

IT'S THE US-AND-THEM BATTLE, AGAIN!

In 1971, Walt Kelly published his famous Pogo cartoon "We have met the enemy ... and he is us." Everyone that saw this got it. At times, we are our own worst enemies. Years ago, an attendee in one of my programs asked, "Whose customer is it? I'm in operations. Is it my customer, the sales force's customer, or *our* customer?" This rhetorical question needed no response beyond a smile of acknowledgement. It is everyone's customer. Unfortunately, this spirit of cooperation does not exist in most companies. One of my great frustrations as a sales trainer is to witness the huge amounts of money that companies invest in training employees go to waste because of the most insidious of organizational profit piranhas—silos.

Silos are the classic us-and-them battles. When one department or group of employees views another department or group of employees as the enemy, you have silo problems. These turf wars are so common that your company is an anomaly if you do not have them. Eighty-three percent of executives report that they have silos in their companies, and 97 percent of them believe that silos are hurting their organizations. You have silos, even and especially if you think you do not.

Industry Week found that silos are the top obstacle to growth. You cannot win battles against the competition when you are wasting energy battling each other. In fact, a smart competitor only needs to watch your turf battles send business his way. Just as negativism is a complete waste of a perfectly good imagination, organizational silos are a waste of a perfectly good competitive spirit. With all of the competition you face daily do you really need competitors inside your organization's walls? Silos are killing your profitability.

Gallup found that silos cost U.S. businesses a whopping 3.6% of GDP in lost productivity!

This means that if you are a \$10 million company, you are suffering a \$360,000 productivity loss because your people cannot get along. Do you have that kind of money to waste? Silos unleash a chain of viral negative consequences that will kill your business if you do not act now.

Silos lead to employee and customer dissatisfaction. Unhappy employees create unhappy customers. Silos breed mistrust, suspicion, and frustration. Good employees leave. Customers run for the exits, as they feel like the neglected child of dysfunctional parents. Silos destroy operational efficiency. IBM found that employees spend 25% of their time seeking information that someone in the company already has discovered. Too bad they do not communicate. This does not have to be your fate.

Sales is not the enemy. Operations is not the enemy. IT is not the enemy. Management is not the enemy. Customer service is not the enemy. The credit department is not the enemy. The Author byline: Tom Reilly is a professional speaker and author of twelve books. Tom is literally the guy who wrote the book on *Value-Added Selling* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), the book that started the value selling revolution. For more information on Tom's presentations, training, and products, visit his website www.TomReillyTraining.com or call his office, 636-537-3360.