

# **Chapter 8**

## **Business-Like Drones**

Business likes to pretend it is all about economic efficiency. This is false, as businesses are as much about power and control as they are about making money. One manifestation of this power is preference. That is the ability to employ friends and relations and more particularly the children of friends and relations. The distribution of largess is a core feature of the power relationship, from the big-men of New Guinea to the barons of New England. It may be that those bestowed with such largess are perfectly competent and able in the positions that they have been given. It may also be the practice of some businesses to start these preferred persons at the bottom and then work them up to the top, so that they see how the whole thing works and hopefully become able to manage the enterprise on the way up. But the brute fact is that 50% will be competent and 50% will be mediocre, and both get in.

The same drone factor of promotion above ability also features in industry, by the process of agglomeration. Successful business people expand their initial businesses and acquire others. Drone successors simply cannot manage such empires and cycles of agglomeration and atrophy occur. In some instances, such as the English automotive industry, this process contributed to the collapse of the entire sector, when confronted with competition from the Japanese and German automotive manufacturers. Sometimes dynasties have no choice in determining succession as there is simply no alternative heir. A specific example of this occurred in the Fairfax dynasty which controlled the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, Australia's major daily. In its day it is said that the Sydney Morning Herald's classifieds were like a river of gold. In the mid 1980s the preceding dynast died and the majority of family shares were inherited by the eldest son. This young man was not an idiot and had been to the best schools that money could buy, but he was out of his depth. Being a scion of a great family can be a difficult thing and from this arose a terrible weakness, a tragic need to prove himself. This weakness was played upon like a piano by a

Western Australian wide-boy who convinced our man to make a bid for outright ownership of the company. As I recall, this required a loan of some \$700 million. The problem was the loan was guaranteed against the current share price and when this collapsed shortly after, our young Fairfax was ruined. To add insult to injury he had signed a contract reimbursing the West Australian wide-boy \$30 million for his sage advice. Other family members held on to smaller share packets but the dynasty had come tumbling down.

After selection by preference comes selection by qualification. As set out above in the Teacher Drone chapter, IQ tests and qualifications are completely skewed, resulting in the mediocre being taken for competent. Not all businesses have the advantage of our acute Fonterra personnel manager. Indeed in many small to middling enterprises personnel management is where drones are often parked, so that they cannot muck up core business. This phenomenon can be gleaned by the fact that a perfectly adequate descriptor ‘Personnel Management’ has been replaced by the depersonalised and degrading ‘Human Resources’. The replacement of the term ‘Personnel’ which refers to ‘persons’ by the term ‘Human Resources’ which degrades persons to things, is corporate psychopathic objectification. It is gladly taken up by drones as it is also a transference of drones inauthenticity, their feeling that they are not persons, but are objects, onto others. The next step is jargonisation into ‘HR’ which creates an in group who can feel superior, by dint of their insider status. The replacement of perfectly adequate descriptors by less descriptive and degrading terminology and in particular by jargon, is the hallmark of the drone. Changing names makes the drone feel like they are actually doing something. Jargon makes them feel special, which they are but in another way. Drone infestation in personnel management has a feedback effect as drones tend to hire other drones, so as to bring the general level of competence down to their own.

Not only this, but business supports entire drone industries such as advertising and legal firms. As advertising and legal services are tax deductible for business, there is no real correlation between what is charged and what is done. It really is pick a number, any number. While the current recession has tightened up on such largesse, ultimately paid for by the taxpayer of course, this is a rort that attracts drones like bees to the honey jar. Because these drone industries need to leach on to business, they hire upper and middle class graduates, competent or not, as they have the requisite social connections. The law school I went to functioned as a servo mechanism for the corporate sector and ran a summer clerking program. It was quite noticeable that all the kids from wealthy families got offered a place in the big corporate law firms.