

The Creeping Grey Hoard

(Part 2 of a 2-part series)

Last month we mused about how the same bureaucratic symptoms of difficulty for the Roman, Russian, and British Empires, are confronting Western societies now. We suggested that perhaps the situation should be examined before it is too late to adjust, especially in Canada which is 'small' enough to adapt, yet influential enough to make a difference. This month we continue.....

Four personalities

The last paper described Hippocrates' message of 350 B.C. about four types of personalities: the active, the detail-oriented, the venturesome, and the people-centered behaviors (which CCCC labeled as P, A, V and F¹). CCCC demonstrates to companies that their operations need all four to be in balance. Each of the four has its strengths and each has its inherent weaknesses. Any one temperament left to work on its own will prove to be dysfunctional resulting in an operational disaster. Since statistics show a population distribution of 'A' at the highest with 39.9%, 'A' will end up dominating any society. Since we need P, A, V and F in balance for success, the dysfunctionality of the dominant one (A) is bound to cause difficulties.

Why we need all four personalities; [The creeping grey hoard and its manifestation](#); – Hyperlink

How creep begins

'A' persons are cautious, laid back, logical, organized, delve into details, thorough, want to know where things are going, think things over carefully before responding, and are careful before acting. Above all, the 'A' person seeks to exercise control over his or her situation. Thus, they dislike: being forced to respond right away, being rushed to a solution, not knowing the whole picture; they dislike risk, loss of control, imprecise answers and the unknown. Therefore, the jobs that attract 'A' personalities are those demanding detail (and other 'A' traits) such as positions in engineering, science, accounting, computer programming, and administration. Where are these positions found? Mainly in universities, journalism, civil service, and teaching, to name a few.

How creep develops

If we examine the schools, universities, newspapers, the city governments, the police, fire departments, hospitals, the provincial governments and the federal government – not to mention the political parties of caution (the Liberals in Canada and the Democrats in the U.S.), we have included an awful lot of people-endeavors within the society. Bit by bit, over the decades and the centuries, each of these 'A' areas slowly and inexorably pick up steam and prestige until the admin sector outnumbers the population in the other sector, called, the private sector. When the public-sector population outnumbers the private-sector population, that is, the society administrators outnumber the society's doers, we face the proverbial more-chiefs-than-Indians syndrome. "Houston, we have a problem!"

Examples

An example is computerization – one we are able to do very little about. But, almost daily updates to the driving software of our computers make that software larger and larger. For we users, the manifestation is more strokes needed for each selection. I once calculated that a single change to a basic part of

¹ P = Producer, A = Analyzer, V = Visionary, F = Friend.

Microsoft software (at ½ second per stroke) would demand 40 hours per year from me from now on – a full working week.

My flavor of the week is the strike by college professors in Ontario in October and November 2017 which directly penalized the paying students (the clients). In my view it is immoral to intentionally deprive our youth of the education they have paid for and rightly expect for their fees. But that is a secondary point to this paper. The main point to be made here stems from the view of the professors, in attempting to improve their working conditions. It appears to be: 'I will achieve my goals at any price. My own interests come before my clients' interests, and definitely before the tax payers' (most of whom are in the private sector)'. Improved conditions for a sector of society which already has pay and other working condition well above the private-sector workers, has to cost the society something.

Did you know that the largest cheque that every medium to large business in Canada writes each month goes to the Government and not to the owners? 'I only wish it was mine' say the helpless owners. That is, the greatest single financial beneficiary of business in Canada is the Government of Canada.

The solution for the creeping grey hoard

The solution may not seem simple, but it is quite doable. CCCC has a model: when CCCC works with companies, it continually checks that PAVF is in balance; it checks a dozen parameters, including that bureaucracy is not growing too fast and that visioning (in the form of listening) is being allowed to thrive.

In your own company you can feel this grey-hoard trend when making individual requests or decisions has become difficult, when administration has power over the sales or R & D depts., or when the company is slow to respond to the need for minor adaptations.

As for society, it must continually check the creeping growth of administration vs. the private sector and rein in the administration when it gets so large as to tip the scale off balance.

How could we do that? We could start by agreeing that the cost of public-sector services shall not exceed 50% of all services (although that percentage should be seriously debated, first). We could agree that no government has the right to issue a budget with a deficit except under condition of emergency – that style of emergency being defined beforehand such as war or some serious national threat.

The road ahead

Of course, if we choose to ignore the issue, our modern societies will collapse. Will it be 50 years or 75 years from now? Something else will fill the void – it always has, and it always will. The void filler is usually dramatic at first, until it sorts itself out after a few decades of chaos.

I leave to others to fabricate a useful private-vs.-public-sector monitoring system; I don't expect to be here 50 years from now.

Bill