

10 Common Organizational Dysfunctions



I have been fortunate over the years to have worked in a variety of organizations, including governmental, entrepreneurial, not for profit, professional firms, and corporate entities. I have studied, developed, and taught a variety of leadership and management courses across the country for leading edge programs and agencies. I have been honored to serve as a board member for numerous diverse corporate and not for profit organizations. I have been privileged to provide consulting services to many CEOs and government officials. Lastly, I have started and led several private business ventures and have been a boss.

From this broad experience, I have observed and learned many things about organizational cultures and human performance.

One of my observations is that there are ten recurring "people problems" which destroy productivity, quality, morale, and profitability.

I refer to these "people problems" as the "10 Common Organizational Dysfunctions."

Listed below in no particular order of performance is my list of Organizational Dysfunctions.

1. Lack of purpose, vision, direction, values, and leadership;
2. Inability to focus on the critical factors of success and thereby execute, perform, and deliver results;
3. Lack of accountability and a sense of personal responsibility;
4. Lack of ethics, trust, credibility, honesty, and integrity;
5. Unwillingness or inability to cooperate, collaborate, communicate, and work as a high performing team;
6. Lack of Emotional Intelligence characterized by recurring and highly destructive interpersonal conflict;
7. Lack of motivation coupled with prevailing attitudes of mediocrity, complacency, or pessimism;
8. Inability to think and act strategically, plan a future, creatively address/resolve emerging problems, and make quality decisions;
9. Poor to horrible customer service attitudes and behaviors; and
10. Lack of pride, quality, craftsmanship, and excellence in the performance of work and delivery of products, characterized by mistakes, defective work, and lost revenue.

I encourage you to take a moment to identify which, if any, of the ten common problems outlined above are present in your organization.

If you suffer from one or more of these organizational ailments, your pain most likely stems from one of several simple reasons: (i) not knowing the underlying causes of these organizational dysfunction and

how to prevent or eliminate them; (ii) not knowing how to promote and develop high performing corporate cultures; (iii) believing the problem is not significant; (iv) not wanting to devote the time, effort and money to fix the problem; or (v) not really caring at all about the problem.

The first two underlying reasons are the result of not having the education and knowledge (principles, skills, methods, etc.) of what works, and how to implement that knowledge.

Fortunately, the education and knowledge you need are readily available to you. Many consultants, me included of course, can easily help you acquire and implement the knowledge that leads to success.

On the other hand, I have no solution for the remaining three underlying causes-that is out of my control and rests solely with each individual business owner, executive, and leader.