

Rules of Bureaucracy

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Bureaucracy - An administrative system, especially in a government, that divides work into specific categories carried out by special departments of non-elected officials

Bureaucrat – An individual who operates as a functionary in a Bureaucracy within specific guidelines of authority.

Rule 1 – Bureaucracies exist for their own survival.

Rule 2 – Bureaucracies are stronger than the individuals who are in them, and stronger than an individual's ability to change them, which is why it is beneficial to be part of a bureaucracy.

Rule 3 – The best way to bring about Bureaucratic change is to use the weight and mechanisms of a bigger bureaucracy against the weight and mechanisms of the Bureaucracy that you want to change, or to use the weight and mechanisms of the Bureaucracy against itself. To bring about that change you have to be creative and smarter than the Bureaucracy, but it is easier and more effective to work within a system than by becoming a martyr. (In the movie "Wargames" the Whopper Computer was defeated by asking it to play itself in game of Tic-Tac-Toe.)

Rule 4 – To fight a Bureaucracy on "issues," you have to overwhelm it with details.

Rule 5 – A True Bureaucrat creates new rules, procedures, and organizational changes with limited feedback for the primary purpose of making sure that the rest of the Bureaucracy knows that the True Bureaucrat is in charge. For changes to succeed they must empower the Bureaucrat rather than displace him/her because "nature abhors a vacuum."

Rule 6 – The pen may be mightier than the sword (as long as you keep your head attached), but the electron (Internet) is faster than the pen. The enhanced 21st century communication speed is why our rate of change seems to be so accelerated.

21st Century Technology Codicil

The pen is mightier than the sword if you manage to keep your head attached, but an electron is more powerful than the sword. And faster.

June 7, 2020