

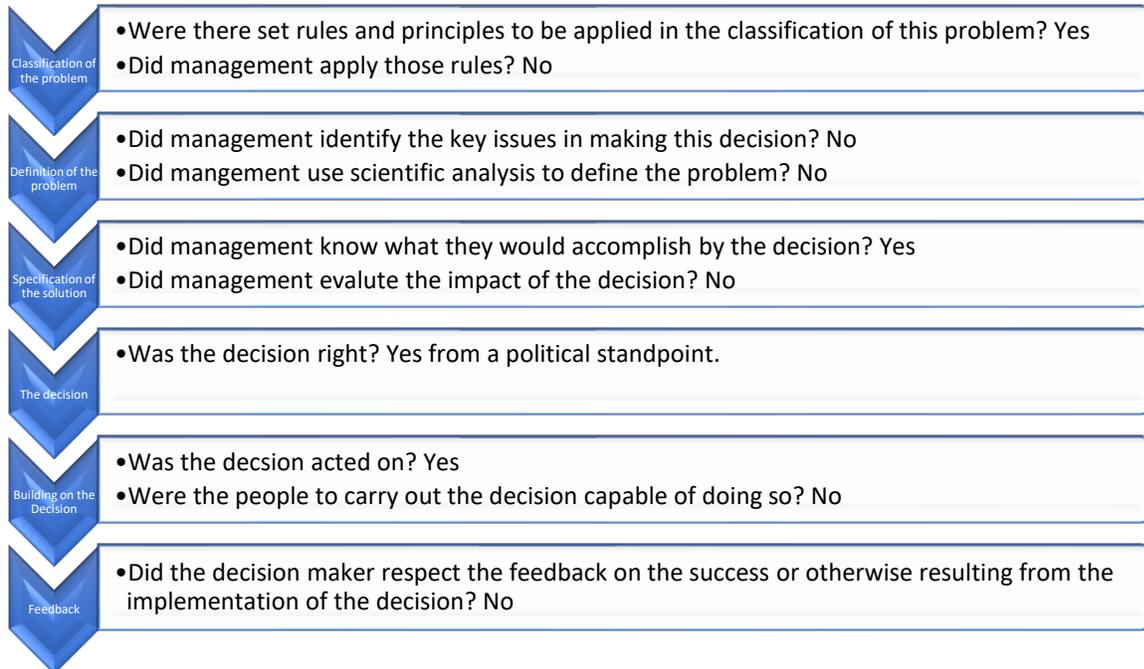
Management by Failure–Part 3

So much of what we call management consist of making it difficult for people to work

Peter Drucker

In the third part of this series I test public service management decision-making against set criteria using our case study from St. Lucia.

Using Peter Drucker’s approach:



The government had set criteria for the award of contracts. These criteria is enshrined in law. The laws are up to date (2015). They form part of an overall project to bring procurement laws in the Caribbean in line with each other. The Minister didn't follow the law.

At the problem definition stage, management needs to use scientific measures to arrive at the objectives of the program. These objectives should be in line with management planning and directing of the organization. The Minister didn't define the problem.

The Minister knew his political objectives in making the decision. This decision benefited his party supporter, or his personal supporter. Given an extra \$1.7 million added to the contract, pure gravy. But, the Minister didn't assess the impact of this decision on the country and the population.

As a manager, the decision was neither right, nor acceptable. As a politician the decision was correct.

According to Drucker, carrying out the decision is not enough. The work must be carried out by people who are capable. He suggests 4 distinct questions:

- Who has to know of the decision?
- What action has to be taken?
- Who is to take it?
- What has to be done so that these people can take the action?

He notes that the first and last questions are most often overlooked.

Drucker reinforces that men are fallible, and decisions can go wrong. There must be a feedback mechanism to monitor and report on the success or otherwise.

The failure of the Minister to accept the illegality of his action has caused him to persist in a course of action after it has ceased to be proper, rational or legal.

In summary, management by failure arises where a manager faces competing objectives that cloud his decision-making ability. These objectives may be divergent. The manager chooses one set of objectives over the other.

The manager remains in position for many years undertaking the same actions since he stays in power due to political factors and not due to his management ability and performance.