

30 Signs Your Company Can't Handle Disruption - Checklist

Not since the introduction of electricity has society seen the level disruption that lies ahead of us. On the whole, we aren't prepared. Oddly enough, it's our own thinking that's getting in our way...

In *Great by Choice*, Jim Collins said "...whether we prevail or fail, endure or die, depends more upon what we do than on what the world does to us." If your organization is not actively preparing, learning, and opening up to the world of possibilities, you're probably on the endangered species list and don't know it.

Check off this list to see how many indicators exist in your organization. Use the results to start a conversation where you work.

NOTE: *The categories below are more for reading ease than to make definitive distinctions.*



Leadership:

- ___ **1. Operating With Blinders.** Critical thinking is limited to a small group of like-minded people (i.e. a typical executive group).
- ___ **2. Blind to the Light.** Key decision makers are married to conventional wisdom and can't see the value in new ideas.
- ___ **3. Acting Like Sheep.** There is a historical tendency to follow the herd or mimic the competition, rather than take a step back, look at the big-picture, and anticipate what customers want and need.
- ___ **4. Disconnected Leadership.** People at the top have little to no idea what's happening on the front lines of their organization.
- ___ **5. Living in Denial.** Common belief that solutions to problems are "outside" the organization rather than taking a hard look inside.
- ___ **6. Above Reproach.** Questioning is discouraged or disallowed, particularly from the bottom up (i.e. the typical hierarchical organization).
- ___ **7. Iron Fist.** Highly autocratic leadership that rules through fear, intimidation, and humiliation.
- ___ **8. Beware of Thin Ice.** Promotes fear of failure by punishing risk takers, even though experiments are a necessary part of innovation and evolution.
- ___ **9. Empire Building.** Undisciplined growth that destroys cohesion and creates instability throughout the entire organization.
- ___ **10. Can't Fill My Shoes.** Lack of leadership bench strength. No succession plan. No one prepared to take the reins when strife strikes. No one invested in the organization's long-term viability.

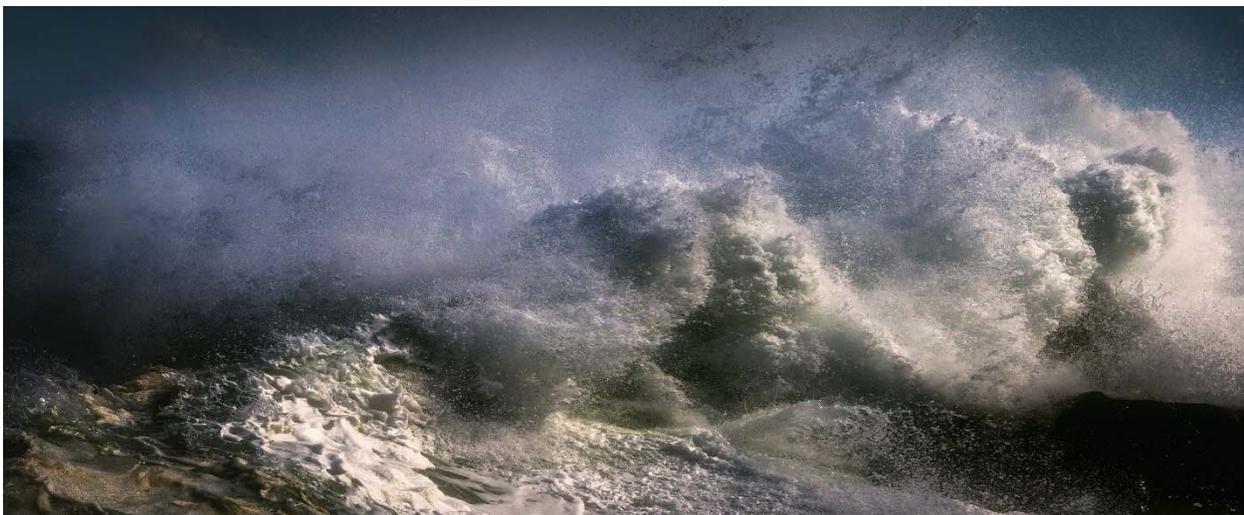
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Organization:

- ___ **11. Reality Check Please!** High degree of delusional organizational hubris. (No profession or industry is immune to disruption.)
- ___ **12. Imprisoned in a Maze.** Organization is trapped in traditional mental models (i.e. lacks an open mind to see possibilities or question the status quo).
- ___ **13. Dysfunctional Inaction.** Organization has lots of meetings but little decision making and even less action.
- ___ **14. Inability to See Opportunities IN Threats.** Organization limits its response to competitive pressure by discounting prices and cost cutting, which triggers a downward spiral.
- ___ **15. Misguided Incentives.** Compensation and other incentives are tied to existing processes, products, and services. As a result, no one is thinking ahead or planning for the future.
- ___ **16. Insensitive.** Failure to recognize customer problems and needs (lack of organizational empathy), combined with a habit of ignoring or dismissing customer complaints or requests.
- ___ **17. Baby, Light My Fire.** Organization lacks any mechanisms to stimulate progress (i.e. compelling purpose or goal).
- ___ **18. Not My Problem.** Single minded focus on profits with no regard to long-term consequences.
- ___ **19. That Could Never Happen Here.** Failure to sufficiently prepare for tough times or catastrophic events.
- ___ **20. Add “Crystal Ball” To The List.** Organization does not have a sensing capability or processes to recognize and seize unexpected opportunities, changes in the market, evolving customer needs, or advances in technology. When it’s everyone’s job, no one is taking responsibility.



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Culture:

- ___ **21. Do Even More With Less.** Pile so much work on employees that they don't have time to think or observe what's going on with customers, much less the world around them.
- ___ **22. It Wasn't Me!** The blame game is active throughout the organization. There is a general failure to take responsibility for poor results. People fail to report mistakes for fear of punishment and or termination.
- ___ **23. Painful Education Avoidance.** Fail to capitalize on learning opportunities in mistakes and unsuccessful endeavors, ensuring that they are repeated over and over handicapping the organization.
- ___ **24. Entitlements that Reinforce the Status Quo.** People at every level of the organization can develop a sense of entitlement. No leadership or supervisory position is required. It sounds like "When I (this) then I'm entitled to (that)." It can be a bonus, a raise, a promotion, a big office, etc. People will go to great lengths to protect something they feel entitled to, even to the detriment of the organization.
- ___ **25. Hidden Perspective.** Differing points of view are discouraged. Individuals with different perspective are ostracized or humiliated. Non-conformists are shown the door.
- ___ **26. Motivation Killers.** Culture that kills the human spirit in large and small ways rather than stimulate it (i.e. an overly controlling environment).
- ___ **27. Neglect Warning Signs.** Unwilling to invest in ongoing improvements in people, processes and systems. For example, small problems routinely occur, but warning signs are ignored (i.e. employees have become dependent on work-a-rounds, etc.). The cumulative effect builds into the perfect storm that can lead to disaster.
- ___ **28. Teenage Mentality.** Organizations are social structures with two options. They can consciously choose to focus on themselves and what they can get with no concern for 2nd, 3rd, or 4th order consequences (the traditional approach). Alternatively, they can look outward at the value that they add to customers, society, and the world creating win/win/win/win situations (a more enlightened approach).
- ___ **29. Growth Mindsets Required.** Lack of individual and organizational learning and development required to cultivate the growth mindsets needed to overcome any surprises the future holds.
- ___ **30. What Purpose & Values?** Failure to create an environment that consistently reminds and reinforces the organization's vision, mission and values, so employees clearly understand what they must do all day every day to ensure joint success, particularly during turbulent times.

Note: To see the full post with references, go to: TotalBackOffice.com/articles/

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