

Ernie the head horse runs a dysfunctional farm.

Ernie is not the world's best manager. Consequently the animals have developed errant behaviours, causing havoc on the farm.

This book invites the reader to consider the errant behaviours happening within their own organisation. You also get the opportunity to tally up the costs of errant behaviours at your organisation.

"I really like this book because it's easy to read and provides unique prompts for the reader to consider errant behaviours in their own organisations"

— J. Wynen, Manager People and Culture, Bass Coast Shire

"Well done on another innovative approach to solving common workplace issues! It's a refreshing read with just the right amount of humour. Lots of useful ideas."

— E. Nunez, HR Director, Pitcher Partners

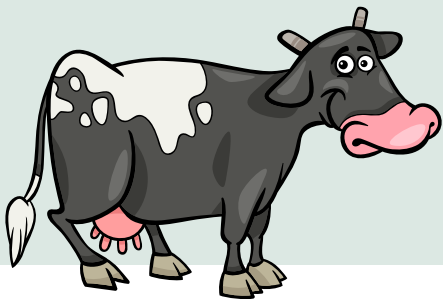
"Truly Orwellian — a dystopic masterpiece. Not since Joyce, Yeats and Beckett has an Irish Writer delivered such quality."

— N. Kennedy (slightly biased)



Niall Kennedy

Errant Workplace Behaviours is Niall Kennedy's third Book.



ERRANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS



Niall Kennedy

ERRANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOURS

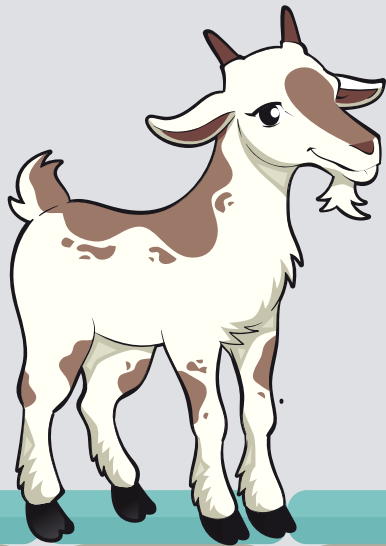
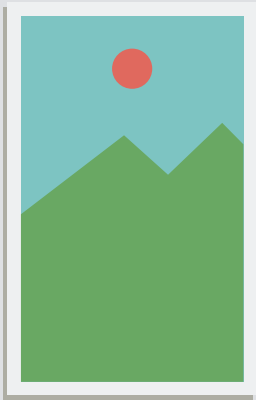
A
DYSTOPIC
MASTERPIECE

Costs, Consequences & Corrections



A farm fable with lots
of food for thought.
*How do **you** compare?*

Niall Kennedy



Cost of Errant Behaviours:	
The Foxes	\$
The Dogs	\$
The Cane Toads	\$
The Butterflies	\$
The Sheep	\$
The Psychopath Rook	\$
The Metaphoric Mice	\$
The Cows	\$
The Snakes	\$
The Work Horses	\$
The Scarecrows	\$
The Peacocks	\$
The Owl	\$
The Bears	\$
The Foals	\$
The Goats	\$
Invading Seeds	\$
The Cats	\$
The Cockatoos	\$
The Giraffes	\$
The Homing Pigeons	\$
Total Cost of Errant Behaviours	\$



Errant Workplace Behaviours: Costs, Consequences & Corrections

Niall Kennedy

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About the Author

Niall Kennedy has been designing learning materials for organisations for the past 18 years to improve organisational capacity and capability. In his experience most organisations are using outdated models and old learning materials to fix current errant workplace behaviours. In the past few years there has been significant psychological breakthroughs to promote a positive working environment. Niall wrote this book to counter whingeing in the workplace which is his pet hate. This is Niall's 3rd book. His other books are *All Aboard the Brain Train* and *Healthy Leadership*.

Some of the organisations that Niall designs leadership capabilities for include Boeing, Department of Defence, BHP Billiton, AGL, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Transport, Department of Finance, Shell, Red Cross, Deakin University, CSL, NEC, Capgemini, Hastings Deering, Monash University and WorkCover.

Born in Ireland, Niall has a Masters of Marketing Degree from Monash University, Melbourne and has lived in Australia for the past 20 years after studying leadership styles in the USA, UK and the Netherlands.

Dedication

Without my family, I'd lack the enthusiasm to write any books.

Love you — Jodie, our two Boys and Daughter.

I'm very lucky to have such a wonderful, loving family.

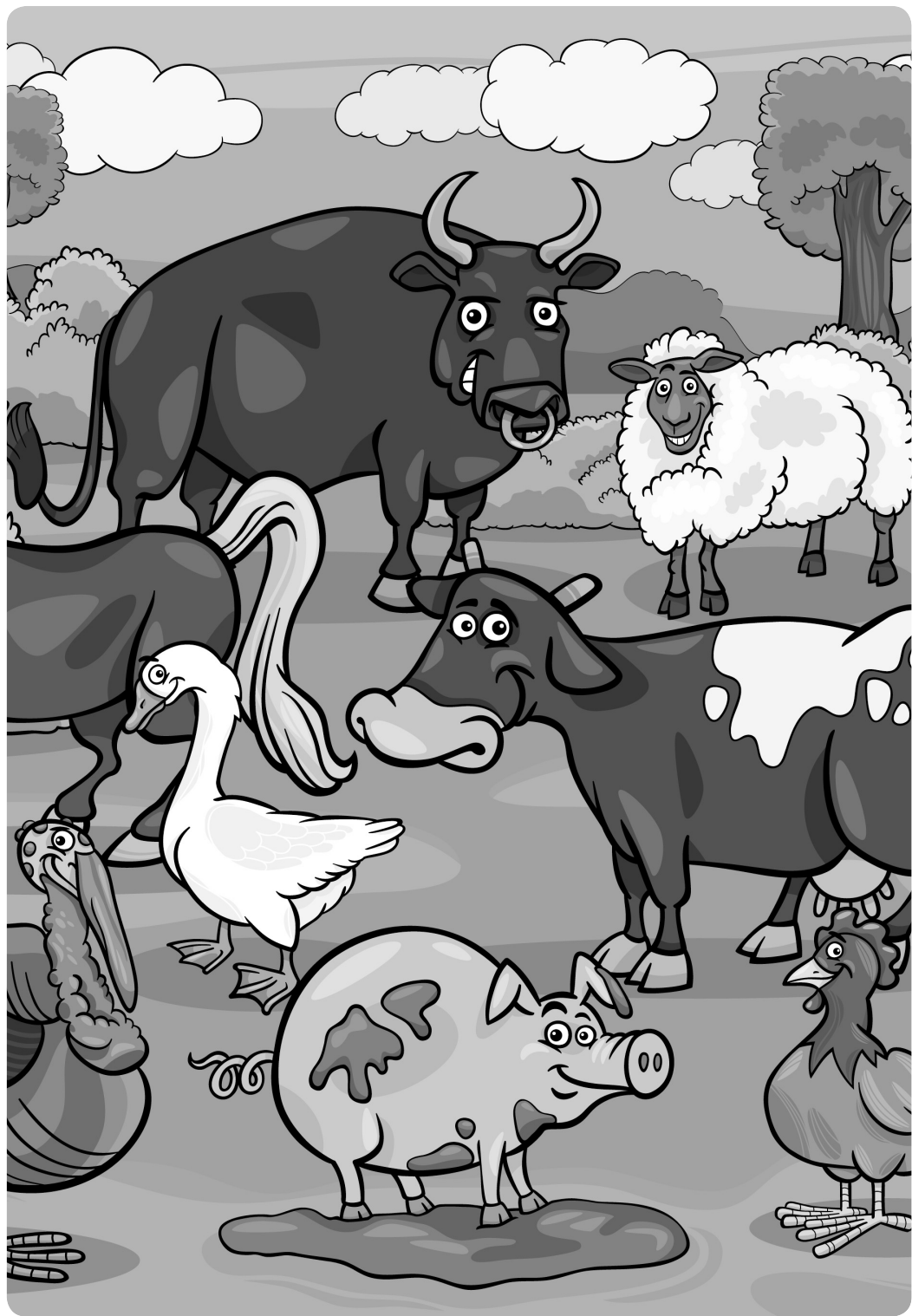
Thank you to my work colleagues

(Mel, Deb, Dan, David, Danielle, Louise, Adele and Lori)

for helping with this book.

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The Land of Milk and Honey

The Farm of Milk and Honey was built on the Land of Milk and Honey. In the beginning, the Farm of Milk and Honey was the happiest farm in the world.

The cows and the bees lived and worked the farm. The cows delivered the milk and the bees produced the honey. Over time, the Farm of Milk and Honey diversified and became bigger. The cows needed to spend more time in the milking sheds. The bees needed to spend more time gathering nectar.

There wasn't enough time — or experience — to manage the new operations.

The horses had some great ideas. Over time, the horses took the lead.

They toyed with an old adage, you can lead a horse to the farm, but the farm must be led.

The horses had now managed the farm for over 5 years and all was certainly not milk and honey, on the Farm of Milk and Honey, anymore.

Ernie, the head horse, ruled the Land of Milk and Honey from Stable HQ.

Market forces were battering the farm. Morale at the farm had disappeared.

The following pages capture some of the errant behaviours that were leading to the demise of the farm.

Errant Behaviours

Think of some of the clothes in your wardrobe. You probably have a few items that you haven't worn for years: but you're used to seeing them hanging around and are reluctant to get rid of them.

Errant workplace behaviours are similar. They become familiar and hang around the workplace environment.

After each chapter in this book, there is a calculation. This calculation helps you estimate how much the issue is costing the organisation. It's best to keep the estimates conservative, as it helps computation. If the same issue occurs in two or more chapters, then only count it once, otherwise you're doubling up.

"If you can't measure it — if you cannot express it in quantitative terms — then your knowledge is of a meagre and insignificant kind."

— Lord Kelvin, 1849

Most organisations have some errant behaviours. Complaining and bickering about workplace behaviours helps pass the time of day. However it usually doesn't provide compelling evidence of a need to fix them. This book can help you measure the cost of errant behaviours in your workplace.

You'll see how errant workplace behaviours can grow like weeds. Once errant behaviours take hold, they are difficult to remove. In the following pages, you'll meet different farm animals. Ernie is the head horse and runs the farm from Stable HQ. Ernie has not managed the errant behaviours well and he's suffering the consequences.

You'll find the book is an easy read. The maths is optional, but I'd recommend that you give it a try. Heed the above sage advice from Lord Kelvin. Measured issues will get attentioned quicker.

Reader Guarantee

The “Food for Thought” section of this book is structured to get you thinking about your current workplace.

When you recall the books that you’ve already read, you’d probably agree that most good books give you 2–5 ideas that you could take away.

This book is designed to be a quick read. I’m confident that you’ll still get the same amount of good ideas with less reading time.

These stories have been crafted so you’ll take away 2–5 good ideas (hopefully more).

If you don’t get at least two decent takeaway ideas, then I’ll refund the cost of the book. There is a bit of humour thrown in, as I couldn’t help myself — enjoy!

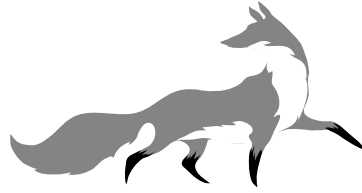
The cover of this book

Designing a book cover has changed dramatically in the past few years. Yesteryear, you could judge the quality of a book by its cover. The cover of this book is deliberately controversial. The cover is a reminder to always be vigilant for errant behaviours.

Every time you see the cover, I'd like you to think how you can improve your organisation. You don't want your organisation to resemble the cover of this book!

If you've got a bookcase at work, please don't slot this book in so you're looking at the spine. Instead, leave it facing you on the shelf. The cover will remind you to fix your own farm.

The Foxes



“**T**he fox strategy doesn’t seem to be working very well,” remarked Ernie in discussion with Anna, the farm’s wise old donkey. “Can you remind me why we employed the foxes?”

Anna replied, “Of course, the foxes used to be our enemy. They were eating the lambs and the cows. They used to prowl the outside fences all night long, looking for opportunities to eat the stock. They’d keep attacking our fences and eventually would break through. The foxes were relentless and a major threat to the farm. The stock losses were mounting. We had a farm meeting and came up with an innovative solution — hire the foxes! We gave them really lazy jobs to do. Lazy tasks meant they didn’t have a big appetite and now we feed them on the elderly hens. So the result is that they’re not hungry. In essence we’re managing their misbehaviours. Nowadays the foxes are misbehaving less. Of course, a fox will always be a fox, so every now and then they break into the chicken coop and kill a few hens.”

“Well,” said Ernie, “it sounds like the strategy is working well. We’re losing a few stock, but we’re getting a few menial jobs completed by the foxes, so well done!”

Ernie was unaware that eggs used to be a very good source of revenue for the farm. The hens didn’t like being sacrificed to placate the foxes. So the hens hid all their eggs in protest. Ernie was blissfully unaware of the true costs of the foxes on his farm.

Stable HQ Mistakes

- Managing misbehaviours is a doomed strategy.
- The farm has internalised an external threat.
- Organisational misbehaviour spreads quickly. Before long, the other animals are likely to pick up some of the foxes' unwelcome behaviours.

Food for Thought

Managing misbehaviours doesn't work. Think of any sporting code and you'll quickly be able to think of an excellent athlete who continuously broke the codes of conduct. The sports organisation doesn't want to lose the person, so they allow the poor behaviour to continue. Cycling is a good example. Drugs and cheating were rampant. People who spoke up were crushed with lawsuits. The outcome was predictable.

Foxes will weaken your organisational structure. Eventually the entity collapses. In time, it ceases to function, as it's held together with prowling foxes looking after themselves. The Tour De France gave up trying to find a winner for the years 1999–2005 because of the cheating that should have been confronted more effectively by the sport, rather than ignored. They now have asterisks to describe what happened for 1999–2005. There are other asterisks for 1996, 2006 and 2010. Now you can see the damage that's been done and how long it lasts. Do you want your organisation to have asterisks to explain what happened with your foxes?

Jack Welch took over General Electric (GE) in 1981 as the youngest CEO in GE's history. Jack was a big believer in strong organisational values. Jack had some great thoughts and values. He insisted that employees got behind the values of the organisation.

One of his bug bears was companies holding on to high performing staff who weren't behind the company's values. This often happens with sales people. What do you do if you have a salesperson that is your star salesperson but won't get behind your organisation's objectives and values? Don't make the mistake of accepting their misbehaviours. It's understandable that the organisation fears losing sales. Many organisations mistakenly tolerate the poor behaviour. These foxes will eat you! Hang onto them at your peril! You're only delaying and expanding the pain.

Take Stock — Action Plans

- Time for courageous conversations.
- Build behavioural capabilities into the performance appraisal process.
- Communicate your values.
- Set behavioural boundaries.

Nurture your Mind with Drops of Wisdom

- Read *Jack*, by Jack Welch.
- Read *Open*, by Andre Agassi.
- YouTube: "Lance Armstrong Oprah Winfrey".

Maths Time

Good farmers know their costs and revenue. How much do your foxes cost? Grab a piece of paper in private. Note foxes that you can identify.

Here are some cost indicators:

- Resignation — Cost to replace “skills and knowledge” — \$35,000
- Management cost per week attentioning fox related issues — \$2,000 pp
- Employee cost per week attentioning fox related issues — \$1,000 pp
- Stress Leave — \$70,000 pp per year

Incident	Cost \$
Other Costs (e.g. outfoxed on major account)	
	Total Cost \$

For clarity, it’s best to be conservative with your calculations. So use figures that you’re pretty confident about.

The Dogs



The lambs were complaining that the dogs were barking too loudly at them. “The lambs feel that the dogs are intimidating them,” said Harvey, the resident stallion.

When we questioned the dogs about their behaviour, they replied that they felt that the lambs were lazy and not being productive. The dogs decided the best way to get the lambs to work was to micromanage them and berate them when they made mistakes.

The dogs were becoming more aggressive. The lambs were scared of the dogs. As a result, the lambs covered up their mistakes, rather than reporting them to the dogs.

“What should we do?” asked Ernie.

“Well, the bullying all occurs down the bottom of the field,” said Jo, the beautiful llama. “Even though the lambs are not happy, it’s not affecting anyone else. The dogs are very handy on the farm, as they can multi-task. The lambs aren’t the biggest contributors to the farm. If the lambs complain, let’s pretend to be empathetic and tell them we’ll sort it out. But in reality, let’s ignore all the lambs’ bleats about the dogs.”

Stable HQ Mistakes

- HQ is ignoring the bullying.
- HQ might be unaware that bullying usually escalates.
- HQ has a duty of care to the lambs that it’s not fulfilling.

- HQ has rewarded the dogs by giving them more responsibilities, which will spread the bullying.

Food For Thought

A few years ago, I received a call from the head doctor from a large oil company. He was considering buying our learning materials on workplace resilience and using them globally for the organisation. He explained that the company had driven down the cost of every part of their operations:

- The price of drilling for oil had dropped
- The cost of refining oil had decreased
- The cost of delivering oil had decreased because of improvements in logistics.

Every cost was decreasing except one. This one cost kept soaring and it was driving the company nuts.

The cost that was spiralling was “workplace duress”. Bullying and Stress Leave were two major costs of their workplace duress. So ignore workplace duress at your peril!

I remember a small business where the owner was just mean and horrible. One of his classics was when he phoned the office manager at midnight, worried that he might have to shut the office the next day due to a lack of office pens. Eager for sleep, the office manager suggested she could bring in pens. The owner slept peacefully that night knowing he’d saved about \$7.

A few months later, the office manager took him to court over years of bullying. The settlement was over \$700K and the owner eventually lost the business and his house. In this particular case, my sense of karma was restored, as the owner was a nasty piece of work.

From a humanitarian stance, it is offensive that people are getting bullied when they are trying to work and feed their families. You've heard the term, "Let sleeping dogs lie." In this case, we need to change it to, "Don't let bullying dogs thrive."

Take Stock — Action Plans

- Review your bullying protocols immediately.
- Apply your organisational values.
- Be confident of what bullying is and isn't.
- Talk about bullying in the workplace.
- Have professional help on hand.
- Communicate on how to use professional help.
- Have an open door policy.

Nurture your Mind with Drops of Wisdom

- Spend time searching for acts of covert bullying. Bullying is not just one person standing over another. For example, "non-inclusion" is covert and distressing and is difficult to find, if you don't look for it.
- Keep up-to-date with legislation. Visit the website of your regulatory legislator.
- If you'd rather procrastinate than act, Google "Brodie's Law" to contemplate the tragic consequences of not acting.

Maths Time

Good farmers know their costs and revenue. How much do your dogs cost? Grab a piece of paper in private. Note dogs that you can identify.

Here are some cost indicators:

- Resignation — Cost to replace skills and knowledge — \$35,000
- Management cost per week attentioning dog related issues — \$2,000 pp
- Employee cost per week attentioning dog related issues — \$1,000 pp
- Stress Leave — \$70,000 pp per year

Incident	Cost \$
Other Costs (e.g. payouts, fines; medical fees). Insert Incident(s)	
	Total Cost \$

For clarity, it's best to be conservative with your calculations. So use figures that you're pretty confident about.

The Cane Toads



“I’m getting concerned about the cane toads on the farm. They seem to be growing in numbers. Can you remind us why we have them on the farm?” asked Ernie.

“Oh, that’s easy”, said Pamela, the disgruntled ewe. “We introduced them to combat the snakes on the farm. When a snake swallows a cane toad, it dies,” she told Ernie.

“But I haven’t seen a snake on the farm for years,” said Ernie.

“Exactly, that’s because the cane toad strategy is working well,” replied Pamela.

Nobody bothered looking back in farm history to see how the strategy to manage beetles using cane toads had been a disaster.

“The cane toads seem to be eating all the corn on the farm,” Ernie commented. “Let’s get them to complete a census,” suggested Michael the ram. When the cane toads heard about this, they questioned the motivation of the census. What did Stable HQ want to know and what would happen as a result of the census? The cane toads deliberately filled in the census incorrectly. When the census results arrived back at Stable HQ twelve months later, the cane toads had trebled in size. They were eating everything they could.

“Well, the census results have arrived,” announced Ernie. “The cane toad population has grown by 4%, so we’re going to plant 4% more cane sugar for them to eat. That will keep them healthy and keep the snakes away!”