

Spotting sabotage in organizations.....happening from within.

11 destructive methods occurring at some of our favorite organizations – that were detailed in a 1944 CIA sabotage handbook

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17 JAN, 1944

Simple Sabotage Field Manual

UNITED STATES. WAR DEPARTMENT. STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT

This historical document was originally published by the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS; now the Central Intelligence Agency) in 1944, for use by OSS agents in motivating or recruiting potential foreign saboteurs. Agents were granted permission to print and disseminate portions of the document as needed. The since-declassified booklet describes ways for civilians to inflict sabotage through ordinary means, so as to minimize undue attention. According to the document, saboteur-recruits were most often U.S. sympathizers keen to disrupt war efforts against the U.S. during World War Two. The booklet contains instructions for destabilizing or reducing progress and productivity by non-violent means. The booklet is separated into headings that correspond to specific audiences, including: "Managers and Supervisors"; "Employees"; "Organizations and Conferences"; "Communications"; "Transportation" (Railways, Automotive, and Water); "General Devices for Lowering Morale and Creating Confusion"; and "Electric Power."

Details

URL	https://www.hSDL.org/c/view?docid=750070
Publisher	United States. War Department. Strategic Services Unit
Date	17 Jan, 1944
Copyright	Public Domain
Retrieved From	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency: www.cia.gov/
Format	pdf
Media Type	application/pdf
Subject	Sabotage--Prevention

USA CGSC FT LEAVENWORTH KAN

FEB 25 1963

DECLASSIFIED

JUN 21 1968

ACCESSION NO _____
REGISTR. _____

SIMPLE SABOTAGE
FIELD MANUAL

Strategic Services
(Provisional)

N4245

REGRADED
*Declassified per
Army News Release
July 1968
by [unclear]
with records
from [unclear]
16 June 76*

OSS

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Important Lessons from Spy History

- This manual was distributed to OSS (Office of Strategic Service) officers abroad to assist them in training “citizen-saboteurs”.
- talent for sowing chaos that only an intelligence agency can properly master.
- Genuine laziness, arrogance, and mindlessness may surely be endemic. BUT “purposeful stupidity is contrary to human nature” and requires a particular set of skills.
- The citizen-saboteur “frequently needs pressure, stimulation or assurance, and suggestions regarding feasible methods of simple sabotage.”

Overview

- Simple sabotage does **not** require specially prepared tools or equipment
- It is executed **by ordinary citizens** who may or may not act individually and without the necessity for active connection with an organized group
- It is carried out in such a way as to involve a **minimum** danger of injury, detection and reprisal
- Some may not know they are even doing it.....some do (the scary few)
- shudder a little as you recognize how much **organizations you know**, and many others, resemble the kind of dysfunctional mess the OSS meticulously planned during World War II.

Your mission...if you choose to accept:

Use the list of 11 sabotaging ideas from the spy manual and analyze the operations of yours and other organizations and see if:

- Purposeful sabotaging is taking place; or
- laziness, arrogance, and mindlessness; or
- Overdoing, over-policing, over-procedurizing; is

Destroying the productivity and good intentions

Analysis from 3 different levels:

- Organizations - Board / Committee meetings
- Managers
- Employees

Organizations - Board / Committee meetings

How boards / committees can sabotage the organization

#1 When possible, refer all matters to committees, for “further study and consideration.”

- Rarely make decisions at the board table
- Insist on delaying until the next meeting to obtain further information no matter how irrelevant
- Advocate “caution.” Be “reasonable” and urge your fellow-conferrees to be “reasonable” and avoid haste which might result in embarrassments or difficulties later on.
- Allow people to avoid a decision through abstaining – without asking why they are abstaining
- Insist on doing everything through “channels or departments.” Never permit short-cuts to be taken in order to expedite decisions.

#1 When possible, refer all matters to committees, for “further study and consideration.”

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How has COVID assisted this one?
- Work from home vs not work from home?
- Governments? Municipalities?

#2 Attempt to make the committees as large as possible — never less than five shoot for 10

- By having more people, more discussion, harder to control and form consensus
- Insist on diversity **regardless** of the skill level even if its available (ex: pilots, air traffic control, VP roles).
- Adding directors to check off boxes on a matrix vs actual need

#2 Attempt to make the committees as large as possible — never less than five shoot for 10

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How has the current politically charged environment assisted this one?

#3 Refer back to matters decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to re-open the question of the advisability of that decision.

- Never let a good decision go undone, insist on the first 20 minutes of any meeting is to decisions made at the last meeting
- Keep questioning if a better decision could be made and do not wait for the decision that was made to be acted on.
- Ensure the next series of decisions can never be made as the first decision is still being redecided.

#3 Refer back to matters decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to re-open the question of the advisability of that decision.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How might you stop this from occurring at a board table?
- How might you stop this from occurring as an ED?

#4 Make meetings last as long as possible

- Make “speeches.” Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate your “points” by long anecdotes and accounts of personal experiences.
- Bring up irrelevant issues as frequently as possible.
- Haggle over precise wordings of communications, minutes, resolutions.

#4 Make meetings last as long as possible

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How do you deal with word smithing at a board meeting?
- How do you politely move a meeting along?

Managers/Executive Director's

How Managers/Executive Directors can sabotage the organization

#5 Insist on perfect work in relatively unimportant projects or products;

- Send back for refinishing things which have the least flaws.
- Keep changing/altering policy manuals
- Remove any positive feedback when rejecting work or products
- Change board/committee structures often and without need (municipalities – following the trend)

#5 Insist on perfect work in relatively unimportant projects or products;

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- Ask yourself what is really going on with an Executive Director/Manager that does this?

#6 Always assign unimportant jobs first and important jobs/roles are controlled by many.

- Always assign unimportant jobs first
- See that important jobs are assigned to inefficient workers.
- Allow inefficient workers to control key assets, keys, access to tools
- Multiply the procedures and clearances involved in issuing instructions, pay checks, and so on.
- See that three people have to approve everything where one would do.

#6 Always assign unimportant jobs first and important jobs/roles are controlled by many.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How many people does it take to screw in a light bulb?
- Are multiple layers of approval necessary?

#7 Lower the organizations morale

- Hold meetings/conferences when there is more critical work to be done
- be pleasant only to inefficient workers; give them undeserved promotions with everybody watching
- Ensure inconsistencies in office resources and benefits
 - only some employees get Fridays off or to leave early
 - Larger portions or offices assigned for no reason
- Allow technology to fall behind (ex use computers and software from 2006)

#7 Lower the organizations morale

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How can you tell if morale is low?
 - Easy to find board members?
 - Easy to find new employees?

Employees

How employees can sabotage the organization (what to look out for as leaders)

#8 Work slowly

- Contrive as many interruptions to your work as you can.
- Engage in bickering, or displaying surliness and even stupidity.
- Non cooperative attitudes – simply places tools in different locations or hiding useful items – not replacing toilet paper roll, misplacing keys.

***Spot the difference: Rarely do people sabotage things they benefit from – coffee breaks – or perks

WARNING

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捨てないで下さい

DO NOT DUMB HERE
NO DUMB AREA

#8 Work slowly

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- Do people sabotage things they like or benefit from?
 - Highlight/compare the difference

#9 Work poorly and blame

- Will blame it on:
 - bad tools,
 - machinery, or
 - equipment.
 - Lack of training

Complain that these things are preventing from doing your job right.

- Don't clean up your work area, constantly leave messes in other work areas.

#9 Work poorly and blame

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How can you spot if blame is real or culture?
- How would you change the culture of blame at an org?

#10 Never pass on your skill and experience to a new or less skillful worker

- Never pass on your skill and experience to a new or less skillful worker.
- Provide no new training for anyone
 - Cyber security – employee falling for phishing attempts.

#10 Never pass on your skill and experience to a new or less skillful worker

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- Why would you do this?
- How do you do this?

#11 Hiring Employees who have resumes that switch jobs every year

- Hiring Employees who have resumes that switch jobs every year
- Either don't stick around so people can't spot them or are getting fired or dismissed as they are discovered

#11 Hiring Employees who have resumes that switch jobs every year

QUESTION/DISCUSSION

- How do you find employees?
- Are you actively recruiting or just hoping they respond?

Top 10 Board Governance Mistakes that will get you or your organization sued

Do's and Don'ts of Managing an Organization

#1 Failing to Understand your Fiduciary Duty

- When you volunteer to serve as a director or officer of a non-profit, you accept the responsibility to act in:
 - Good faith
 - Due care
 - Loyaltyand you accept the potential liability for failing to fulfill those duties
- No longer sufficient to rubber stamp or abstain from dicey decisions
- Real consequences when items fail

Due Care

- Exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably prudent personPrudent Director
 - Prudent not average but certainly not perfect
- reasonably prudent director would recognize that the information is revealing problems within the society that require further investigation and action – financials, or some form of behaviour complaint.
- —the courts will refrain from looking too closely with hindsight at the directors' strategic choices

Duty of Loyalty

misappropriation of organization property for a director's or officer's personal use,

taking of a commercial opportunity that properly belongs to the organisation,

disclosure of, or inappropriate reliance, on confidential information.

Pushing for items or projects to be done to benefit your kids vs the organization alone

#2 Too much deference to Executive Committee or Board Chair or Founder or even Executive Director

- No one committee, director, or individual can control the organization
- Executive Committee should not just be a mini board
- The chair does not have the power to override decisions of the board.
- The board has a duty to review the performance and set compensation for the chief executive and if necessary, censure or even terminate the chief executive.

#3 Avoiding the hard Questions

- Its uncomfortable to ask tough questions or to disagree with fellow board members
- group think rarely leads to sound decision-making
- set a tone that encourages a free exchange of ideas, both good and bad.
- Open, vigorous discussions about key issues should be encouraged.
- A board that passes every resolution unanimously should evaluate whether it needs to do more to encourage a thoughtful and open discussion.

#4 Insufficient Conflict Management

- Need a detailed conflict of interest policy
- Procedure in place to handle the decision – conflicted person out of the presentation, discussion and voiting (documented)
- If after considering alternatives, the board still finds the transaction with the insider is in the best interest of the organization, then the board should carefully document the basis for the decision and the fact that the interested director did not participate in the deliberations or vote.

#5 Lack of Awareness of Laws Governing

- Directors and officers are on the hook for:
 - Unpaid wages
 - Tax remittances for wages and GST
 - WorkSafe fines
 - Environmental damages
 - Decisions made that were grossly negligent or willfully blind
 - insurance

#6 Operating with outdated, or inconsistent governing documents

- not uncommon to see bylaws that call for voting members although no member votes have ever taken place; or
- bylaws with a term that calls for the cessation of the organization on a date that has long since passed.
- Frequently, these issues stem from copying another institution's bylaws without regard to the distinctions between the organizations or current law.
- conducting regular reviews of the governing documents and checking the bylaws before electing additional officers or directors, creating additional committees, adopting amendments, etc.

#7 Airing Disagreements outside the boardroom

- what happens in the boardroom stays in the boardroom. Inherent in the duty of loyalty that all board members must adhere to, is an implied duty of confidentiality.
- Once an issue is settled by board vote, the board members who voted against the majority must present a united front.
- If a vote is so disagreeable that a board member cannot carry on in this manner - resign!!
- board member could join together with other like-minded board members to bring a derivative suit to enforce the organization's rights.

#8 Recruiting and Selecting Board Members with due care

- Protect your board
- Don't just add people for the sake of adding people
- sometimes because we can't find anyone else.
- sometimes select influential and wealthy individuals because they will contribute substantial sums to the organization and connect us to their network of other influential and wealthy persons.
- select directors who are going to attend meetings, provide real oversight, and govern using their independent judgment.
- Provide massive training

#9 Failing to Document actions appropriately

- virtual transcripts of board meetings?? or
- minutes that only document actions without any mention of the process or deliberations.
- Documenting every discussion could create greater exposure for liability and makes it unlikely that minutes will be reviewed except in cases where we are looking for something specific.
- BUT, documenting only actions can result in a loss of institutional knowledge about why certain decisions were made and provide less evidentiary support of a board's due care in making decisions.
- Do we incorporate minutes of board committee meetings into our minute books? Do we even have minute books?

#10 Failing to hold people accountable or reviewing program effectiveness

- regular performance reviews to our executives
- Not just pats on the back (which we should do whenever deserved)
- hard look at deficiencies and take corrective actions
- document errors in judgment, complaints, abuses of authority
- Are we prepared to fire an executive even without malfeasance where he or she is just not getting the job done? And
- what about removing directors who don't show up at meetings or otherwise fail to fulfill their governance responsibilities?

Resources

Board Governance Insider:

Jon Close

<https://www.upclosejon.com/blog>