

Are the “monkey’s” running your Zoo ?

An article written by Dr Steven A Saunders. Business consultant with more than 30 years experience dealing with people issues in small and large, private and public business.

Whether you are a Director, Business Owner or Manager you need to be on guard to ensure that your “monkey’s” are not running your Zoo”.

You may well ask *“what are the early warning signs of this happening?”*

here are the warning signs...

1. The “monkey” (be they CEO, line manager or staffer) will have come to the conclusion that the job is bigger than their capabilities. Depending on their intelligence and the scope of their agenda, the “monkey” will have a timeline spanning a few months to several years.
2. The “monkey” works out who the strong people are, be they board members or managers (or you) and starts a campaign to discredit you. Normally the favourite tactic is to isolate you by talking to anyone whom (they suspect) is malleable and willing to listen, then sets about to systematically “poison the well” (your well).
3. The “monkey” picks off key people one by one and shows a remarkable willingness to talk to them about you whilst at the same time shows an even more remarkable unwillingness to talk to you directly. Perhaps because they know you will put them back in their place.

The most common trigger factor for the “monkey” is their realization that you are “onto them and their tricks”. This response usually follows the discovery (by you) that the “monkey” can and is getting things wrong. (“monkey’s” have an extreme aversion to being made to look like a “monkey”.)

Generally, most of this happens behind your back or when you are out of town. It is not helped when you are cut out of selected important information. At the same time the “monkey” will bombard you with useless information in the hope that you will stop reading all the detail. Hidden amongst the trivia are the real facts that you need to get your head around.

Working in the shadows, the “monkey” hatches a cunning and seemingly plausible plan to get rid of you so that he/she can take control of the business and run it according to his/her agenda. Often this is an elaborate cover up for failure on the job or, even more concerning, part of a self serving desire for increased status or monetary gain or both.

Additional contributing factors can be obsessional personality disorders, stress, depression, delusions of grandeur or major feelings of insecurity. Whatever!

With the “monkey” asserting themselves in this manner and with your colleagues apparently falling for his/her story you cannot be blamed for feeling a lot of self doubt. “Did I really do things that badly?” “should I just go and let my colleagues and the “monkey” get on with it? Or what?

About now the “monkey” is gaining in confidence and runs the risk of overstepping the mark. You are feeling very alone. However, truth prevails over personally and politically motivated agenda’s and provided that you have the insight and ammunition to “shoot the “monkey”” you will come out on top with the “monkey” leaving (fired, resigned for personal reasons or is paid out (sigh!!!!))

Usually the “monkey’s” end up in a showdown situation and they come to the proverbial gunfight armed with just a knife.

Lessons to be learned.

First and foremost recruit right. Do your reference checking even though you think you might not have to because the person may be known to someone you know or more commonly, is employed in another role within your company.

Be strong, trust no one, examine everything, believe nothing, stay in touch. Do not be intimidated by threats or lawyers. The “monkey” would have done it all before!!!

Sit and reflect. While you will have lost some sleep you will have gained valuable experience and, just maybe, the respect of your colleagues.

Post Script

The writer has, in his more than 30 years of private business consultancy experience, seen the “monkey” (trying to) run the Zoo , having witnessed or been part of this phenomenon on many occasions. Getting on top of the situation quickly and with force is the only way forward for your business. Do not procrastinate. Do not be bullied. Stay calm and deal with it.

You might like to purchase my book entitled
Pricks, Losers and Well Poisoners© – *positive strategies for dealing with negative people.*

Available on our website. www.drstevensaunders.com