

How Are You Growing Your Bureaucracy?

The nature of bureaucracies and how to avoid them, for profitable quality.

Keith Sketchley

**Pacific Aircraft Maintenance Engineers Association
2009 Symposium**

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Short bio:

Keith has worked in various roles including repair design, aircraft performance, product development, certifier, manager, and consultant for many years.

He's been in the bush and snow of the Canadian north, offices, boardrooms, test labs, and stores, where he saw how things get done or not done.

Among experiences he likes to remember are helping flight crews in the High Arctic, directing flight tests of avionics systems as DER, aircraft modifications including at Pacific Western Airlines and Okanagan Helicopters, and many cases of true teamwork getting good things done both within and between organizations ranging from very small to huge.

He is registered as a Professional Engineer.

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“actualize the brand proposition”

What does that mean?
Will anything get done?

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How are you growing your bureaucracy? Hopefully you are not falling into that trap, because bureaucracy impairs efficiency and quality. But it is easy to, as organizations grow and try to improve coordination among more people and maintain quality – or just improve quality and efficiency.

Today I'll try to give you some understanding of why bureaucracies get that way, by examining underlying causes. I'll say what I believe is needed to prevent them, and leave you with a list of useful articles and books.

Much of what I say comes from seeing many things done well but too many done poorly, and perhaps making some of the mistakes myself. My examples will be negative, for the ultimate purpose of fostering the good.

Today I address people working in businesses, not in government bureaucracies because they have essential differences though the same underlying determiner – the values of their owners. Whatever your role I hope I can help you today. Owners have the strongest influence, but anyone can contribute – for example, if you push for a rule when the real cause of a problem is something else, that does not help in the long term.

Whether a Mega Motors or a small farm in middle Africa, doing the work is a challenge. Changing economics mean you need to be agile but able to judge when to change and how.

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- **examples with “what was going on?”** (phenomena)
 - buzz-speak example
 - financial bureaucracy (policy pushed but wrong info - AFE contradiction)
 - purchasing bureaucracy & iron rice bowl (gumboots)
 - Controlling Mentality
 - Obsessive about lunch time (hospital and hanger)
 - Don't talk to “them” (maintenance and pilots)
 - Not looking out the window (US Ordnance Board re Wright Brothers)
 - Fancy programs that didn't work
 - Fooling yourself (Boeing Wedgetail program)
 - SMS not effective (railway)
 - Ethics at large avionics company
 - Product improvement programs step backward
 - Can't do little things either, yes mistakes can be made.
 - Fixation leads to overlooking things

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- **why do those things occur? (the general nature of bureaucracies)**
 - Do something and everyone will understand and follow.
 - Think structure not people.
 - Believe they automatically know everything now and in future.
 - Get frustrated then use bad values
 - Want free lunch (dump security costs on you).

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- **what can you do to prevent growth of bureaucracy?**
 - Say it like it is (Shannahan in contrast to deliberate underestimating)
 - Perhaps with some diplomacy.(a story)
 - Facts of reality
 - Unspoken evaluations
 - Integrate.
 - Contradictions can't exist.
 - No politics
 - What it is
 - Cook story PW
 - Fire the politickers

 - Emphasize the end mission, within a values framework.
 - Explain the reasons /Increase communication and awareness.

 - Tricky aspect is standard procedures.
 - Need sound values and goals underlying your reasons.
 - Continuous improvement but validation challenge.

 - Learn from the mistakes of others including colleagues,
 - Remember what it was like as a grunt.

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- Popular does not mean practical nor moral.
- Think for yourself, out of the box but validate against reality.

- Fair dealings
- Deal with good people
- Lead (example of Craig Beard and Gerry Marsters).

- **Closure**

- People do it, right or wrong, the good deserve credit
- The same end result just longer and more costly?
- educational references
 - Keith's eclectic opinionated list. ☺
 - <http://www.keithsketchley.com/pamearef09.pdf>
 - Jeff Salzman example of mixed advice.