CASE 15: WHO'S WHO IN THE ZOO

The Story

A 10,000 strong manufacturing company has recently decided to "install" its very own Safety Management System. This system is aimed at integrating the safety of the person, the product and the processes used for manufacturing in the context of new and aggressive regulator requirements. An implementation team was put in place to "grease the wheels" of the implementation. The senior management team of the company all nodded their heads sagely, when presented with the initial business case for proceeding.

Within a month of the kick-off of implementation, symptoms began appearing of a complex system of internal politics:

- Customer processes were divided among three competing Vice-Presidents: Sales, Customer Service and Marketing, who never met to work out a joint strategy;

- Manufacturing and Quality Management, each led by its very own VP, were constantly fighting over who was accountable for "quality escapes";

- Staff VP's were intent on controlling the line functions of the organization: Finance wouldn't let managers spend their budgets and HR "suggested" to line managers who they should fire and hire; the legal department even suggested that the organization couldn't have an SMS, because it would expose the organization to legal challenge on the safety of its products; Communications would only communicate what was good news.

- There was a Planning VP who, since he had arrived a year earlier, had not been able to figure out what his job was, much less prepare a Business Plan;

- There were a total of 15 direct reports to the CEO of the organization, each competing for attention that he had no time to give.

The Intervention

There were way too many drones in this organization, each drawing a staggering rate of pay, replete with year-end bonuses that had nothing to do with performance. The CEO needs to:

- Re-think the functions of the organization;
- Simplify and re-align the corporate structure;
- Do away with duplicate functions and people;
- Make each senior manager accountable for one process;
- Mentor the remaining senior managers in performance expectations;
- Test the maturity of the organization to undertake the proposed change;
- Plan the change in detail, including the role of the corporate senior team.