

## **KEEP PEOPLE IN THE DARK, ALWAYS**

You might've heard of mushroom management. If you didn't, here's a quick paste from the Wikipedia page about it:

“Mushroom management is a style of management in which the personnel are not familiar with the ideas or the general state of the company and are given work without knowing its purpose.”

If you end up reading the whole Wikipedia entry, you'll think that mushroom management is something terrible. Yes, it's awful if you're not the manager. However, it's a fantastic tool to cement your position if you are one.

Let's list some of the things Wikipedia mentions as problems of mushroom management.

- Negative employee attitudes and lower commitment
- Reverse mushroom behavior (employees behaving in similar ways as management, i.e., not telling information)
- The limited ability of employees to understand or contribute to the organization

Problems? Hell no! For you, those are the ideal conditions.

**A negative employee attitude** should not concern you. If they were better at winning in life, they wouldn't put themselves in that position (or be long enough in it). Their problem is your gain. Positivity within the team might grow into motivation, and motivation might develop into the desire for promotion.

When they start eyeing your position, then you're fucked!

**Reverse mushroom behavior?** If you, as a manager, let that happen, you're doing it wrong. You are their boss. YOU are in control. You can always force them to spill the beans, as you have the tools and levers to pull to do so.

This can be done by creating a policy of detailed reporting of their daily activities. For example, make them fill in a timesheet daily before exiting the office building.

Never take your employees' word for anything. It's crucial to surveil your employees all the time. Use the software that controls their computers; there's plenty

of it on the market. Last but not least, constantly micromanage them.

**The limited ability of employees to understand**

what's going on is another plus for you as a manager. They're not there to understand. They are there to produce the minimum of work that will get you higher up the hierarchy.

By keeping people in the dark, you're lowering the chance of your position being endangered. You're keeping your subordinates in line and retaining control. The only person that shouldn't be held in the dark is YOU!

## WALTER THE FUNGICULTURIST

Our small team of three, with Walter at the helm, was cozy yet challenging. Walter wasn't just our tech lead but our country manager. This setup might sound ideal for tight-knit collaboration, but Walter had a different playbook.

His strategy? Keep us apart. For reasons only Walter seemed to understand, he made sure we never worked together on the same projects. It was as if he wanted to prevent any strong team bonds from forming.

Now and then, a project would come along that screamed for our combined efforts. Our skills complemented each other, promising a perfect blend for success. Yet, Walter would shut down any suggestion of teamwork, waving the banner of some made-up "company policy."

His insistence on separation didn't just slow us down; it sowed seeds of frustration. The potential for a dynamic, collaborative effort was right there, but Walter's unwarranted barriers kept it just out of reach.

The more we observed, the clearer it became: Walter was playing a game of self-preservation. He hoarded knowledge and gatekept the system we were all

contributing to, convinced that giving us more access would make him less essential. In his mind, our ignorance was his job security.

This approach made for a stifling environment. Innovations that could have sparked from our joint efforts remained unexplored. Opportunities for growth, both for the projects and for us as professionals, were lost in Walter's shadow.

Despite the challenges, the three of us managed to find ways to share insights and support each other, even if it had to be under Walter's radar. We learned to read between the lines of his "policies" and, in doing so, cultivated a quiet resilience among ourselves.

Walter's leadership style was a lesson in what not to do. It demonstrated how fear of becoming replaceable could lead to counterproductive management tactics. As for us, we took it as a reminder that collaboration, openness, and mutual support are the true engines of progress in any team.