

Vampire Extermination Expeditions

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Have you ever asked yourself, “Why am I doing this?” “Why is this report necessary?” Experience shows me many people spend valuable time, effort and energy doing unnecessary or redundant work. The larger the organization the worse the problem becomes.

I worked for the Federal government and Lord knows we wasted a lot of time doing unnecessary work--sometimes called, “busy work.” It sounds like a Dilbert cartoon, but it is true. “Let’s count something so it looks like we are working” mentality. In fact, I knew of entire departments performing functions no longer needed adding no value what-so-ever.

Any function or process failing to add value to the business is what I call a ***“vampire function.”*** Superstitions aside, a vampire is dead, but still can drain the life out of its victims. Vampire functions serve the same purpose. Vampire functions consume precious resources and have little influence on anything important. Smart managers find out how much time people spend doing unnecessary work--vampire functions.

Take for example . . . meetings. Most meetings create that sucking sound. They are a big; black hole of wasted of time. I knew one CEO who forbids all meetings. He told all his managers if they had something important to say to get off their duffs and go tell their people individually. As a result the company started making more money and communication improved.

Consider red tape and unnecessary paperwork. Each year businesses generate 2.5 trillion pieces of paper. One-third of that are forms. Corporations spend \$100 billion each year in processing forms. Ask yourself what forms and paperwork can I exterminate? Here is other vampire functions to consider:

- Waste and rework
- Steps and tasks not adding value to the process
- Unnecessary meetings
- Counting things that don't need counting
- Completing reports that no one looks at
- Filing reports no one will ever look at
- People doing the same thing in different departments

Vampire Extermination Expedition Team

The only good vampire is a dead vampire. I know several businesses that took my advice and created their own Vampire Extermination Expedition team. They took a negative situation and put a humorous spin on it. Here is how it works.

1. Select about 6 team members from the organization. Try to get volunteers-they are more motivated. They should come from different departments. Run the expedition for no longer than 3 weeks each year.
2. Create a vampire extermination nomination form and pass out to all employees.
3. Inform the organization and have all employees nominate their “vampires.” Make sure you first let everyone know their job is not in jeopardy; otherwise, they will not tell you what you need to know. Unless they trust you they will protect their job.
4. Instantly trade their nomination forms with a coffee cup, \$5.00 or other form of recognition. Have a random drawing or a contest for the biggest (most wasteful function) vampire.
5. Have the team evaluate all nominations and decide what needs to be exterminated, changed or revised.
6. Inform the organization of what is exterminated or what is revised. Calculate the savings generated from the exterminated functions.
7. Have a ceremonial burial of all the exterminated vampire functions. Make it fun-have a celebration.

There are a few critical steps left off on this process, but most importantly, insure you do this in a fun and light-hearted manner or it will fail and even possibly backfire. Most people will respond favorably to this. The key is to make it short term, high intensity and “encourage” everyone to participate. If you like my company to help you run your own Vampire Extermination Expedition, please call us at 800-821-2487.

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