

HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex

HCO POLICY LETTER OF 8 MAY 1970

Remimeo

Admin Know-How No. 24

DISTRACTION AND NOISE

Noise is a technical term used in the field of Public Relations to describe the medley of messages hitting a member of a public besides one's own message.

The clamoring for attention of many different people, firms, situations brings about a condition where another voice or despatch is just ONE MORE DISTRACTION.

We can profitably use NOISE to describe the demands for attention put upon a staff member, executive, office or org that is being distracted off a main line of action.

A law evolves—THOSE INDIVIDUALS OR AREAS THAT ARE THE LEAST WELL-ORGANIZED ARE AFFECTED THE MOST BY DISTRACTIONS.

Let us take an office in Gus Falls, South Alabama. The Public Exec Sec chooses personnel and audits, the HCO ES lectures, the OES mows the lawn. The rest of the staff are assigned to no divisions particularly, they try to cope but the org makes little money naturally so they "moonlight" (have other jobs).

The place is a mess, of course. Public, bills collectors, salesmen all clamor endlessly for the org's attention. The more disorganized the place is, the more messages each distractor has to originate to get anyone there to listen. Routine actions, having no lines on which to travel and no one to handle them become frantic oft repeated emergencies each one with multiples of messages.

SO, you are an executive in a remote city. This Gus Falls Office is in your area.

SO, you write them despatches.

You get no answers.

You write more despatches.

And they go unanswered.

Gus Falls just isn't reporting up.

WHY? You are just one more noise in a screaming chaos.

The office manifests mainly DEFENSE. It is being hit so hard with random voices and despatches that it develops a ridge against all voices, all despatches.

Anything from you, if it gets read at all, is resented as it's "just one more awful impossible".

So there are only three conditions wherein you get no answers or compliance:

1. There is no one there.
2. Your terminal there isn't wearing his or her hat.

3. The place is a howling disorganized madhouse.

The remotely located executive who keeps writing despatches into an area and gets no action or answers has these situations:

- A. His orders are unreal in that they are not based on good observation.
- B. His orders are contrary to policy and would produce upsets or disorganization.
- C. There is no one there at the receipt point.
- D. The terminal addressed isn't wearing his/her hat.
- E. The place is a howling disorganized madhouse.

In any of these cases we get this law:

WHEN YOUR DESPATCHES OR ORDERS AREN'T GETTING ANSWERED OR ACTIONED DON'T EVER KEEP ISSUING MORE OF THE SAME.

In the special case of E you haven't got a chance of attracting attention.

There are many things you can do in the case of E.

Whatever you do, if observation and real data to hand (not rumour or opinion) shows E to be the case, there is one basic rule:

WHEN A PERSONNEL OR PLACE IS DISTRACTED, GET IN ONLY EASY BASICS ONE AT A TIME.

"Problems of Work" data applies. Stable datum and confusion.

Whatever you do you have to get correct factual observation that is actual data, not propaganda or opinion.

It could be somebody there is suppressive and is tearing the place apart.

It could be they just don't know what organization is, that it means that specialized personnel are assigned to different posts with specific duties and that command and flow lines are established throughout the organization. Maybe they don't know that.

It could be only the top strata is in a mess with the staff working well out of sight from a remote observer. That has happened.

A remote executive or one on the ground confronting this sort of thing gets his first inkling of it from no-reports or non-compliance or slow compliance.

His next action is to collect factual data on actual conditions.

His next action is to find out WHO if anyone is disorganizing the place, and handle that one. But this is with care as such action if remotely taken can be wrong and the place will just disintegrate.

His next action is to get in single basics like an org board, then hats, then a comm center, then recruitment, then decent promotion and decent service.

Often such a group as in E has generated howling financial or even public emergencies and these are what are screaming for attention. The thing to do is to put a

special section IN CHARGE OF THAT EMERGENCY and route anything related to it to that special section for full orderly handling. Get the rest of the place properly organized and conducting business as usual.

It takes a while for an organized activity such as an office to become a shattered wreck. However an SP put into it as an exec can speed this process up greatly.

Therefore, anyone seeking to handle the confused area must detect the symptoms early and handle early.

THE LATER THE SITUATION IS NOTICED THE HARDER IT WILL BE AND THE LONGER IT WILL TAKE TO BUILD IT BACK UP AGAIN.

The next time you get a DEFENSIVE ANSWER, A SLOW COMPLIANCE or a NO-REPORT realize that you have on your hands right there, whether in one person or an org, the symptoms of a situation you must handle. It is any one of from A to E above.

Honestly and dispassionately figure out which one it is. And realize if it is D (not wearing a hat) it could be a symptom of an SP so watch it until you know his (a) Case Status, (b) Ethics record and (c) Production record or you could make a mistake.

If it's any one of these, A to E, you can find out by dispassionate analysis based on facts.

But in any event the situation MUST be handled. What is wrong *must* be remedied.

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