



## Chapter 22

### **Hazing as an Art Form**

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Sent: Sunday, April 2 at 9:49 pm  
From: CEO  
To: Management Team  
Subject: Performance Transparency

Team,

Let's face it, we've got a performance problem on our team. I'd like to see a stack ranking of all the PMs based on the amount of Q2 revenue they've managed and their respective gross margins. Once we have that, I'd like to call a meeting, get them all in a room, and put some feet to the fire. The slackers need to know who's carrying their weight and the performers need to be publicly rewarded for their hard work and accomplishments. I don't have a problem sending this report to allstaff@ either so let's plan on doing that directly after the meeting.

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This is a business, not summer camp. And you are the leader, responsible for inspiration and positive motivation, but also for administering the smackdown when it's required. Peak performance means cracking the whip every now and again, so if you have to do it, do it right and do it hard.

Great leaders are masters of discipline and obedience. Oftentimes this means making your authority and your expectations crystal clear. Not only do you need to lead by example, you need to make examples of those who are not taking your leadership and your

requirements seriously. There should be nowhere in your organization to hide and nowhere to run when the going gets tough.

There are many proven techniques and methodologies when the situation requires the reset of performance standards. Stack ranking is an effective way to let everyone know who the performance winners and losers are. The people on the top of the stack will be seen as exemplary performers, respected and revered. The people on the bottom of the stack will be seen as slackers and *the bag to drag* for others. This will cause a tribal phenomenon known as *corporacide*—a cost effective and swift method for making room for new talent.

Three-hundred-sixty-degree anonymous feedback is also an effective way to publicize humiliation and shame that are deserved for lack of performance. Being anonymous in nature, it allows for brutally honest feedback, which is often needed by those too clueless to recognize their own laziness or ineffectiveness. Peak performers need to vent their frustration with their coworkers, and anonymous feedback is a fantastic way to accomplish your mission for both the giver and the receiver of the feedback.

Leadership means sometimes it's going to hurt them a lot more than it's going to hurt you. So be swift, decisive, and make every whack count.

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## Let's Get Real

Kiss your culture goodbye if you resort to shame, humiliation, or bullying. Bullying and abuse do nothing but degrade and debase your employees, and not only are they wrong and unethical, they are downright dangerous. These practices can inflict lasting emotional damage to those who are subjected to them as well as those who are forced to administer them. They can cause permanent damage to personal confidence while derailing careers. In the worst cases, they can incite violence, retribution, and self-harm.

As a leader, you are 100 percent responsible for the safety and well-being of your employees at all times. Ensuring that abuse is not happening anywhere in your organization is on you. If it happens below you, deal with it immediately by terminating the abusers. If it happens above you, report it to your state's department of labor immediately, and include specifics.

Bullying happens in the workplace at a much higher rate than most of us realize. The Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) defines bullying as “repeated mistreatment: sabotage by others that prevented work from getting done, verbal abuse, threatening conduct, intimidation, and humiliation”. Just the fact that the WBI exists should be troubling enough for most employers and employees alike. And to prove the point, 2010 poll conducted by Zogby International for WBI showed that fully 37% of the total US workforce had been bullied at work. What's even more frightening is that an additional WBI report showed that 52% of time employees reported that employers did nothing to stop the bullying.\*

\* Brené Brown, “3 Ways to Kill Your Company's Idea Stifling Shame Culture,” *Fast Company*, September 13, 2012, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3001239/3-ways-kill-your-companys-idea-stifling-shame-culture>.

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# (How Not to) Be a Leader

by Mary E. Marshall & Kim Obbink

*(How NOT to) Be a Leader* is the first in a series of how-not-to guides for newly minted leaders looking to avoid becoming feared or hated losers in the ivory tower or veteran leaders looking in the rearview mirror wondering where and why they ran off the road. Irreverent and hilarious, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* shines a big bright spotlight on the oh-so-common mistakes that many leaders make when they plow forward through life and business without taking the time to really consider the effect their leadership is having on others. We've all seen and heard the horror stories of bad leadership, and hopefully many of us have been lucky enough to have been the benefactor of truly great leadership. Either way, if it's your turn at the top, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* will help you understand what you can do to be a better leader by first understanding what you should never ever do; and if you are, why you should back up the truck, take another look at yourself and your leadership qualities, and do the work and self-reflection needed to get back on track.

Why this book series? Having been in the leadership trenches for a combined fifty years, we've seen a lot. Some good, some bad, and some really, really horrible. There was no guide for us, and we want to help all those leaders who will come after us. Not with a boring manifesto about a fictional leader who only exists in a book, but with real-life stories we've experienced or even perpetrated ourselves and vow never to repeat.

This book consists of twenty-four characteristics that you don't want to be known for. Not all twenty-four will apply to you and a few might resonate louder than others. What was it you heard in your last 360? Micromanaging doesn't work? You aren't listening? You want everyone to do it your way? You might have a few to work on, and our challenge to you is to choose three or four that seem the most immediate and start working on those. Once you've mastered them, take on a few more. And certainly share the book with those around you whose leadership styles need a little polish.

Should you accept this leadership challenge, you will be able to quickly identify twenty-four ineffective leadership traits and make changes to positively address them. Through the stories in this book, you will learn how to avoid the pitfalls of leadership, how to be a better leader, and, most importantly, how to pass good leadership on to those you lead.

*Available now from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in print and Kindle formats.*

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and follow her blog on leadership development and entrepreneurship:  
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