

## **AFTER THE STORM: HOW TO GET PAST THE EFFECTS OF A BAD ADMINISTRATOR**

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### **Abstract**

According to the 2007 ACE *American College President Study*, the average University President tenure is 8.5 years, Provost tenure is 4.7 years, Business School Dean 3.2 years and Marketing Department Chair is estimated to be less than 3 years. In a typical 20 year career of a faculty member, that translates into 21 different administrators. During that time, virtually every marketing educator is going to be exposed to at least one extremely bad or damaging administrator. We're not talking about the administrator that is disorganized or complacent or even incompetent. We're talking about a damaging, hurtful administrator that does seemingly irreparable harm to the department or college. Once the administrator has been relieved of his or her job responsibilities (the storm passes), what can be done to put the pieces back together to get the department of marketing or college of business back on track (clean up the situation and get back to normal)? This session offered a systematic way to deal with the situation.

Often the damage goes way past simply lowering morale or infighting among colleagues. Much of the damage is in the form of structural and infrastructure issues. In many cases, the consequences will felt for decades. First, Jack Schibrowsky and Alexander Nill discussed the specifics of performing a situation analysis similar to the process used in states like New Jersey and Louisiana. They demonstrated the need to identify short term and long term strategies to minimize the damage in the long run. They talked about the problems associated with dealing with structural damage that cannot be fixed by simply ignoring it. They used the after effects of Sandy Katrina as a case study. Next, Gail Ball discussed the recruitment process used to hire a replacement. She presented the potential problems and pitfalls associated with recruiting a replacement. Third, Ludmilla Wells and Stuart Van Auken presented some of their research on rebuilding camaraderie among employees and generating momentum to "fix" community problems rather than simply focusing on self interest. Micol Maughan presented his work on leadership skills needed to lead the academic unit out of the current situation. Jack Schibrowsky and Jim Cross then presented some of their research on community rebuilding after the disaster relief goes away. Jim Cross presented the findings from the sociology and counseling literature

that has applications to this type of “dysfunctional family.” Finally, Jack Schibrowsky provided a review of recent business books that should be on the reading list for faculty members dealing with the effects of a really bad administrator, such as:

- "Grateful Leadership, Using the Power of Acknowledgment to Engage All Your People and Achieve Superior Results," Judith W. Umlas.
- "Mean Girls at Work: How to Stay Professional When Things Get Personal." Katherine Crowley and Kathi Elster.
- "Taking People With You: The Only Way to Make Big Things Happen." David Novak

Finally, this literature was summarized and a framework for developing a plan to fix the structural damage, rebuild camaraderie and trust among faculty members, and to move the organization towards a cohesive team was presented. Attendees left with a specific set of recommendations for putting the pieces back together. This special session was designed to be of interest to all marketing educators, whether or not they have had a bad experience with an administrator. It is a must for any faculty member contemplating a move into administration, since they often follow a storm in the role of administrator.