

"Company Policy"



Primary source: unknown

Can this be how "company policy" is formed?

Inside a large cage there are five monkeys.

A banana is hung inside the cage on a piece of string with a set of ladders under it.

Before long a monkey will go to the ladders, start to climb and reach for the banana. As soon as the monkey starts to climb the ladders, all the monkeys are sprayed with cold water.



After a while another monkey attempts to get the banana. Again as soon as the monkey starts to climb the ladders all of the monkeys are sprayed with cold water.

Pretty soon when a third monkey goes to get the banana, all the other monkeys try to stop it.

The cold water is turned off and one monkey removed from the cage. A new monkey who has not experienced the previous actions is then placed into the cage.

The new monkey sees the banana and wants to climb the ladders. To his surprise and horror, all of the other monkeys attack him.

After another attempt and attack, he knows that if he tries to climb the ladders, he will be assaulted.

Another of the original five monkeys is removed and replaced with a new one.

The newcomer goes to the ladders and is attacked. The previous newcomer takes part in the punishment with enthusiasm.

A third original monkey is replaced with a new one and the newest monkey goes to the ladders and is then attacked as well. Two of the four monkeys that beat him have no idea why they were not permitted to climb the ladders, or why they are participating in the beating of the newest monkey.

After replacing the fourth and fifth original monkeys, all the monkeys that have been sprayed with cold water have been replaced. Nevertheless, no monkey ever again approaches the ladders.

Why not?

Because as far as they know that's the way it's always been around here.

And that's how "company policy" begins ...

This is a great story for highlighting the inefficiency of people saying "that's the way it's always been around here".



More metaphors and similar-style stories can be found in Nick Owen's books "The Magic of Metaphor" and "More Magic of Metaphor".