

Executive Action

Urgent Information for Executive Decision making

FILE: Management Communication

TO: Executive Addressed

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RE: Destructive Management Communication Behavior

When we analyze what causes management communications programs to implode, explode, derail, self-destruct, or simply slide into the ditch, there are identifiable behaviors and activities that precede or predict disaster or negative collateral damage. Here's a checklist of the most destructive behaviors, attitudes, and approaches. If any of these are included in your communication or the behaviors of management, you're already in trouble. If you're even thinking about using them, recognize the damage they could cause and STOP NOW.

1. **Arrogance:** Opposite of empathy. Taking action without consulting those directly or indirectly affected means you don't care because you don't want to.
2. **Bland generalities:** The stone wall behind which the guilty hide.
3. **Cold logic:** An organization without empathy, a kind word for victims, or a tear is an organization without a heart. It is also an organization that will fail alone.
4. **Complexity:** The foggy, fuzzy hiding place of the guilty, complicit, or negligent.
5. **Emotionalism:** Usually a form of whining and victim confusion. The perpetrating organization focuses on itself instead of resolving real victim issues.
6. **Evil:** The combination of arrogance, deception, and remorseless, wicked, corrupt behavior.
7. **Hitting back:** Attacks on victims assure your destruction.
8. **Hot rhetoric:** Guarantees the perpetrator's own incineration – legally, rhetorically, publicly, and emotionally.
9. **Mindless verbiage:** Usually self-congratulatory or self-forgiving rhetoric. We all recognize it as an indicator of guilt, duplicity, or stupidity.
10. **Negative communication:** Non-communication, destructive, always causes confusion, is erroneous, and in some respect are lies.
11. **No comment:** Guarantees that seven out of 10 believe you are guilty of something.
12. **Oversimplification:** Underestimates the intelligence of victims and audiences.
13. **Partial truth:** A high-risk strategy that eventually backfires to burn reputations and careers.
14. **Silence:** If they won't answer the easy questions, what else are they hiding?

It would be nice to find out who in management education programs is teaching this stuff, or whether it's in the genes. When bad things happen, these behaviors tend to surface first. Attack them, expose them, rout them out, inhibit them, and stop them. The cost in reputation, credibility, and trust for repairing them is enormous.

If you'd like more information or equally interesting views, ideas, and concepts, contact the author's Web site at www.e911.com.