

Common advice from knowledgeable horse trainers includes the adage, "If the horse you're riding dies, get off!!" Seems simple enough, yet, in the education business we don't always follow that advice. Instead, we often choose from an array of other alternatives that include:

- Buying a stronger whip.
- Trying a new bit or bridle.
- Tightening the cinch.
- Switching riders.
- Moving the horse to a new location.
- Riding the horse for longer periods of time.
- Saying things like, "This is the way we've always ridden this horse."
- Appointing a committee to study the dead horse.
- Threaten to take away the dead horse's funding.
- Appoint a committee to study the committee that is studying the dead horse.
- Arranging to visit other sites where they ride dead horses more efficiently.
- Increasing the standards for riding dead horses.
- Creating a new test for measuring the ability to ride a dead horse.
- Comparing how we're riding now with how we did ten or twenty years ago.
- Complaining about the state of dead horses these days.
- Coming up with new styles of riding dead horses.
- Blaming the horse's parents. The problem is often in the breeding.
- Explaining to the dead horse that its behavior is not conducive to riding and therefore is unacceptable.
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The Dead Horse Phenomenon

The tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians, passed on from generation to generation, says that, *"When you discover that you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount."*

However, in Corporate America, the **Dead Horse Phenomenon** is alive and well as "advanced strategies" such as these are employed in such situations:



Buying a stronger whip.



Changing riders.



Appointing a committee to study the horse.



Visiting other countries to see how other cultures ride dead horses.



Lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included.



Reclassifying the dead horse as living-impaired.



Hiring outside contractors to ride the dead horse.



Harnessing several dead horses together to increase speed.



Providing additional funding and/or training to increase dead horse's performance.



Doing a productivity study to see if lighter riders would improve the dead horse's performance.



Declaring that as the dead horse does not have to be fed, it is less costly, carries lower overhead, and therefore contributes substantially more to the bottom line of the economy than do some other horses.



Rewriting the expected performance requirements for all horses.

And of course our favorite. . .





Promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position. My favorite.

Riding a Dead Horse

Dakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.

However, in business we often try other strategies with dead horses, including the following:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
2. Changing riders.
3. Saying things like "This is the way we always have ridden this horse."
4. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
5. Arranging to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
6. Increasing the standards to qualify as a dead horse rider.
7. Appointing a tiger team to revive the dead horse.
8. Pass legislation declaring that "This horse is not dead."
9. Unilaterally declaring, "no horse is too dead to beat."
10. Blaming the horse's parents.
11. Providing additional funding to increase the horse's performance.
12. Do a Cost Analysis Study to see if contractors can ride the horse cheaper.
13. Declare the horse is "better, faster and cheaper" dead.
14. Revisit the performance requirements for horses.
15. Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.



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***In the Dakota tribes of the American Indians, there's a wise old saying: When you discover you're riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to simply dismount.***

***Today we have more advanced policies, such as:***

***Deny that the horse is dead***

***Declare there is no such thing as a dead horse***

***Change the rider***

***Ban the word "horse"***

***Stuff more hay down the horse's throat***

***Point out as many times as necessary that the horse is not nearly as dead as it used to be***

***Go into high level negotiations about whether dead horses have rights***

***Emphasize the breakthrough accomplishment that a dead horse can be still be ridden***

***Hire a p.r. firm to put the focus on "Who Shot The Horse?"!***

***Ban all biological discoveries relating to anything equine***

***Do a study to find out if celebrity riders would improve the dead horse's performance***

***Demand reparations from the ones who sold us the horse***

***Adjust standards so that riding dead horses is accepted and embraced***

*Lakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount. However, in business (and education and government) we often try other strategies with dead horses.*

Among them are

- buying a stronger whip;
- changing riders;
- saying things like “This is the way we always have ridden this horse”,
- appointing a committee to study the horse;
- arranging to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
- Increasing the standards to ride dead horses;
- appointing a team to revive the dead horse;
- creating a training session to increase our riding ability;
- comparing the state of dead horses in today’s environment;
- change the requirements, declaring that “This horse is not dead”.
- Hire contractors to ride the dead horse;
- harnessing several dead horses together for increased speed;
- declaring that “No horse is too dead to beat”;
- providing additional funding to increase the horse’s performance;
- do a study to see if contractors can ride it cheaper.
- Buying a product to make dead horses run faster;
- declaring that the horse is “better, faster and cheaper” dead;
- forming a quality circle to find uses for dead horses;
- revisiting the performance requirements for horses; saying this horse was procured with cost as an independent variable;
- promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position.

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Buying a stronger whip.

Changing riders.

Say things like, "This is the way we have always ridden this horse."

Appointing a committee to study the horse.

Arranging to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.

Increasing the standards to ride dead horses.

Appointing a tiger team to revive the dead horse.

Creating a training session to increase our riding ability.

Comparing the state of dead horses in today's environment.

Change the requirements declaring that "This horse is not dead."

Hire contractors to ride the dead horse.

Harnessing several dead horses together for increased speed.

Declaring that "No horse is too dead to beat."

Providing additional funding to increase the horse's performance.

Do a Cost Analysis study to see if contractors can ride it cheaper.

Purchase a product to make dead horses run faster.

Declare the horse is "better, faster and cheaper" dead.

Form a quality circle to find uses for dead horses.

Revisit the performance requirements for horses.

Say this horse was procured with cost as an independent variable.

Promote the dead horse to a supervisory position.