



Measurable Results. Immeasurable Value.

Building Block: Systems – Part 2

Bureaucratic ‘Mud’ Chokes Initiative, Boggs Down Morale

In some organizations, life at work is like swimming through mud. To accomplish even simple changes, a task requires so much that many people give up on even making small suggestions. Customers are frustrated, too. For them, encounters take longer, special requests are discouraged.

Mud’s a funny thing, too. A relatively uncomplicated process can somehow gain steps and procedures without much notice. The results, however, are the same: Too many approvals, too many steps, redundant paperwork – and it has become way too difficult to truly satisfy customers. Mud kills morale. Knocks the wind right out of initiative. Pummels commitment in the first round. And fuels job searches. Top talent? They’re first out the door.

Consider these alternative approaches:

Approval chains: Are all those signatures really necessary? For appropriate sign-offs, how can the turnaround time be reduced?

New ideas: Is a process in place to quickly channel employee ideas from suggestion to action? And, when an idea can’t be implemented, is quick feedback and a full explanation provided?

Outdated processes: Keep in mind that people who feel their jobs are unnecessarily difficult will gradually disengage, feeling frustrated and hopeless. Additionally, they lose confidence in managers who don’t address problems. Form a team from different departments affected by the process and allow staff to re-design how the work gets done.

Redundancy: When unnecessary or repetitive work is required, people again lose confidence in management’s ability to move the company forward, particularly in difficult economic periods. Again, allow a team of affected staff to work on developing leaner processes.

Continued

Mud literally bogs people down. Excess mud easily becomes the spark for initiating a job search. Creative, bright people don't want to spend time doing unnecessary work. Keep in mind: People seek to excel and to feel good about their accomplishments and contributions. When the mud slows them down, they'll speed up their own search for a company where getting work done is easier, faster and more exciting.

**For more information contact
The Center for Association Resources at
888.705.1434**