

## Progressive Management Critics' Strategy and Tactics

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People who disagree should follow certain rules to ensure a fair discussion based on the merits of the arguments. This can facilitate the process for resolving differences. However, it can be difficult to abide by rules of argumentation because people often have strong personal or collective motivations to ensure that their views prevail. The strong desire to win can eclipse any desire or need to follow the rules. Therefore, fairness and winning based on the merits of an argument becomes of secondary or tertiary importance. Whether done intentionally or not, people will take shortcuts to win. The shortcuts will necessarily allow one to forego seeing the situation for one's self and being fact-based. Shortcuts eliminate the need to "go see."

The core strategy used by people who dislike progressive management is to ignore rules of argumentation, while the tactics include widespread use of illogical arguments to advance their interests. This approach is taken when it is difficult to win solely on the merits of the ideas. Those against progressive management usually cite dire, zero-sum outcomes or other forms of selfishness, which many people dislike. Progressive Lean management\*, with its two principles, "continuous improvement" and "respect for people," is a non-zero-sum system of management that opposes selfishness and promotes teamwork.

People on any side of an argument typically have good intentions and are expressing deeply-held beliefs that they view as wholesome. Yet argumentation in contexts devoid of rules and "respect people" assures that civil dialog and discussion descends into heated, emotional debate. People who might be influenced by civil argumentation become confused and annoyed and quickly lose interest, leaving those who have already chosen sides to continuously confirm one another's biases. The ensuing deadlock creates false dilemmas, consumes resources while creating no value, and impedes necessary human progress in business and elsewhere.

Supporters of progressive management should be well aware of the principal illogical arguments so they can avoid them in their own arguments and recognize their use by others. In doing so, they can help create an environment in which those who are unsure of progressive management can make better-informed decisions. Below are the illogical arguments that are typically used by people who are against progressive management:

| Illogical Argument                   | Definition   | Examples   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Using and Abusing Tradition          | Using tradition to argue against something.  | "We've always done it this way. It works."<br>"Adam Smith was right when he said..."         |
| Avoiding the Force of Reason         | Make false claims, obfuscate, mischaracterize, or use power to avoid confronting someone's argument. | "We already tried that and it didn't work."<br>"We have to do what the boss wants."          |
| Inability to Prove Does not Disprove | Ask questions that emphasize minutiae or seek highly specific answers to questions.                  | "Show me the proof that this works."<br>"Give me an example of who has done this."           |
| Making False Assumptions             | Knowing or suspecting the assumption is false but using it anyway.                                   | "This will be too disruptive."<br>"We don't have budget to do that."                         |
| Ad hominem                           | Attack the person, not their argument.   | "Your emotions are out of control."<br>"That's how a liberal socialist thinks."              |
| Red Herring                          | Deliberately divert someone's attention from the problem at hand.                                    | "It will hurt the economy."<br>"It will cost jobs to do that."                               |
| Abuse of Expertise                   | Using expertise or experts to justify an action.   | "The president of XYZ company agrees..."<br>"The majority of economists say..."              |
| False Dilemma                        | Persuading people there are only two choices when there are many.                                    | "If we don't do X, then Y will happen."<br>"Our choices are clear: it's A or B"              |
| Expediency                           | Ignoring the means to achieve a desired end.   | "Don't worry; everyone does it that way."<br>"I don't care how you do it, just get it done." |
| Special Pleading                     | Omitting key information because it would undermine my position.                                     | "We're different."<br>"You're not a CEO; how can you know?"                                  |

Adapted from: *Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking*, D.Q. McInerney, Random House, 2005

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Originality in Lean Thinking

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These illogical arguments are often used in combination with one another for greater effect, and also in tandem with logical arguments. The result is confusion, which compels some people to tune-out and most others to accept the alternative that is simplest to comprehend - which usually is not progressive management. Supporters of progressive management can improve their position by calling out the illogical arguments. However, they must also show how progressive management is a sound, sensible, capitalist path to freedom and security. ♦

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\* Lean is a non-zero-sum principle-based management system focused on creating value for end-use customers and eliminating waste, unevenness, and unreasonableness using the scientific method.

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