



Only cross-departmental education and awareness can serve to catch these problems before they can infect or otherwise damage a company, and the role of executives in ensuring this is vital. Not only in practical terms of ensuring that educational & awareness systems are present in the first place and mandating that employees must utilise these in order to share the burden of responsible protection around, but also in theoretical terms in accepting that recommendations to make quite integral changes are not an attempt to intrude upon their fiefdom but genuine measures to safeguard all elements of the corporate body (and by extension, their own job). A bad system can be temporary, but a bad attitude can be terminal.

A second way in which executives can help manage the problems from within is to lead by example and practice what, hopefully by this point, they will preach. Business culture stems from the highest levels and the approach of 'do as I say, not as I do' worked wonders for Henry VIII, but represents the worst possible world for corporates. Executives must set the example by adopting far greater rigor and scrutiny in all their daily professional activities, implementing whatever measures are necessary to improve the security of their company, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and togetherness that does not 'cut corners' when it comes to addressing, and mitigating, vulnerabilities in key areas.

One example of this was seen in the case of an individual who worked for three successive industrial firms in the area of nuclear safety – but with no qualifications to do so. A lack of diligence on the part of the companies meant that this did not stop him, however. From each, he was asked to leave after six months once the deception became clear, but each CEO in turn offered a year's salary as 'hush money' and did not alert the wider community, due to sheer embarrassment at their company's operating a system where an unqualified individual can take a senior nuclear safety post.

All advisements in this paper can be made to CEOs and board-level directors on all the topics of this 'Executive Orders' series: their thoughts, words and deeds form the bedrock of corporate action; and this can, at its best, allow companies to flourish based on sensible and careful planning, and at its worst, condemn them to ruin due to arrogance, ignorance and greed. Executives have a duty to set the tone for their whole organisation: if they refuse to acknowledge their own limitations or biases, act rashly and ignore the warnings and advice of those whose sole function it is to provide such warnings, what is the rest of the company to think? Moreover, just as embarrassing, instances of fraud or business collapse reflect badly on an executive in the short term, an unwillingness or inability to fix the practices & systems that enable bad decisions has a much more long-term effect. Examples must be set from the top down.

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Heavy is the head that wears the crown, but so long as it is also a sensible one, the worst excesses of the corporate malaise can be avoided.

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