

HOW TO GET RID OF A WORSENER



**BUILD A KAIZEN CULTURE BY
BANISHING DETRACTORS TO THE
COMPETITION**

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How to Get Rid of a Worsener:

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TO THE COMPETITION**

By Someone Who's Been Sabotaged Before Lunch

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Chapter 1: Meet the Worsener

If you've ever tried to make things better and suddenly found yourself at the receiving end of a passive-aggressive email about "overstepping boundaries," congratulations — you've met a **Worsener**.

Worseners are not misunderstood. They're not "change-averse." They are **agents of status quo and self-preservation**. Like a barnacle clinging to the hull of a ship, the Worsener thrives in immobility. They don't just ignore improvement efforts — they undermine, resist, and occasionally try to have you reassigned to the corporate equivalent of the mailroom (or, worse, the "innovation committee").

Chapter 2: The Worsener's Arsenal

Worseners wield bureaucracy like a samurai sword. Their weapons include:

- "That's not how we've done it."
- "We tried that before. It didn't work."
- Endless meetings that result in nothing but scheduling the next meeting.
- Mysterious cc's to higher-ups.
- Whisper campaigns about how you're "radical" or "disruptive."

They thrive in environments where **Continuous Improvement is optional** — where leaders say "empowerment" but mean "please stop emailing me about waste and dysfunction."

Chapter 3: Know Thyself — The Impruver

An **Impruver** is a rare species. Equal parts optimist, data nerd, and corporate ninja, the Impruver sees inefficiency as the enemy. But unlike traditional heroes, the Impruver is usually armed with a Green Belt and a whiteboard — not authority. That makes the battle uneven. And it makes survival tricky.

Chapter 4: The Clock Is Ticking

Statistically, an Impruver has **18 months or less** before one of three things happens:

1. They get frustrated and leave.
2. They get reorg'd into obscurity.
3. They're removed by a Worsener-led whisper campaign.

Time is of the essence. If you want to make a dent — or better, eliminate the Worsener(s) — you must move strategically.

Chapter 5: The Direct Tactics

Here are some **direct-action tactics** to eliminate or neutralize a Worsener:

1. **Document Everything** – Every sabotaged project, every snide remark in meetings, every "forgotten" deadline. Use timestamps, quotes, and screenshots like a court reporter with a vendetta.
2. **Formal Complaints** – File regular and professional complaints with HR or the Worsener's boss. Use words like "obstructionist behavior," "resistance to strategic alignment," and "creating a hostile environment for improvement."
3. **Audit Traps** – Suggest a process audit where the Worsener owns the most broken process. Let the data speak. Spoiler: it screams.
4. **Policy Judo** – Use company policies against them. Is there a requirement for supporting company strategy? Cite it. Every time.
5. **Escalate with Tact** – Frame your concerns around business impact, not personalities. "These delays have cost us \$X" goes further than "Karen is mean."

6. **Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)** – Encourage HR or management to place Worseners on PIPs when their behavior is consistently counterproductive. Provide the documentation and examples to support the need.
 7. **Probation Periods** – If your company uses probationary periods for new roles or internal transfers, advocate for using these to evaluate the Worsener’s fit for the team’s improvement culture.
 8. **Coaching & Out-Counseling** – Offer coaching to the Worsener (documented, of course). When that fails — and it likely will — suggest out-counseling as a professional, face-saving exit strategy for all involved.
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Chapter 6: The Indirect Tactics

Worseners hate accountability. So build systems where accountability is baked in:

1. **Tie Performance Goals to Strategy** – Suggest that all performance reviews include a “strategic alignment” or “improvement contribution” metric.
2. **Gamify Change** – Introduce public scoreboards, team competitions, or dashboards that show who's driving value (and who isn't).

3. **Redirect the Spotlight** – Celebrate Improvers. Quietly exclude the Worsener from visible wins. Let their lack of contribution speak volumes.
4. **Data Diplomacy** – Use data storytelling to get leaders on your side. Worseners struggle to argue with numbers — especially in PowerPoint.
5. **Socialize the Vision** – Build informal coalitions with allies across departments. Worseners operate best in the shadows — drag them into the light of culture change.

Chapter 7: Tactics Borrowed from HR

You don't need authority to build a case like HR does. Just borrow their playbook:

- **Pattern Documentation** – Show recurring behavior over time, not one-offs.
- **Impact Statements** – “This behavior resulted in X delay or Y cost.”
- **Third-Party Witnessing** – Bring others into the loop subtly. “Hey, can you sit in on this meeting and give me feedback?”
- **Feedback Loops** – Record attempts to give the Worsener constructive feedback — and their refusal to adapt.
- **360 Influence** – Loop in leaders by showing how the Worsener is misaligned with organizational values.
- **Soft-Landing Strategies** – Work with HR to create a path for the Worsener to transition out gracefully, such as reassignment, outplacement services, or early retirement offers.

Chapter 8: When to Fold 'Em

If the Worseners outnumber the Improvers — and leadership is indifferent — your time is limited. No matter how principled you are, martyrdom helps no one. Sometimes the best move is to exit gracefully and join a company where improvement isn't a dirty word.

Chapter 9: A Closing Word from the Trenches

You're not crazy. The resistance is real. But so is your impact.

The Worsener may be louder, sneakier, and more entrenched. But the Improver is more valuable, more visionary, and more necessary — especially in times of change.

Remember: organizations don't die from bad products or poor strategy alone. They die because they tolerated too many Worseners for too long.

So take heart. Be bold. And if necessary — get rid of a Worsener.

Your company's future depends on it.

About the Author:

An Impruver who survived five Worseners, two reorgs, and one team-building ropes course. Still improving. Still documenting.



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He is also a husband of one, father of three, son of two, and brother of an uncertain number of siblings.