

Breaking Down The BDIP

The Anatomy of Muck

Muck. The obstacles, the shackles, the things that get in the way of people doing their best work. *Acoustic Leadership* introduced four different types of muck as BDIP, which stands for Bureacracy, Dinosaurs, Incidental Infrastructure, and People.

Here's a quick recap of the things you need to be on the lookout for. Are any of these muck monsters hiding in your office?

Bureacracy

This is defined as “excessively complicated administrative procedure” but it can be found in many forms. You probably recognized it the moment it smashes directly into your ambition; You are on a roll getting things done and suddenly everything grinds to a halt and you find yourself with your hands-tied and your frustration mounting. A few example of common bureaucracy muck:

- Red tape
- Excessive approval steps required
- Unnecessary layers of hierarchy
- Policy that applies to everyone but was created with one person in mind

Dinosaurs

Have you ever asked yourself, “why do we do this exactly?” We've always done it. Everyone does it, but no one is exactly sure why and not entirely sure who it benefits.

T-Rex, my friends!

These megalodons of muck are those processes, procedures, protocols that maybe we inherited, were passed down from a previous leader, or simply status quo work that eats up more time than it creates value.

These look different in every organization, but a few good questions to ask to eliminate Jurassic Junk:

- Why do we have this policy?
- Is this worth the time, energy, and money it takes to do this?
- What are the benefits of this approach and who benefits?
- What would happen if we simply – stopped?



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Incidental Infrastructure

Consider a casino – every design element in the building, from a lack of clocks to “free” drinks to a maze-like setup that makes it hard to find your way out - all of these things are in place to drive a few key behaviors: spend more money and don’t leave. And often, we don’t even these hidden elements are motivating our behaviors and decisions.

The same things exist at work. From speed to productivity, to cost savings and recognition, we often see well-intentioned motivators have unintended behavioral byproducts. Consider the frameworks and the structural motivators in place – are these things motivating behavior that benefits your organization?

Your organization values productivity, so much so that people are inclined to perform a whole lot of tasks to show that they are doing an insane amount of work. But is it the right work?

A few key questions here: What are we motivating people to do? Is what they are motivated to do helping the big picture? What are the incidental outputs of our motivators and are they magic...or muck?

What behaviors get:

- Recognized
- Promoted
- Resources
- Punished

And are those behaviors serving the greater good?

People

When we factor in the incidental infrastructure and combine it with personal motivation, we often see good people performing poorly. Some of the frequent examples:

- The micromanager – The desire for control leads to them applying an overly directive approach to others when a hands-off style is more warranted.
- The firefighter – Motivated to please everyone, suddenly everything is urgent and on fire, when we know for a fact not everything is a priority.
- The climber – motivated by recognition and the desire to elevate themselves, they throw others under the bus to move ahead.



Time to get the muck out.