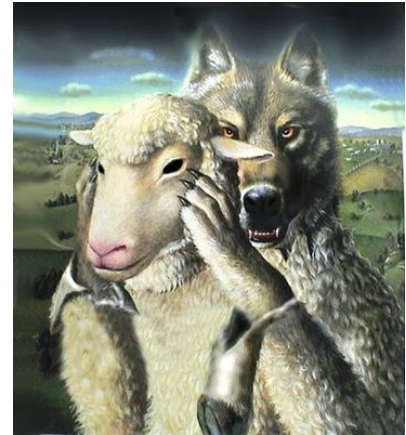


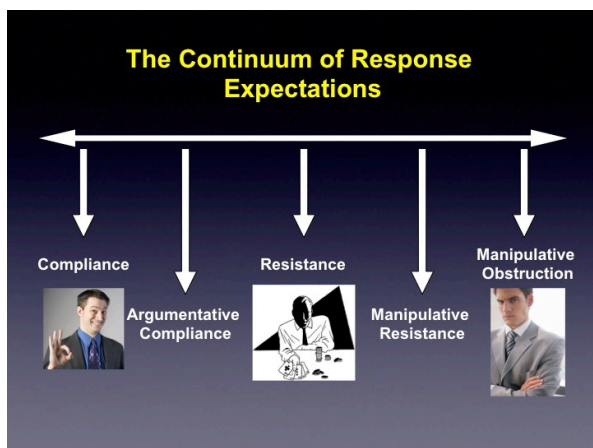
## The wolf in sheep's clothing - enter the world of the EDB (Extreme Difficult Behaviour)

Dealing with difficult and awkward behaviour in the workplace is a regular occurrence for most managers and HR professionals. There are, many would agree, ranges of difficult behaviour and various reasons for such behaviours. Tackling difficult behaviour in the workplace has been, as the words suggest, difficult and has resulted in many programmes to help tackle the issues.

Martin Smith is a leading training consultant who for the past decade has spent a lot of time developing and delivering a programme around difficult behaviour but with a significant difference. Martin's programme does not look at your average difficult behaviour but instead what he terms - Extreme persistent behaviour in the workplace. A programme that goes well beyond the average awkward where managers and HR are not having difficult conversations, they are having - Impossible Conversations!



Within the programme Martin explores what he terms - The Continuum of Response Expectations, that is what you can expect as a behavioural response from different types of people you are trying to deal with.



On the left side of the continuum you have the least difficult individuals who either comply or perhaps give argumentative compliance. As you see from the chart this moves on to those that give you resistance but again eventually come round to the managers or organisations view. We then have the manipulative resistance and the far end of the continuum - manipulative obstruction which is where what the programme defines as an EDB sits and which the programme is primarily focused on.

An EDB - one who demonstrates extreme difficult behaviour is the focus of Martin's programme and looks at a very small number of individuals in the workplace categorised by some key indicators. By no means an exhaustive list but this type of person can often exhibit some, if not all of the following:

- They are always right - never wrong!
- They are often very good at their job but does it "their way" not yours!
- Deflects blame and responsibility with ease.
- Plays the victim, and constantly claims they are being harassed or bullied with consummate ease.
- Has no insight into the affect of their actions or behaviour on others.
- Consistently works against managers, HR and the organisation and "Blocks" any attempt to resolve issues or difficulties.

- Has a Chameleon like qualities - very nice to some and not to others.

Although the term EDB is not an official term and has come out of the development of this programme there are a number of other terms which also fit what we are talking about and are cited in many referenced articles and text.

A very good example of this is the term “**Workplace Deviance**” defined as:

***Behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organisation, its members, or both.***

(Robinson and Bennett 1995) cited in Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham 2010 P120

It is important to note that the type of person we are talking about, as the above definition defines, can damage both people with the organisation as well as the organisation itself. This person does what most average members of staff do not and this is a good comparison to make to help recognise and manage this type of behaviour. A simple question to keep asking is “do the majority of staff in the organisation do what this person is doing and is this reasonable behaviour given all the facts?”

Managing this type of behaviour is very difficult but as highlighted in the EDB programme not impossible provided there is an over arching strategic approach from two perspectives. Within what we term the Action Matrix the two strategic approaches are interpersonal and organisational. The manager must take control and manage the individual but must have the backing of senior managers, HR and the organisation as a whole to make things work. The action matrix goes on to develop key actions essential to managing the type of behaviour highlighted in this article and the type of person that fully displays such behaviour.

Another very important point made throughout the programme is what Martin terms his “Rule of Three” It is important to ask politely and if necessary to ask again but after two asks the manager and organisation must go to tell. A key reason organisations hold on to and allow EDB’s to do what they want is the Organisation does too much asking and not enough telling, whilst the EDB does too much telling and not enough asking.

For more information on the EDB programme or any questions contact Martin directly on **mjs@taking-control.co.uk** or **phone him on 07 973 410 010**.