Dry rot tends to enter an organization early—often with the founders. And like cancer, it's easier to deal with it earlier than later. To get 30 individuals to change when the organization is still growing works better than trying to changing a mature organization of 300 or 3000.

14 symptoms that early stage SMEs have dry rot include:

- Executives and employees driven by greed rather than an inspiring vision.
- A management “team” that doesn’t know how to act like one.
- Personal relationships characterized by mistrust prevents open communication.
- Barely concealed frustration produces rising tension and periodic blow-ups.
- High stress levels lead to acting out or burn out.
- The organization fails to learn from mistakes that occur again and again.
- Fire fighting becomes that norm as the urgent crowds out the important.
- Deadlines are missed more often than they are completed on-time.
- Ineffective meetings waste 20 to 40 percent of people’s time.
- Individuals can’t solve complex problems when in a project team.
- Unclear roles and responsibilities cause confusion over who does what when.
- Strategic objectives are not followed, talked about, or made clear.
- Dysfunctional group norms prevent team work from developing.
- Too many projects teams get stuck in neutral or continuous conflict.

If your organization comes up with more than seven "positives" on this checklist, you should seriously think about taking action.