Ten Rules for a Dysfunctional Organization
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Many management consultants have cleverly, and with apologies to Tolstoy, observed that successful organizations are successful for different reasons, and dysfunctional organizations are dysfunctional in the same ways.

Rarely is departmental dysfunction due to lack of intelligence. Quite often, it’s the result of less than effective choices made (intentionally or by default) by leadership. With that in mind, here are ten rules leaders can follow to better ensure a dysfunctional department:

1. Don’t share your goals and strategic direction with your people. Or share it only once, but don’t check back for understanding and agreement.

2. Never check in with your people to ensure the alignment of goals and objectives. Never help employees understand the “why” of things. If you have to explain, they probably shouldn’t be working here.

3. Don’t discuss things that make you or anyone else uneasy. Difficult conversations are in order when there’s a crisis. Otherwise, they only open up Pandora’s Box.

4. If you need to have a difficult conversation, don’t take time to plan what you want to say, how you might say it, or what a successful outcome would look like. Just be yourself and get it over with.

5. Never say exactly what you mean to the person who most needs to hear it.

6. Don’t create an environment in which people feel safe sharing their concerns, ideas, or observations. This is a job, not a therapy session.

7. Dictatorial leadership may look ugly, but it works. So don’t allow disagreements, tough questions, or challenges.

8. Don’t place too much value on employee voice. Usually, all you get is a lot of noise from people who like to complain.

9. Don’t model, discuss or set expectations for a respectful work environment.

10. Don’t intervene when you observe problematic behavior. There’s no reason to make mountains out of molehills when the problem will probably blow over in time.