even when the founders are no longer active figures, perhaps just portraits on a wall, the negativity that has been fostered by them from the beginning seems to, over time, take on monstrous proportions. Under such pressures a company can become too overwhelmed and ultimately be brought down: company wipeout.

Negative influences bred from the top and embedded into a business culture can only lead to complete company misery. This means that at every level negative influences put a damper on the entire operations of the company regardless how great the product or service. This is

because the negativity becomes like an illness affecting everybody. Ultimately it will even affect the product. Symptoms of a negative business culture as reflected by its employees are frequent miscommunication problems, lack of innovation, lack of motivation, lack of business purpose and goals and a high rate of illness. What is perhaps worse for the company is that employees often carry with them an air of negativity when greeting the marketplace or important buyers and clients.

Fresh, new, talented management is often brought in to correct the problems of a negative business culture. However, the task usually proves more daunting than at first expected. Basically, it takes more than new management to turn a company around after years of build up into an all-encompassing negative atmosphere. More than often, new management gets affected and with that the hope of a successful turnaround. The negative output of a company's culture can also affect consultants. With everyone affected, if something is not done quickly, regardless of present sales success, the company is doomed. Within a matter of time the company will cease to exist.

In such a critical business situation the focus must be on the solutions for turning the negative culture of a company into a positive one. First and foremost, the extent of the negative influences needs not only to be recognized and identified but also confronted in its entirety. This is almost impossible when the founders of the company are still involved.

Although it seems obvious and easy to take the first step in ridding the company of its negative working culture by identifying and confronting its negative aspects, often enough this is the most difficult thing to do. There are just too many defensive attitudes and walls of indifference to successfully tread through without stepping on a blow up situation.

A careful plan of action involving genuine, positive, individual approaches needs to be made up and brought into action. The company must take on at every level a new purpose, a new goal: EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY CONSCIOUS EFFORTS AT POSITIVE COMMUNICATIONS. This is difficult to do as it involves changing the thinking patterns, behaviors, habits and attitudes of the workers at every level. The plan of action to turn the company around must also involve earning the employee's trust and respect as a whole for the company.

Should a company continue to operate in a dysfunctional, negative culture without any attempt to turn it around, the company will eventually face its ultimate breakdown. When the product or service of such a company is an excellent one and sustainable, company wipeout is a business shame.

By John Watts – September 2002 –