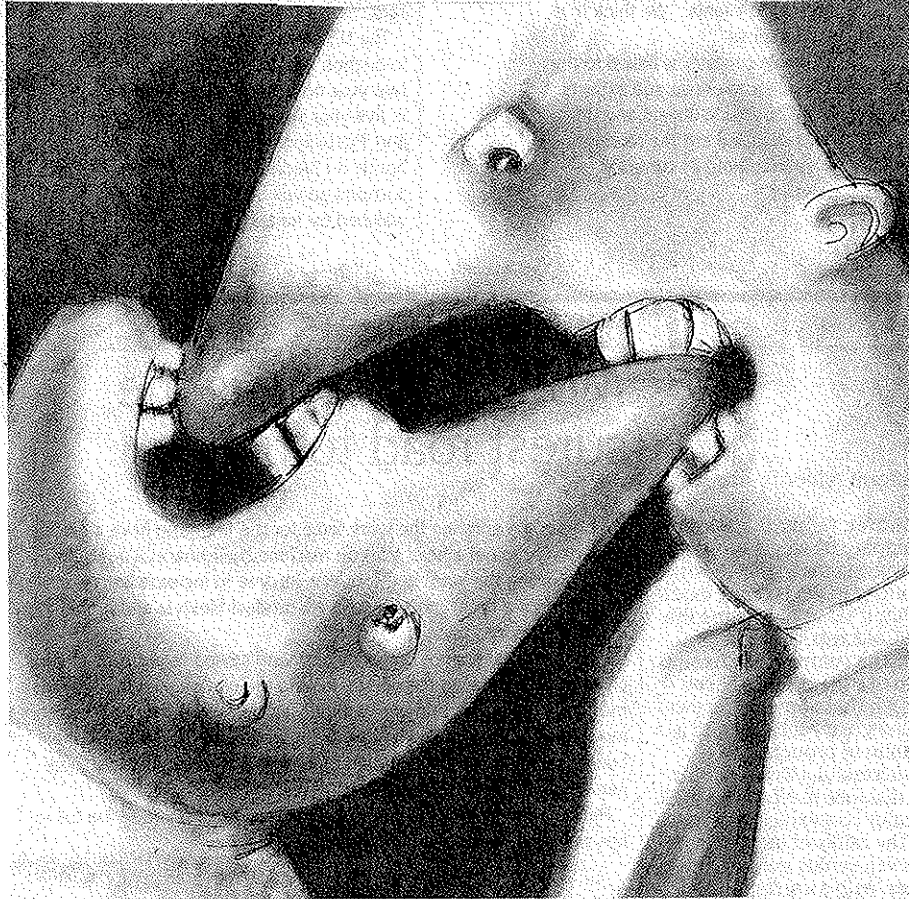




# MONDAY MORNING MANAGER

Harvey Schachter's guide on how to handle everything from overflowing e-mail to meeting overload



MIROSLAW PIEPRZYK/ISTOCKPHO

With the business world and business schools grappling with how to get a handle on ethics, Toronto-based consultant Patrick O'Neill highlights five deficits that have to be addressed, in his Extraordinary Conversations e-newsletter

### DEFICIT OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

As the pace of work speeds up, a significant imbalance has arisen between reflection and action in many organizations. The value placed on action also far outweighs critical thinking. "Strategic decisions are being made on the fly, divorced from an examination of the issues involved, including ethical considerations. While there have been significant inroads made in governance and risk management, especially in the last decade, much damage has resulted from expediency," he writes.

### DEFICIT OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Leadership is an initiation into character and courage because, he says, "it requires people to take on extraordinary responsibilities." Our society currently rewards and develops talent, but less recognition and fewer resources are allocated to character development. Yet, ethical behaviour requires both. To help, he ar-

gues that business reporting should include stories of conflicts, dilemmas and issues handled ethically. We could use lessons on groups or leaders who do the right thing with courage and integrity.

### DEFICIT OF RESPECT

In more than 200 conflicts that he has been hired to mediate, the core issues that Mr. O'Neill found usually included some form of abusive behaviour – an example of the erosion of respect in the workplace. Bullying in the workplace is common. Corporate leaders treat shareholders with little respect. Ethical treatment, he says, is a fundamental human right, and organizations must ensure it.

### DEFICIT ON RIGHT USE OF POWER

The increasing abuse of power in organizations leads to demoralization, employee absence and attrition, occupational health and safety issues, and litigation. "It costs a lot of money when productivity is impaired in this way," he says. "Providing leaders with a basic understanding of the positive and ill effects of using and abusing power and helping them come to terms with their own relationship to power would be a significant contribution to ethics education."

### DEFICIT OF MENTORING

Mentoring has not been used to the extent it could for teaching ethical leadership, he says. Instead, the focus has been on coaching technical performance, rather than the overall development of the person. "This gap has contributed to the decline of ethical leadership in business, community and institutional life," he asserts.