



## The Risks of Conforming

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We often look at the risks associated when people don't conform, and we often don't like those who fail to act in the way we want or we expect. But how often do we consider the risks associated with conformity? The answer is rarely, yet the risks are considerable.

We often go along with a course of action, or carry on with an activity even when it is obvious to us (and often to others) that to do so is detrimental. Think of the time you pushed yourself too hard in the gym, or in a game or a race, and you paid for it later. Why do we do this? Well, it is not so much about being brave but about being part of the group. A kind of keeping-up with the Jones; if you will.

Research shows that we tend to conform to the behaviors of those around us. For example, if your work colleagues take sick days, then you'll start taking them too. This may not seem important – but let's look further.

The recent problems at Volkswagen who were found to have manipulated emissions tests for at least seven years illustrate this. Suggestions have been made it was only a couple of people were responsible, but in an organization of over half-a-million people worldwide this does not seem credible. In this time nobody said anything. Why? Because nobody else had said anything no-one else did.

If you are a leader you need to act and do what is right – and this may be not conforming and going against the rest of the herd. The question is this: what will you do, and what are you doing now that others are conforming with? Remember, people will follow what you do not what you say!

To do this, firstly, be clear on what your values are, those which are non-negotiable; secondly, be clear as to what is happening around you and also because of how you act; thirdly, make sure that you act in a way that is aligned with your values. If this means taking a stand, then do so – to act with integrity requires courage. Leading from the front is never easy, but that is what every good leader will do. So what are you going to do?

### **About Andrew Cooke and Blue Sky GPS (Growth & Profit Solutions)**

#### **Andrew Cooke**

*An experienced executive coach, business facilitator, and management consultant Andrew has more than 25 years' national and international experience, working across a range of industries and businesses. He is passionate in helping people, teams and companies to unlock their individual and collective potential, enabling them to achieve their personal and business goals and, in turn, to help them unlock the potential of others.*



**Growth & Profit Solutions**

"Unlocking your business potential"

*Andrew has extensive experience in dealing with both blue-chip and start-up companies, and has had extensive international experience in the UK, the Middle East and Ireland across a range of industries.*

*He has post-graduate business qualifications with a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from the London Business School. He is an accredited associate coach for Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centered Coaching in coaching executives and leaders.*

### **Blue Sky GPS (Growth & Profit Solutions)**

*Andrew runs [Blue Sky GPS \(Growth & Profit Solutions\)](#), working with individuals, teams, groups and corporate so they can unlock their potential, that of others, and create a life and a job they love and choose to lead.*

*Through customized development programmes using experiential learning, backed by group workshops, individual one-to-one coaching and on-going support the individual and group development needs are addressed, the skills and capabilities are unlocked and the people can grow and achieve both personal and business outcomes on a sustainable basis. His blog, Growth and Profit, can be found at <http://growthandprofit.me>.*

*To find out more about this visit the [Blue Sky GPS website](#) or contact Andrew at [andrew.cooke@business-gps.com.au](mailto:andrew.cooke@business-gps.com.au) or on +61 (0)401 842 673.*