

Silent Killers! - Toxic Leaders?

Michael Walton

Management Consultant and Visiting Professor, Department of Managerial Psychology and Sociology,
Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Republic

Abstract

Purpose

To counter the continuing high rate of executive failures this paper suggests a more forensic approach be adopted in the appointment of executives. It advocates Corporate Boards together with top and senior management consider the use of psychometric profiling - combined with regular monitoring of an executive's 'behaviour-in-context' following their appointment - to guard against the emergence of toxic leadership behaviours.

Derived from executive coaching experiences, and research, this paper highlights differing examples of dysfunctional and toxic leadership. The term 'Covid-Tox' is introduced to describe the pervasive virus-like presence of dysfunctional, destructive, counter-productive and fraudulent behaviour in the workplace and suggests ways through which such behaviour may be countered.

Findings

Its main findings are that that an assessment of the leader's performance should be based on their 'behaviour-in-context' and involve regular post-appointment monitoring as a defence against the emergence of toxic leadership.

Keywords: Corporate psychopathy, deviant workplace behaviour, toxic leadership, Executive 'behaviour-in-context', Executive selection, psychometrics, White-collar crime, 'Covid-Tox'

Management Insight (2021). DOI: 110.21844/mijia.17.1.4

Introduction

The purpose of this research-based article is to highlight the pervasive virus-like presence of counter-productive and toxic behaviour in the workplace and the damage such behaviour does to business organisations. Its widespread presence suggests that such patterns of behaviour should be anticipated and planned for if we are to guard against toxic leadership taking over business life.

High-profile leadership failures continue to be regularly reported in the press; fraud and white-collar crime continue unabated seriously damaging trust in business institutions and in leaders across the globe. These continuing failures raise questions about what can be done to reduce their frequency and to limit the damage of such transgressions and arrest the erosion of trust in those in positions of power and responsibility (Aasland et al, 2010).

One problem I believe is that organisations continue to

Corresponding Author: Michael Walton, Management Consultant and Visiting Professor, Department of Managerial Psychology and Sociology, Prague University of Economics and Business, Czech Republic,
Email: michael.walton@btinternet.com

How to cite this article: Walton M. (2020). Silent Killers! - Toxic Leaders? Management Insight, 17(1) 27-36

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

Received: 04.05.2021; **Accepted:** 14.06.2021; **Published:** 14.07.2021

be viewed and managed 'as if' they are logical-rational institutions. So far as interpersonal behaviour is concerned organisations remain fundamentally dynamic, emotion-rich *political* entities. As such they come complete with all the rivalries and tensions that can be triggered when people work together. The inherent - but invariably suppressed - emotionality of business life combined with the competitive dynamics of career-focused employees generates the potential for exploitative, dysfunctional and anti-social workplace behaviour in the workplace (Kets de Vries, 2001, 2011; Lubit, 2002; Ortenblad, 2021; Walton, 2005, 2007, 2015a, b).

So this article describes such patterns of behaviour as being 'virus-like' and proposes remedial treatments which revolve around (i) more rigorous selection processes combined with (ii) regular transparent monitoring of executive 'behaviour-in-context' as defences against leadership toxicity and organisational decline.

Introducing 'Covid-Tox' or 'C-Tox'

In the business world we have our own equivalent to the Covid-19 virus which I will refer to in this article as 'Covid-Tox' or 'C-Tox' for short. It is a wide-reaching 'virus-like' contagion which is capable of infecting every dimension of business life. It damages people, stunts and paralyzes organisational functioning, can wreck the bottom line and has the potential to corrupt people and generate corrupt organizations (Pinto et al 2008). Whilst, unlike Covid-19, it does not kill, disable, or destroy lives in the same terminal and profoundly distressing manner as Covid-19 it nevertheless remains 'a killer' in the damage it does to business life in general and to the mental well-being of employees in particular. Covid-Tox behaviours corrupts people and organisations.

It is a matter of regret that the assertive, forceful, and determined actions that have emerged in response to the Covid-19 virus remain absent in the response by businesses to highlight and tackle the long-standing challenges posed by C-Tox

My definition for 'Covid-Tox' *phenomena* includes bullying, physical, mental, psychological & sexual assault as well as fraudulent activity, intimidation & humiliation, harassment, exploitation, abusive behaviour, destructive assent and the mis-use of the power and the trust vested in executive appointments. Such Covid-Tox behaviours are common-place at work although invariably hidden from view. Behaviours which include leadership toxicity and criminality in its various forms which undermine trust and damage the integrity of an organisation and are detrimental to the well-being of employees.

There is however a problem in that unlike Covid-19 though, C-Tox is particularly difficult to identify, contain, and counter because it resides within - and

emanates from - those occupying positions of organisational authority, influence and trust. Complicating matters even more, the 'Covid-Tox' virus presents differently depending (i) on the organisation in which it emerges, (ii) the psychological characteristics of the perpetrator(s) and (iii) the target! In this respect Covid-tox could be said to 'mutate' depending on the perpetrator's assessment of the culture of the 'host' organisation and what they decide they can get away with without being caught or disadvantaged!

Toxic and destructive *leadership* will present in various guises such as (i) varying behavioural abuses at the individual Executive and at Executive Board level (Finklestein, 2003 ; Micklethwait and Diamond, 2017, (ii) through outright Criminality and Fraud (Anand et al, 2004; Ashforth, 1997; pwc, 2020; Levi, 2017)(iii) through executive greed (Hamilton and Micklethwait, 2006; Newton, 2006; Smith, 2021), (iv) through sociopathy and anti-social behaviour (Babiak and Hare, 2006 ; Boddy, 2011; Kets de Vries, 2014: Tourish, 2013, Wellons, 2012), and (vii) by all forms of bullying & intimidation (Fitness, 2008). Many of the above describe different facets of the traditional 'seven deadly sins' of Leadership – Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy and excess Pride (Bendeian, 1995; Walton, 2007)

It is clear from media reporting that corporate fraud is not uncommon and so called 'white-collar crime' persists relatively unabated in spite of the increased emphasis in recent years placed on financial and regulatory safeguards - and on audit procedures (Anand et al, 2005; Cressey, 1953; Perri and Mieczkowska, , 2015). PWC's 2020 global survey 'Fighting Fraud: A Never-Ending Battle' cites senior management (i.e., our corporate leaders!) as being responsible for at least 26% of such crimes.

Edelman's Trust Barometer (2021) indicates '... a growing trust gap and trust declines worldwide, people are looking for leadership and solutions as they reject talking heads who they deem not credible. In fact, none of the societal leaders we track - government leaders, CEOs, journalists and even religious leaders - are trusted to do what is right, with drops in trust scores for all.' The survey finds '... CEO's credibility is at all-time lows in several countries, including Japan (18 percent) and France (22 percent), making the challenge for CEO

leaders even more acute as they try to address today's problems.'

The primary difficulty in arresting the spread of toxicity within organisations is that once 'organisational toxicity' takes hold it - as with a virus - has the potential to poison and corrupt the very fabric of the host organisation. Essentially the organisation is then at danger from internal self-destruct processes.

From my experience a significant 'release-mechanism' for toxicity is a person's elevation to a top or very senior leadership position *combined with* internal instability in the organisation concerned. It should be noted that organisations are particularly susceptible to toxicity taking hold during periods of prolonged stress and strain - such as during periods of major structural change as well as when defending against external threats such as aggressive competitor activity and hostile takeover bids. Organisational instability can provide a toxically-inclined executive with sufficient 'cover' for their latent toxicity to surface..

Now, if such behaviour is so prevalent, so persistent and so commonplace one has to wonder why such behaviour in the workplace has not been outlawed? One answer could simply be that over time dysfunctional behaviours have become normalised and accepted even though they remain counter-productive. Where for example workplace transgressions which may have been initially ignored, or explained away, become the norm and then accepted as such. An alternative explanation could simply be that addressing such behavioural transgressions by senior executives may have been considered as just too difficult to tackle resulting in inaction and thus enabling toxicity to become established.

Leaders can go astray!

Because of the seniority of their positions top and senior executives are well placed to exploit their position and make decisions designed to benefit their own situation rather than that of the organisation. This is not to suggest that all executives may wish to act in such ways but invariably some will seek to exploit situations for the own advantage and to the detriment of their employing organisation. Not all executives either have a

malevolent component in their psychological make-up nor will energetic, ambitious, and innovative executives be necessarily motivated primarily by self-interest. But some will be! Toxic Executives behaviour is especially difficult to constrain because of the political power they wield and the scope they have to make or break people's careers. Research suggests that highly ambitious managers are more prepared to violate ethical codes of conduct, exploit others and adopt coercive policies in order to further their interests (Garrard and Robinson, 2016;; Kets de Vries, 2012; Owen, 2018; Padilla et al, 2007, Zglidopoulos et al, 2009). There is also a solid body of sub-clinical psychometrics research from which predictions can be made about a person's potential for future toxicity (Babiak and Hare, 2006; Hogan, 2007). The extent to which such insight and research is being used in the appointment and behavioural monitoring of executives is open to question and no doubt more could - and arguably should - be done in this regard given the considerable damage toxic executives do.

Executives have a responsibility to deploy their organisation's resources appropriately and such power and influence can feed an executive's narcissistic, envious and hubristic tendencies. More than one of my CEO/MD clients has confessed to introducing organisational changes not because of any pressing business priority or need but '.... because I can!'. In one instance I was unexpectedly given notice that my long-term contact with one organisation was to be concluded. This followed a meeting - at Director level - where I was the only one to question the advisability & practicality of a planned organisational change. I held - and hold - the view that, as an external consultant, it is my professional duty and responsibility to raise for consideration critical matters for discussion rather than just conveniently agreeing with them.

The decisions senior executives reach regarding workplace priorities, the allocation of responsibilities, the flow of information and the deployment of an organisation's resources can *further* or *impede* the careers of colleagues. It is not surprising therefore that executives' colleagues will be somewhat hesitant to address toxicity - or challenge the boss - in the workplace.

Furthermore those in the senior echelons of an

organisation set the behavioural norms for others to follow. Consequently if the behaviour of top and senior executives exemplifies self-serving, exploitive, and unethical behaviour we should expect that such ways of working will probably take hold and may come to characterise that organisation's ways of functioning. Motivational drivers resulting in toxic behaviour would include destructive narcissism, sociopathy, tyrannical behaviour, greed, hubris, delusion, fear of failure, a fear of success, ego fragility, excessive egoism, insularity as well as leadership paranoia (Gallos, 2008; Gudmundsson and Southey, 2011; Kets de Vries, 2009, 2014; Palmer et al, 2020; Walton, 2011, 2013 a, b., 2015 a, b.).

Power corrupts and senior executive positions offer the opportunity to take liberties and raid the resources of the organisation for their own use (Garrard and Robinson, 2016; van Ginneken, 2014). A Leader's latent toxic potentiality can be triggered by the power of the senior institutional positions they hold. Self-interest, greed, narcissistic excess and delusions of grandeur can come to overwhelm those who are (i) vulnerable to the inherent seductions of their senior status, (ii) satiated by their high levels of remuneration, (iii) come to feel they are omnipotent in their ability to deploy organisational resources for self-aggrandisement and (iv) come to consider they are invulnerable to challenge because of their positions of institutional power and privilege.

The lure of toxicity is advanced by excessively generous severance packages, 'golden hand-shakes' and related benefits. Such benefits do little to curb executive malpractice and much to encourage greed and self-serving behaviour when such opportunities arise (Gentilin, 2016; Hamilton and Micklethwait, 2006; Jackall, 1988; Micklethwait and Dimond, 2017; Newton, 2006; PWC, 2020; Zyglidopoulos et al, 2009).

CEOs and top executives are paid very highly compared to the wider workforce and this can go to their head! In the US for example the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, DC has highlighted the inequality between the average pay of employees and the remuneration of CEOs et al at the top of America's largest public firms. In 1965 the CEO-to-worker compensation ratio was 20:1 and by 2018 the ratio has risen to 278:1 even 'where there were executives have been rewarded despite

failing their employees and customers.' (Mishel and Wolfe, 2019). In the UK the median pay for FTSE CEOs is 117 times higher than the average UK full-time employee (CIPD, 2020). Such levels of privilege and entitlement can entice and induce executive dysfunctionality and toxicity.

Whilst an executive's behaviour may not in itself be the sole determinant of Covid-Tox behaviour emerging in the workplace it is perhaps the most significant single factor involved. The '*behaviour-in-context*' of an executive is a key factor around which the emergence and perpetuation of toxic workplace behaviour hinges (Walton, 2005).

According to Gallup 50% of people quit their jobs because of their direct line manager - rather than because of the job itself so the selection and nurturing of respectful, trustworthy, honest and ethical leaders should be - and remain - a top priority for those involved in executive recruitment and promotion decisions (Gallup, 2019). The actual percentage will not doubt be far higher – the message is very clear people will leave overwhelmingly because of the behaviour of their direct senior colleagues.

In other words how an executive actually behaves in the execution of their responsibilities matters a great deal and profoundly affects the culture, morale and spirit within their part of the organisation. This reinforces yet again the importance of taking fully into account the psychological characteristics of any candidate for an executive position before an appointment is made (Glaso et al, 2010; Hogan, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2014).

Latent Executive Toxicity

An executive's latent toxicity is founded primarily around their psychological characteristics and life history. Whilst more rigorous executive selection processes can help to minimise the appointment of those with a high latent potential for toxic behaviour such measures won't eliminate them completely.

The identification of potential latent toxicity is one thing but assessing the likelihood of such behaviour actually emerging is another. In this respect an individual's risk-proneness under pressure can also be assessed and this,

when combined with comprehensive psychometric profiling, can help to narrow down even more those who may be unsuitable for executive responsibility. It goes without saying that all such assessments must be conducted in ways which are respectful, fair, evidence-based and which adhere to ethical ways of working.

In spite of the advances made in personality assessment identification of those who may display toxic behaviour remains difficult to identify primarily because there is no single combination of indicators - or 'toxic DNA' - that would predict counter-productive behaviour. With attributes and qualities such as charisma, confidence, persuasiveness and courage, the characteristics of successful corporate psychopaths could initially be viewed as charismatic and transformational leadership behaviour (Andrews and Furniss, 2009; Tourish, 2013). One critical difference however is that sociopaths and psychopaths will take little notice of criticism or adverse comment, will steal the ideas of others, will commit to risky or unwise ventures, are unlikely to nurture future talent, will not create a harmonious team, and will sabotage and usurp the careers of talented employees and rivals. (Boddy, 2011). Clusters of behaviour which can be described as profoundly self-oriented, callous, exploitative and undertaken with no regard for the consequences which their actions will have on others.

Examining the presence of sociopaths and psychopaths within the business community has been the focus for trail-blazers such as Babiak and Hare for many years (Babiak, 1995a, 1995b; Babiak and Hare, 2006). In exploring why organisations promote such leaders, Pech and Stade (2007) suggest that such destructive, egotistical, and self-centred behaviour is tolerated - and possibly encouraged - because of the results delivered. Thus their abusive and negative attributes are conveniently 'overlooked' and even sponsored for as long as it suits the organisation concerned (Cangemi and Pfohl, 2009; Gudmundsson and Southey, 2011; Wellons, 2012). It should be worth noting that whilst the number of sociopathic individuals in senior executive positions may be small the impact of their behaviour on all around them, and across their organisations, will be considerable, far reaching, and long-standing (Boddy et al, 2021; Gudmundsson et al, 2011).

In terms of frequency the prevalence of psychopaths in the general population is very difficult to assess however it is estimated that approximately 1% of the general population, 25% of the prison population (Hare 1999), and 3.5% of the business population (Babiak and Hare, 2006) although Cangemi and Pfohl (2009) see it as somewhat higher. There will be psychopaths and sociopaths in the workplace – and only some of them have been exposed as such and few successfully charged with criminal behaviour (Babiak and Hare, 2006; Boddy 2011; Burke et al 2011; Burke et al 2013; Brytting et al, 2011; Hare, 1999; Kets de Vries, 2011, 2014).

Three traits in particular Narcissism, Machiavellianism and Psychopathy - referred to as the Dark Triad - have feature prominently in discussions and research about toxic and dysfunctional leadership in recent years (Furnham et al, 2013). Executives exhibiting such characteristics can be expected to present considerable dangers for organisational well-being. It is unclear how much such traits feature in the ranks of top and senior executives (Furnham and Taylor, 2004; James 2013; Owen, 2018; Palmer et al, 2020; Paulhus and Williams, 2002; Roter, 2017; van Ginneken, 2014;). It seems to me essential that an executive's psychological characteristics be profiled, tested and explored - and then tested in discussion - before executive appointments are made. Given the mix of factors outlined so far perhaps we should expect rather than be surprised at the inevitability of toxic leadership emerging at some point within many - if not all - organisations (Adams-Jackson and Dean, 2009; Burke et al, 2013; Roter, 2017; Walton, 2007, 2020).

Whilst an executive's behaviour is the single most significant factor when examining dysfunctional leadership it is not just a leader's actions that enables dysfunctional behaviours to emerge and be sustained. The internal culture and contextual features of an organisation are also major factors in either facilitating or inhibiting toxicity. And, as has been noted earlier the relative internal stability - or indeed chaotic – nature of an organisation will facilitate or impede the emergence of organisational toxicity (Linstead et al, 2014; Walton, 2005, 2007, 2013a).

Leadership Toxicity is more than just an Executive's Behaviour

An executive's behaviour on its own will rarely be the only factor which results in the toxification of an organisation. Consequently a more sophisticated approach is needed which takes account of broader contextual factors and consider show the factors

identified may have contributed to toxic behaviour becoming established.

Figure 1 below illustrates three key determinants which - in combination - are very likely to result in a workplace which is ripe for a range of dysfunctional behaviours to emerge when driven and perpetuated by executives who are so inclined.

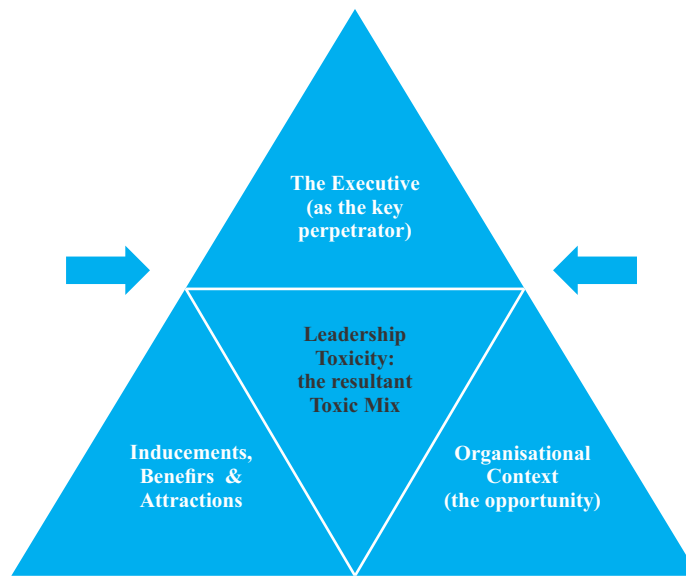


Figure 1: Three Perspectives contributing to Workplace Toxicity

Derived from my consulting work and research my proposition is that when the three factors in Figure 1 above are in alignment then the likelihood of C-Tox will be very high and conversely that if only two of these three components exist then this greatly reduces the possibility of C-Tox emerging and being sustained.

The overall message is

- (a) Comprehensively assess the psychological suitability & resilience of executives forensically before executive appointment or promotion decisions are made,
- (b) maintain fair but not excessive remuneration packages and ensure they are conditional on continuing ethical performance, and

- (c) be wary of intemperate and exploitative decisions by executives during periods of organisational instability, stress and volatility

The corrosive impact of institutional power when combined with the seductive attractions of financial gain, and related attractions & inducements, should not be underestimated.

Because of their position top and senior executives have the opportunity to exploit situations for their own advantage and they have the means through which to do so should they be so inclined (i.e. the 'motive').

These three factors – Motive, Means and Opportunity are shown in Figure 2 below:

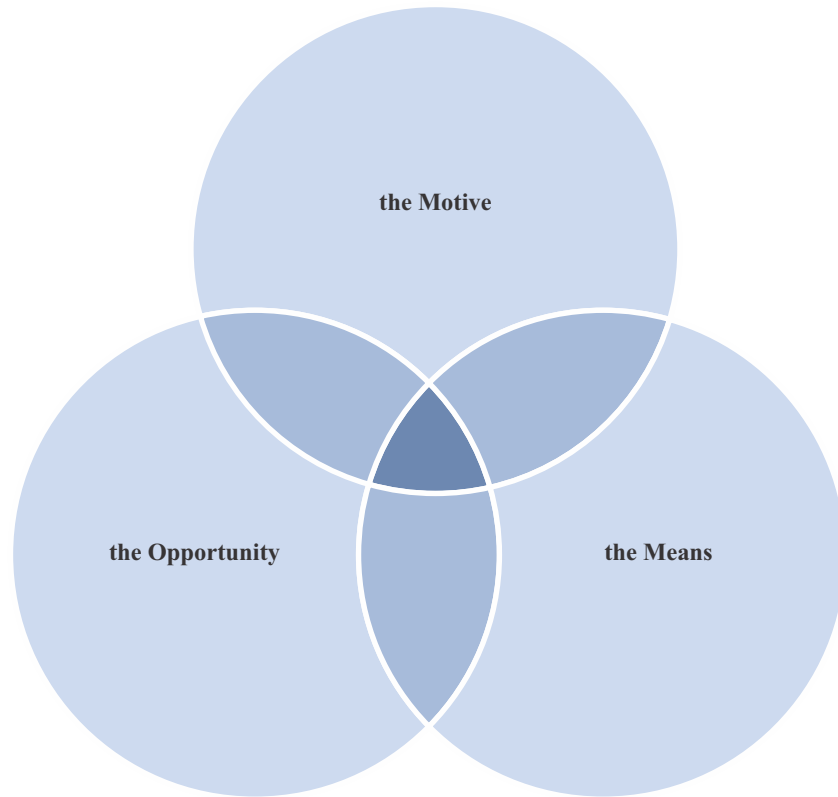


Figure 2: The Motive, The Opportunity and The Means

Having the *Means*, the *Opportunity* and the *Motive* can lead some executives to mobilise their institutional power and position for self-interest. One way of limiting the likelihood for such counter-productive, toxic and, potentially, criminal behaviour is to weaken the connections between the three components shown in the figure above. This could be achieved through closer monitoring of how an executive uses their discretionary powers, and through more rigorous internal audit and regulatory supervision. This could be reinforced further by formalised external *independent* oversight.

From my research the critical intervention is simply monitoring an executive's actual *behaviour-in-context* because doing so provides evidence about how responsibly and ethically they are managing the considerable responsibilities and organisational power they hold (Walton, 1984, 2005). Ethically, openly and transparently monitoring executive behaviour introduces an early warning system and will pick up and identify indications about possible problems - and thus

prompt considerate, appropriate and determined remedial action - *before* things become bad.

Conclusion -Co-existing with Corona virus 'C-Tox'

We have to assume that Covid-Tox behaviours and phenomena will remain an ever-present feature in the workplace. If so then a key question which demands attention is how to limit the disruptive and destructive impacts which toxic executives -our 'Silent Killers' - exert within our organisations?

Often when leadership problems arise a common response is to replace, or in some way 'change' the toxic Leader. This approach has appeal because it offers a quick, convenient and expedient way of handling a problematic and sensitive matter. Its relative simplicity, and speed makes it an attractive option as testified by the popularity of non-disclosure agreements and pay-outs. It is though too simplistic an approach to adopt when addressing such a complex matter as transgressions of

leadership. Furthermore just changing the errant leader on its own may neither identify nor address the precipitating factors underpinning toxic leadership in that organisation.

More though clearly needs to be done (i) to limit the prevalence, (ii) restrict the emergence, and (iii) manage the presence of workplace toxicity when it arises. Quite simply a great deal could be achieved just through introducing regular behavioural audits in order to monitor executive behaviour.

Making more visible the conduct of an executive's behaviour during their day-to-day interactions works wonders because leadership toxicity prospers when out of the public view. Once 'in view' an executive's behaviour becomes more open to review, discussion, and where necessary will identify the need for any remedial action.

As much of this article has made apparent a critical first step in managing toxic leadership would seem to revolve around (i) the identification of those who are more prone to become toxic in the first place, (ii) careful management of their career progression and (iii) embedding robust defensive processes & mechanisms in order to arrest counter-productive behaviour when it emerges. The strategy of transparency underlying the actions advocated above simply places 'centre-stage' the behaviour of an organisation's executives as they discharge their responsibilities.

One final cautionary thought. Readers conversant with the Legal profession will be aware of the concept of 'Caveat Emptor' – “let the buyer beware”. This is a core principle of Contract Law and acknowledges that Buyers have less information than the Seller of the goods or services on sale. This 'information asymmetry' is significant because defects or limitations in the goods or services for sale maybe hidden from the buyer and are only known to the seller. The key point here is that the purchaser should be aware of possible non-disclosures and take all reasonable and legitimate opportunities to ensure that the 'product' is as described and fully capable of delivering the range of services or attributes described.

If we now apply the concept of 'Caveat Emptor' to the

appointment of Executives it becomes very clear that those responsible for the recruitment of executives (*i.e.* the 'Buyer') must do all they can to assess the authenticity and suitability of candidates (*i.e.* the 'Seller') for executive positions before any such appointments are made. To fail to do so would represent a major failure of responsibility and a significant dereliction of duty.

References

- Asland, M., Skogstad, A., Notelaers, G., Nielsen, M and S Einarsen (2009) The Prevalence of Destructive Leadership Behaviour British Journal of Management Vol. 21 pp438-452
- Adams-Jackson, J and Dean, S (2009) The Ascent of Narcissism in Contemporary Daily life. The International Journal of the Humanities, Vol 7 (7) 109-116
- Andrews, H and Furniss, P (2009) A successful Leader or psychopathic individual? Management Services 53 (4) pp22-24.
- Anand, V., Ashforth, B and Joshi, M (2004) 'Business as usual: the acceptance and perpetuation of corruption in organizations' Academy of Management Executive 19 (4)
- Ashforth, B (1997) Petty Tyranny in Organizations: A preliminary examination of Antecedents and Consequences Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences 14 (2) pp126-140
- Babiak, P (1995a) Psychopathic manipulation in organizations: pawns, patrons, and patsies Issues in Criminology & Legal Psychology (24) pp12-17
- Babiak, P. (1995b) When Psychopaths go to Work: a case study of an Industrial Psychopath. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 44, 171-188.
- Babiak, P. and Hare, R (2006) Snakes in Suits HarperCollins, New York
- Bedeian, A (1995) Workplace Envy Organizational Dynamics, 23 (4) pp49-56
- Bendell, J. (2002) Psychos in suits: American CEOs in need of an Asylum in Open Democracy, August
- Boddy, C (2011) Corporate Psychopaths: Organisational Destroyers Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke
- Boddy, C., Boulter, L and Fishwick, S (2021) How so many Toxic Employees ascend to Leadership Bad Leadership: Reasons and Remedies in (Ortenblad, A Ed) Palgrave Macmillan, Cham Switzerland pp69-85
- Brytting, T., Minogue, R and V Morino (2011) The anatomy of fraud and corruption: organizational causes and remedies Gower

Publishing Ltd, Farnham

Burke, R., Tomlinson, E and C Cooper (2011). *Crime and Corruption in Organizations: Why it occurs and what to do about it*. Gower Applied Research, Farnham

Burke, R., Fox, S and Cooper, C (2013) *Human Frailties: wrong choices on the drive to success* Gower Applied Research, Farnham

Cangemi, J and Pfohl, W (2009) Sociopaths in high places *Organizational Development Journal* 29 (2) pp85-96

CIPD (2020) *CEO Pay Ratio Reporting Fact Sheet* CIPD, London 2nd January, 2020

Cressey, D. (1953), *Other People's Money: A Study in the Social Psychology of Embezzlement* Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Edelman (2021) *2021 Trust Barometer* Daniel J Edelman Holdings, Inc

Fitness, J. (2008). Fear and loathing in the workplace. in Ashkanasy, N and Cooper, C (Eds.), *Research companion to emotion in organizations* (pp. 61-72).

Finkelstein, S. (2003) *Why Smart Executives Fail* Portfolio. Penguin Books. New York

Furnham, A. and Taylor J (2004) *The Dark Side of Behaviour at Work*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

Furnham, A., Richards, S and D Paulhus (2013) *The Dark Triad of Personality: A 10 Year Review* *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* (7) 3 pp199-216

Gallos, J (2008) *Learning from the Toxic Trenches* *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 17 (4) pp354-367

Gallup (2018) *Talent Walks: Why your best employees are leaving in Gallup 'Workplace'*, January 25,

Gentilin, D (2016) *The Origins of Ethical Failures: Lessons for Leaders* Routledge, Abingdon

Garrard, P and Robinson, G (2016) *The Intoxication of Power* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

van Ginneken, J (2014) *The Psychology of Power: Temptations at the Top* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

Glaso, L., Einarsen, S, Matthiesen, S and Skogstad, A (2010) *The dark side of leaders: A representative study of interpersonal problems among leaders* *Scandinavian Journal of Organizational Psychology* pp3-14

Gudmundsson, A and Southey, G (2011) *Leadership and the rise of the corporate psychopath* *e-Journal of Social and Behavioural Research in Business*, 2(2), pp-18-27

Hamilton, S. and Micklethwait, A (2006). *Greed and Corporate Failure: the lessons from recent disasters*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hare, R (1999) *Without Conscience: The disturbing world of the psychopaths among us* Guildford, London

Hogan, R. (2007), *Personality and the Fate of Organizations*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.

Jackall, R (1988) *Moral Mazes: The world of corporate managers* Oxford University Press, New York

James, O (2013) *Office Politics* Vermilion, London

Kets de Vries, M (2001) *The Leadership Mystique* Prentice Hall, London

Kets de Vries, M. (2009), *Sex, Money, Happiness, and Death: The Quest for Authenticity*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Kets de Vries, M. (2011). *The shadow side of leadership*. in *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership* (pp. 380-392). London: SAGE. Bryman, A., Collinson, D, Grint, K, Jackson, B and Uhl-Bien, M (Eds)

Kets de Vries, M (2012) *The Psychopath in the C Suite: Redefining the SOB* Insead Faculty & Research Working Paper

Kets de Vries, M (2014) *The psycho-path to disaster coping with SOB executives* *Organizational Dynamics* 43 (1) pp17-26

Levi, M. and Lord, N. (2017) "White-Collar and Corporate Crime" in Liebling, A., Maruna, S and I. McAra (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* Oxford: OUP

Linstead, S., Marechal, G and R Griffin (2014) *Theorizing and Researching the Dark Side of Organization* in *Organization Studies* 35 (2) pp165-188

Lubitt, R. (2002) *The long-term organizational impact of destructively narcissistic managers* *Academy of Management Executive*, 16, 127-138.

Micklethwait, A and Dimond, P (2017) *Driven to the Brink* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke

Mishel, L and Wolfe, J (2019) *CEO Compensation* Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC

Newton, L. (2006), *Permission to Steal: Revealing the Roots of Corporate Scandal*, Blackwell, Malden, MA

Ortenblad, A (2021) *Debating Bad Leadership: Reasons and Remedies* Palgrave Macmillan Cham, Switzerland

Owen, D (2018) *Hubris: The Road to Donald Trump* Methuen, York

Padilla, A., Hogan, R. and Kaiser, R. (2007) *The toxic triangle* *The*

- Leadership Quarterly, Vol.18, pp. 176-194.
- Palmer, j., Holmes, M and P Perrewe (2020) The cascading effects of CEO Dark Triad Personality on subordinate behaviour and firm performance: A multilevel theoretical model *Group & Organization Management* 45 (2)pp143-180
- Paulhus, D. and Williams, K (2002) The dark triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy, *Journal of Research in Psychology*, 36 (6), 556-563
- Pech, R and Slade, B (2007) Organisational Sociopaths: rarely challenged, often promoted. Why? *Society and Business review* 2(3) pp 254-269
- Perri, F and Mieczkowska, E (2015) Fraud Rationalizations and the Guilty Mind *Fraud Magazine* March/April pp 43-47
- Pinto, J., Leana, C and Pil, F (2008) Corrupt Organizations or Organizations of Corrupt Individuals? *Academy of Management Review* 33 (3) 685-709
- PWC (2020) Fighting Fraud: A never-ending battle PwC's Global Economic Crime and fraud Survey (www.pwc.com/fraudsurvey)
- Roter, A (2017) Understanding and Recognizing Dysfunctional Leadership *Routledge* Abingdon
- Smith, R- (2021). Illuminating the 'Fat Cat Metaphor', as a storied, signifier of 'Capitalist Greed' and 'Corporate Corruption'. *Academia Letters*, Article 599. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL599>.
- Tourish, D (2013) *The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership* Routledge, Hove
- Walton, M (1984) Consulting Practice in the National Health Service: Some Empirical Studies' PhD Thesis, Department of Organizational and Occupational Psychology, University of London
- Walton, M (2005) Executive Behaviour-in-Context unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Bradford, School of Management
- Walton, M. (2007) 'Leadership Toxicity – an inevitable affliction of organisations?' *Organisations & People*, 14 (1) pp. 19-27.
- Walton, M (2011) Derailment themes and personality variables in *Counselling at Work* Winter, pp2-5
- Walton, M (2013a) A 'PRISM' for your thoughts *Business Leadership Review* Spring Vol 10 No. 2 pp22-29
- Walton, M (2013b) The Rottweiler and the Flying Penguin in Lemmergaard and Muhr, Eds) *Critical Perspectives on Leadership* Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
- Walton, M (2015a) Carnage in the Research Lab: Power, Personality and Neglect Karanika-Murray and Biron (eds) *Derailed Organizational Interventions for Stress and Well-Being* , Springer Science, Heidelberg pp127-133
- Walton, M (2015b) Power Mad: A case of Professional services Karanika-Murray and Biron (eds) *Derailed Organizational Interventions For Stress and Well-Being* , Springer Science, Heidelberg pp135-141
- Walton, M (2020) Leadership Toxicity: Our Coronavirus – 'Covid-Tox' Pandemic in *The Effective Executive* XXIII, (2) pp7-11
- Wellons, R (2012) The Devil in the Boardroom: Corporate Psychopaths and their impact on Business *PURE Insights*, 1(1) Western Oregon University
- Zyglidopoulos, S, Fleming, P and Rothenberg, S (2009) Rationalization, overcompensation, and escalation of corruption in organizations *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, pp65-73