



UNIT-17

How to Be a True Leader Not Just a Boss

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Know the differences between good and bad bosses
- ✓ Understand how those who hold management positions can develop into good leaders
- ✓ Recognize characteristics of good leaders
- ✓ Know the elements of leading by example
- ✓ Comprehend how to use common sense in workplace dealings
- ✓ Know why it is important to use clear communication techniques
- ✓ Understand the importance of providing effective feedback
- ✓ Understand how to apply emotional intelligence to your dealings with others

Unit 17

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Good Boss versus Bad Boss

Bad Bosses

Most everyone can remember their favorite teacher. For some it was a smiling, gentle elementary school teacher who always had patience in abundance to help tie shoe laces or who has a constant supply of tissues on hand to wipe runny noses.

It may have been a high school teacher who helped nurture a latent love for classic literature like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* or F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Or a math teacher who made numbers and formulas fun and introduced you to the Pythagorean Theorem.

In university, it may have been the unconventional professor who challenged you to open your mind and demand more of yourself, to consider the philosophy behind, "I think, therefore I am." Or perhaps it was the young professor who would just as soon join you and your friends in hoisting a pint at the campus pub rather than spend a Saturday night grading papers.

Yes, we have that one – or perhaps more than one – teacher we will never forget. Just as we all have a teacher or professor who stands out for all wrong reasons – too strict, demanding, unfair, unavailable – we have all had, at some point in our working careers, that one boss who stands out as being a really bad boss.

He or she managed staff through intimidation, bullying tactics or by general fear and scare mongering. Maybe they were an unapologetic narcissist and thought of no one but themselves. Perhaps they were a poor communicator and an even worse listener.

There was even a Hollywood movie made about this subject. Released in 2011, *Horrible Bosses* tells the story of three friends who conspire to murder their awful bosses. You sure do not want to be the boss in that situation!

It has been said that employees do not leave good jobs, they leave bad managers. Or people do not leave bad companies, they leave bad managers.

Bad managers often make several common mistakes that cause loyal, dedicated staff to leave. A good boss will avoid these mistakes or risk sabotaging staff retention.

BAD BOSSES...	CONSEQUENCES
... Are unreachable	Employees need input from managers from time to time. Staff who cannot count on a timely reply to emails and voicemails may be frustrated and seek greener pastures.
... Micromanage	This shows staff that you do not believe they can make good decisions on their own. This is demeaning to employees who want to prove they can shine.
... Shirk responsibility	Everyone wants a leader who leads, not someone who just occupies the corner office.
... Waste others' time	It causes frustration among employees.
... Are disrespectful	People want to work for someone who makes them feel valued, appreciated and treats them like they are an integral part of the team.
... Does not give feedback	How does a staff member know they are being effective if they are not told? Recognition for a job well done is also essential for staff retention.
... Picks favorites	This is a sure-fire way to make other employees feel unsatisfied and like the playing field is stacked against them.

... Ignores toxicity	When the boss ignores the difficult team members and the problems they cause, top performers may get frustrated. That leads to unhappiness on the job and is a big reason why good employees leave.
... Breed negativity	Negativity is contagious. Managers who complain can expect the same from their employees. The tone is set at the top.
... Keep employees from growing	Bosses who do not foster growth will see good employees leave because they often feel stifled and like they have hit a plateau.
... Cultivate an intimidating reputation	Temper and impatience are a bad combination in a manager. Employees should be able to come to their boss when they need support, see hurdles ahead or worry that something is about to go wrong.
... Take things personally	Horrible bosses fail to move when things do not go as planned. They hold grudges and may let conflict fester. They refuse to take responsibility.

GOOD BOSSES

Now *you are* the boss and you strive to be the best, most effective manager you can be. You do not want to be the bad boss. You want to treat your employees with fairness and respect and earn their respect in turn. You want to be the type of leader who motivates staff and inspires them to go the extra mile for you.

Good bosses should be helpful and promote a sense of purpose. They are concerned about staff retention and do everything in their power to keep star employees happy. In a survey of Canadian workers by Robert Half, workers cited unhappiness with management as the second most popular reason they would leave their job (poor compensation was the number one reason).

Half says good bosses are easy to identify because they possess certain characteristics and exhibit specific behaviors. Good bosses work to make sure that loyal, dedicated staff never want to leave.

GOOD BOSSES...	BENEFITS
... Are always available	Even the best employees need direction from their boss from time to time. A good boss responds to staff through email, voice mail or in person in a timely manner.
... Trust staff to work on their own	A good boss who does not micromanage demonstrates trust in employees; this tends to improve staff retention.
... Take charge	Leaders lead; they do not wait for someone else to take charge. A good boss leads by example.

... Value others' time	A good manager recognizes that time is valuable and productive. They do not call a meeting to decide whether to have a meeting.
... Respect staff	Employees are not necessarily looking for a best friend in their boss. But a good boss makes his/her staff feel valued. Simple things like remembering the names of an employee's children and celebrating

	<p>birthdays and work anniversaries go a long way to making an employee feel valued.</p>
<p>... Provide feedback</p>	<p>Professionals need feedback on their performance and constructive advice they can use to improve. A good manager recognizes that a job well done is essential for staff retention. And he/she shows team members they appreciate their hard work.</p>
<p>... Treat employees fairly</p>	<p>Every boss has a staff member(s) who they consider to be their go-to person, but they do not show favoritism to any one person because they recognize this can breed contempt.</p>
<p>... Deal quickly with issues</p>	<p>An effective manager deals with difficult situations and toxic employees right away. Toxic employees can wreak havoc at work and this can cause top performers to harbour resentment – both for their bosses and their colleagues. Unhappiness on the job is a big reason why good employees leave and good bosses do their best to prevent this.</p>
<p>... Foster positivity</p>	<p>A good boss leads by example. They know that if they have a poor attitude, so will staff. Great managers give staff members a reason to care and display the level of enthusiasm they hope to see from staff.</p>
<p>... Help employees grow</p>	<p>Managers who value staff retention help employees expand their knowledge and abilities – even if that means the employees leave the team to hone their skills elsewhere, working for another great boss. Good employees leave because they feel constricted. Good bosses help their team member be all that they can be.</p>

... Cultivate a 'team' attitude	Employees should be able to come to their boss when they need support or have an idea they feel could work as a solution to a situation that may arise. Good bosses recognize the value in remaining even-tempered and approachable to foster great relations with staffers.
... Do not hold a grudge	Good managers take responsibility when they are wrong or are responsible for a failure; they do not hold grudges against employees who point out the boss's misgivings. They recognize that everyone has their own opinion and it is the collective workings of a team that brings about the success of a project.

Some of these traits of good bosses will be explored in more depth later in the course.

Now, think about a horrible boss you have had in your working career. Did that boss play favorites, be unavailable and shirk responsibility? Did they exhibit any of the other behaviors that we have discussed?

Name three characteristics or behaviors exhibited by these people that caused you to think about them as being a horrible boss.

Come up with the 10 most important pieces of wisdom you have learned about how to work effectively with people.

The Boss as a Leader

The Boss

A search on the internet reveals that the word boss can sometimes have negative connotations. Most of the blogs and articles about bosses paint them as dictators that rule with fear, giving orders and not listening to others.



A thesaurus lists the words boss, supervisor, manager and leader as synonyms for each other. However, dictionaries have slightly different meanings for each term.

These meanings are found in the Merriam-Webster and Oxford dictionaries and dictionary.com:

Boss:

- A person who exercises control or authority; specifically one who directs or supervises workers
- A person who is in charge of a worker or organization
- A person in control of a group or situation
- A person who employs or superintends workers; manager
- A person who makes decisions, exercises authority, dominates, etc.

Supervisor:

- One that supervises; especially an administrative officer in charge of a business, government, or school unit or operation.
- A person who supervises a person or an activity.
- A person who supervises workers or the work done by others; superintendent.

Manager:

- One that manages: such as a person who conducts business or household affairs.
- A person responsible for controlling or administering an organization or group of staff.
- A person in charge of the activities, tactics, and training of a sports team.
- A person regarded in terms of their skill in managing resources, especially those of a household.
- A person who has control or direction of an institution, business, etc., or of a part, division, or phase of it.
- A person who manages.

Leader:

- A person who leads: such as a guide, conductor.
- A person who has commanding authority or influence.
- The person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country.
- A person or thing that leads.

For our purposes, a boss is someone who holds a management position and directs others. This does not automatically make them a leader, but they can develop into one. The role of boss is not just about giving orders, a boss can be a leader too. Becoming a better boss means developing into a leader.

In an article for Psychology Today, Stephanie Sarkis says “the best bosses aren’t bosses — they are leaders.”

Business author and speaker Tom Peters does not acknowledge a distinction between managers and leaders. “Your principal moral obligation as a manager/leader is to develop the skillset (soft and hard) of every one of the people in your charge to the maximum extent of your organization’s resources. The good news: This is also the number one mid- to long-term ... profit maximization strategy!”

He believes bosses, managers, and supervisors should act as leaders to help others reach their potential. “Excellence can only be attained through the enthusiasm and energy of every employee/project member.”

A leader creates an environment where everyone is working together as a team.

Let’s face it: there are staff members on your team who are better performers than others. Perhaps there is nothing you can do about it; it is a team that you inherited when you took over as boss. And there are those employees who you do not click with; maybe they are resentful of your position and question every move you make.

A leader will not take anything personally and will recognize that each and every staff member possesses certain skills that make them unique and valuable to the team. If one staff member is brilliant at planning and organizing the task at hand but is lacking in people skills, a leader will recognize their strengths and assign them accordingly. **A leader knows everyone has a part to play and trusts their team to work harmoniously.**

A leader pitches in to help fix the problem.

They will not care what caused the mess, they will jump in with both feet first to fix the problem, then ask questions later.

A leader believes success comes when everyone reaches their potential.

A leader encourages their followers to always do their best and strive for perfection. If there is a task to perform, he or she will assign roles to everyone on the team and then motivate the team to reach the goal. They know that by working together, anything can be accomplished. Along the way, a leader will identify pitfalls and remove obstacles and barriers so that everyone is happy working at their maximum capacity.

A good leader will recognize what still needs to be done, roll up their sleeves and dig in to make sure everyone has achieved success.

A leader cares about employees.

A leader takes the time to get to know their employees on a personal level and, sometimes, the family members of employees. Do you know the dates or celebrate the birthdays of employees or how about work anniversary dates? Do you make the work environment as enjoyable as possible? Do you remember to give thanks to employees who go above and beyond the call of duty? If so, you are a leader.

A leader will care enough about and ask questions of your entire team: *What do you think of this? How do you feel about that?* An open and honest dialogue makes it easier to proactively identify problems and work together to create a mutually beneficial environment. It will also make your employees feel appreciated and acknowledged.

A leader is democratic and encourages employees at all levels to participate.

Admirable Leaders

Think of at least three leaders that you admire. Why do you admire these leaders?

Behaviors of Leaders

A look into the management of most every workplace will reveal the most successful leaders all possess a number of behaviors that are common and endear them to their employees.

People who succeed as leaders understand that once they take on the responsibility of leading a team or department, their mindset has to change. Being an effective leader is not about what you can achieve on your own, and getting ahead is not a journey made alone. Instead, it becomes a team focus now. It takes a team to make success.

Leaders are successful when group goals are met because employees are properly motivated and contributing at their highest level.

A good leader should **set reasonable goals** for staff members. *Goals* should give a team something to reach for. Record the *goals* for your team and each of your direct reports. *Goals* must be accepted and recognized as important and they must align with the organization's mission and strategy. It is important to revisit the *goals* on a regular basis because they can sometimes change when the unexpected happens.

By *establishing* and monitoring objectives, a good leader can give his or her *employees* real-time input on their performance while motivating them to achieve more. Experts advise leaders to connect *employee goals* to larger company *goals*. Make sure *goals* are attainable but challenging; an unchallenged staff becomes an unproductive staff: create a plan for success; monitor progress; re-establish goals.

A good boss should **lead and not dictate**. This has been discussed previously in this workshop. No one likes to work for a dictator, someone who listens only to themselves and has a 'do as I say and not as I do' attitude. True leaders do not dictate: They convince others to make the right choices.

Responsibility, accountability and decisiveness are the hallmarks of great leadership. They have little to do with management. A great boss will listen more and speak less, be direct and decisive to create action and be part of the solution, not the problem.

Many bosses have been in a position where an employee comes to them with a problem, but not a solution. Want to impress your boss? When you come to him or her with a problem, also have a solution or two. Want to be a really great boss? Encourage that employee to come up with solution on their own. Oftentimes, employees already know how to use common sense to bring about a positive outcome, but they may be unwilling to share their opinions. A good boss will give them the power to do it on their own.

Good leaders are also **humble**: they praise publicly and criticize privately. All employees like to be praised for doing good work – and rewarded for exceptional work as well. A successful manager who cares about their employees will shine a light on the entire team's contribution to the success of the project – even if they alone were single-handedly responsible for it.

And while it is easy to give praise to a deserving staff member, many bosses find it difficult to dole out criticism. Let's face it, sometimes employees just 'phone in' their effort. This can happen for a variety of reasons: a sick child at home could be taking all of their attention, or perhaps they are experiencing a health scare of their own; whatever the reason, sometimes not every employee is firing on all cylinders. When this becomes a habit with an employee, that is an entirely different conversation the manager will have to have.

But when someone is 'off' for a brief period of time, or has not delivered on a particular goal, there is a hard line that has to be taken and a hard message that has to be delivered by the boss to the employee. When this difficult situation arises, a great leader knows to deliver the message, listen for an explanation, deal with the situation and move on.

Sometimes, bosses spend a lot of time correcting employees for every little thing they do wrong and not praising enough for what they do right. In an effort to eliminate errors and increase efficiency, they sometimes overlook the need for positive re-enforcement and forget to accentuate the positive. But good leaders recognize that people do not thrive in an environment of criticism, so they find ways to motivate, praise and reward.

Great leaders know that being the boss comes with responsibility. A good boss will scrutinize the progress of employees and help dedicated staff members reach their potential, but as the boss, you also have to **scrutinize your own performance** and develop yourself. Nothing will inspire those who work for you more than seeing you identify your weaknesses and consciously and publicly make necessary adjustments. The great news is that every time a team member succeeds, the entire team benefits and every time you — as leader — succeed, the team benefits as well. So, you are a great boss; you have lots of experience and advice to share. But that does not mean you *have* to share it all the time.

There are really two reasons for this. First, if you talk more than you listen, it will shut down the thinking process for the entire team. Your team will think less for themselves and become solely dependent on your brain. Let them explore the problems and find their own ways to handle them. Listen to their conversations to make sure they do not get too far off track.

Secondly, listening more than you talk allows team members to exercise their common-sense muscle, feel the freedom to make their own choices and voice their own opinions. It allows good bosses to listen, not demand, and encourages the exchange of ideas and solutions from other sources. Who knows? You might learn something new yourself.

Knowing when to pick your battles is strength of a great leader. You cannot and should not fight every issue. You do not want your team to feel battle weary and you certainly do not want to exhaust yourself. Instead, direct your own attention and efforts only to where you will have most impact.

A good leader knows which issues are worth skirmishing over. And it should not be for every little thing. Instead of waging battle over what color to paint the lunchroom, a better use of your strength as the person in charge would be to take a hard line on a news sales policy.

Lead by Example

Good leaders should lead by example. By walking your talk, you become the type of boss others will want to emulate. If you lead by example, your employees will model that behavior. Do the opposite, by saying one thing while doing another, and it can erode the trust your employees have in you and have drastic consequences on your ability to manage.

It has been said time and time again that attitude is everything, and an effective boss is all about having a positive attitude. This applies to your home life and personal relationships as well as to your work life and the relationships you build and foster there. If you do not have the right attitude both *for* work and *at* work, it can breed negativity.

And if the boss oozes negativity, that will only trickle down to negativity from your employees

Part of being effective, while maintaining a positive attitude, comes down to being a team player. Great leaders know that team players are important to overall office morale. If office morale is high, virtually anything can be accomplished. On the other hand, low office morale can breed fear, resentment and an unwillingness to perform. As the person in charge, it may be necessary to distinguish yourself as a leader, but it is equally important to reinforce that you are a team player with similar responsibilities.

Lead by example to demonstrate that you both respect and appreciate each member of your team. If you are constantly complaining or are disrespectful to co-workers, chances are your employees will imitate your actions. Nothing will get accomplished if this is allowed to fester in the workplace. If this happens, how effective are you?

Trust is a critical element of effective leadership. If your employees do not feel you are trustworthy, you will not have their respect and they will not give it their all for you. If you want the best out of your employees, give them *your* best. If you want them to go the extra mile for you, then demonstrate that you will go the extra mile for them.

Be the one who shows up early for work and does not roll into the workplace late or take advantage of longer lunches and breaks, who asks as opposed to demands. Leaders set the direction by helping others see what lies ahead and rising to the challenges. They see everyone's potential and encourage and inspire those around them.

Set clear standards for your employees so everyone knows what is expected, and make sure you follow them as well. Inspire and motivate employees by modelling the behaviors you would like them to demonstrate.

In order to lead by example, consider these guidelines:

- **Be positive.** There is a song lyric that goes: Sometimes you are the windshield, sometimes you are the bug. In other words, some days are better than others. Even during moments of crises or when dealing with a particularly difficult task, great bosses will maintain a positive attitude and not project negativity onto staff. It may be difficult but as previously mentioned, employees will model your behavior. Stay away from negative conversations, keep your chin up, spirits up and your employees will follow your lead.

- **Be punctual.** In terms of your employees modelling your behavior, arriving to work with time to spare will allow you time to prepare yourself for the day ahead. Employees notice when managers take advantage of longer lunches or breaks. Bad bosses seem to have an attitude of 'do as I say and not as I do.' Good leaders follow the same rules that the employees must and do not take advantage of the fact that they are in charge.
- **Be the first to volunteer.** Good leaders do not get into a routine of passing unwanted tasks on to employees. Instead, they should take on tasks themselves. By willingly volunteering for a difficult or unpleasant task, you are holding up your end of the work and showing that teamwork makes the dream work.
- **Be respectful.** Respect is earned, not given automatically. It takes a team of people at all levels rowing the boat together, so to speak, in order to accomplish a goal. A good boss recognizes that everyone has their individual role to play and no one is better than the other.
- **Be appreciative.** Good managers recognize and appreciate the hard work employees have done. While they may not always control the company's purse strings, and therefore cannot show appreciation with a cash bonus or pay raise, they recognize a variety of ways exist to show appreciation. A sincere and heartfelt 'thanks' does not cost a dime!
- **Be supportive.** Encouraging employees to do their best and supporting their efforts to grow are signs of a good leader. Consider encouraging them to register for a professional development program, or giving them time to support charitable endeavors of their choosing also go a long way to supporting staff.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." A good boss will take this to heart and put their own spin on it: Be the type of employee you want to see in your workplace. Exhibit positive behavior, try your best, stay organized, and efficiently handle day-to-day responsibilities. Model this type of behavior and it will encourage your employees to give their best effort each day, and in every task as well.

Employees are aware of the actions and performances of their leaders, managers, and supervisors. A positive attitude in the boss sets up employees for continued success.

Generally, a manager's success is directly tied to his/her ability to focus on the business fundamentals – like discipline, accountability, strategic alignment, managing to company values and empowering employees. Great bosses have already mastered the basic functions of management such as leading, planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and communicating, and communication is certainly the thread that ties everything together. Clear communication is essential at all levels.

Managers lead and motivate through communication. Businesses promote discipline, accountability and strategic alignment with clear communication. Market leaders promote their products and services using communication through compelling advertisements and marketing campaigns. Good communicators make good managers.

Mastering the Art of Communication

Clear communication is always a two-way process. It is not enough to speak clearly; you have to make sure you are being heard and understood. Sometimes we believe we are being clear with directions, and we fail; just as sometimes we are actually abundantly clear, but we are not heard.

Great leaders have a communication plan that is really quite simple and uses only a few steps: Prepare how they will communicate, deliver the message, evaluate the effectiveness and take corrective action, if necessary.

In preparing how you will communicate, the first step is clarifying the goal of the communication: Do you need to discuss a change in policy with the entire team? Or do you need to take disciplinary action with one staff member? No matter what the reason, it will be necessary to plan carefully before communicating it. Will it be sent out through email, at a team meeting or one-on-one? Before the communication is sent, a great boss will anticipate the receiver's viewpoint and feelings.

In delivering the message it is important to express your meaning with conviction. In the example of communicating a policy change, clearly communicate the necessary changes and why they are necessary and what this will mean to the entire team. Good bosses know they need to relate their message to the larger goals of the team and the company, and then identify the action to be taken. To avoid miscommunication, it is necessary to confirm the other person understands exactly what you are saying and why it is being communicated.

The stakes are high when it comes to communicating – if you fail to do this properly, you can poison the atmosphere in the workplace, as well as your company's morale. Before sending a letter, e-mail or communicate in-person, a great boss will stop to consider its impact and consider common barriers to effective communication.

Keep these points in mind when communicating:

- It is important to show respect for the other party or parties
- Communication must be clear and not poorly defined
- A good boss will not communicate serious issues through e-mails or on cell phones
- Intimidation is wrong

The bottom line is clear communication is one of the most important aspects of a business leader's success. To be successful as a leader you must learn how to be an effective and compelling communicator. You and your team also have to master the art of clear communication together. By using these and other strategies, you and your employees can reach new levels of leadership excellence.

Characteristics of Effective Feedback

As part of good communication, and to help employees develop to their full potential, effective leaders know how to provide frequent positive and constructive feedback in a way that motivates both under-performing and high-performing employees.

Review objectives with your team regularly to ensure expectations and goals are clear. In conjunction with this, on a consistent basis analyze employee performance and provide them with useful, honest and specific feedback about their performance.

A key reason that high-performing employees stay at their jobs is because they have the opportunity to learn and grow. Leaders help organize and institute career development plans with their employees and follow up to ensure the plans are implemented.

One goal of feedback is for it to contribute to an improvement in future performance. Even when it does not lead to a desired level of performance, the meeting itself provides the platform to discuss expectations, results, motivation, and how to succeed. For employees (or even suppliers) who choose not to perform at an adequate level, the meeting serves as a benchmark within the larger performance management arena. If an employee refuses to comply, has been supported and coached to do well, and continues to refuse, then the supervisor has the necessary means to move into a disciplinary performance management plan.

When feedback is perceived to be negative (because of our own behavior, or perhaps because it is not well delivered), people will naturally try to avoid it, or at least minimize the negative effects. However, we need to let people know that it can be a great tool for personal development, especially when we include information on both the issues and the possible solutions. With this in mind, let's delve deeper into the six major characteristics of effective feedback.

In Private

Feedback should be given in private if your comments can be embarrassing, and a formal feedback meeting should always be held in private. While some people like the attention that comes from sincere praise or celebrating an accomplishment in front of others, some do not, and no one wants negativity shared in front of their peers. (This should be apparent without having to state it, but sometimes we get excited and forget!)

Balanced

Balance in this context is about designing the feedback session so that, even though there may be constructive criticism required, the employee does not feel attacked, or that all you have to say about his work is negative. We recommend that you avoid the older form of "sandwich approach" (by making a positive comment, a negative, and then a positive). However, you should still start any feedback with a positive comment about some aspect of the employee's work. If you are not comfortable with this, or not good at small talk, write some comments down ahead of time to keep yourself focused. Your employee will appreciate that you get to the heart of the meeting quickly instead of letting any anxiety build. Feedback that is delivered in specific terms and in a sincere manner is usually accepted well, even when we are receiving criticism.

Relevant

Keep the conversation focused on feedback that is relevant and job related, and to things which the employee has control over. For example, complaining about the way a letter looks when the employee only has access to an ancient printer that adds lines to everything, or asking for a sophisticated looking brochure when there is no budget provided for the proper paper and licensed photography, only adds to the employee's stress and frustration.

Specific

Avoid general statements when you deliver feedback. “You seem unmotivated,” is not nearly as helpful as, “You arrived late to work at least three days a week, your last two assignments were late, and you did not attend the new employee lunch last week.”

Documented

Base your comments on documentation, facts, and your own observation. Do not rely on what another manager or a colleague told you, or what someone overheard, when you should be available to monitor what is going on yourself.

Personal (In the Right Way)

Compliments or criticisms that are directed generally toward the team are meaningless to an employee. “We just don’t seem able to get out error-free invoices,” is not as constructive as, “Three of the last invoices you sent out had errors in them.” Describe the behavior that is unsatisfactory, rather than judge a person because of it. Base it on their actions, and do not make a personal attack on the individual.

Providing Feedback

Think of someone specific who works with you, (this person could be an employee, an employer or a peer). In the space below and using the above guidelines, write down some effective feedback you could give to that person when you return to work after the workshop is over:

Common Sense

Using Common Sense

Successfully leading a group of people who work for a company involves one thing and one thing only: Getting the most out of them every day. That applies to whether you work for a company that is developing cutting-edge products, carrying out top secret missions or building an empire.

Being a good boss is hard but not complex. And most of it involves using plain old common sense. Common sense is like a muscle – it has to be exercised to be effective.

But just because something takes common sense does not mean it is commonly practiced. Indeed, most everyone can recall an event in their workplace where common sense was most definitely *NOT* practiced.

For example, a staff member who has an issue with childcare for a short period of time: Common sense should dictate that flexible hours for that employee during that period of time would be a viable solution. Instead, a horrible boss may demand the working hours are a particular set time and that employee with a childcare issue should take vacation to deal with it.

Or, consider a customer received an incorrect order. A common-sense solution would be to apologize to the customer for the mix-up, assure them that steps are being taken to make sure it does not happen again, and then make sure the customer is ultimately satisfied with the corrective measure. Not using common sense: blame the customer for providing unclear directions in placing the order, express exasperation at what this mix-up means to *you*, and assign blame to the staff member who originally dealt with the order.

A good leader will use common sense when dealing with both employees and customers. A *great* leader will instill this same common-sense approach in his or her staff members so they, in turn, can use common sense when dealing with clients and customers. You are not trying to re-invent the wheel, just deal with situation in the most direct way for the maximum result.

Sure, being a great boss takes one part peace maker, one part best friend, one part disciplinarian and one part organizational genius, all adding up to be the type of leader everyone wants to follow.

The Key to Successful Management

In a Forbes article, Victor Lipman wrote about why common sense is key to successful management. Great leaders practice these common-sense, effective-management ideas:

Treat me
right

Be clear

Be a stand-
up person

Treat me right:

This common-sense practice is something most of us have heard as a familiar refrain while growing up: Do unto others... People like to be treated the way you like to be treated. Employees like to be treated the same as management likes to be treated – with fairness and honesty. Most employees respond best to fair, decent treatment from management and will work hardest when treated that way.

Treating staff members with courtesy does not mean you do not have high expectations of them – of course you do. Expect excellence from people and do not settle for less. Not every employee will be a superstar, but they are all capable of giving superior effort.

Be clear:

Set clear, fair goals and hold employees accountable to them. Expectations should be formalized with well thought-out goals and objectives that employees both understand and buy into. If you are unclear in your expectations, employees are unclear in their direction and that can lead to poor results on all levels.

Accountability is fundamental, yet often neglected, even among senior managers. But it is the job of management to hold people accountable to achieve results.

Be a stand-up person:

Do your best to show your employees that you can be trusted and that you are fair in your dealings with them as well as with customers. If you say something, mean it. Talk the talk and walk the walk. Do not make vague promises you cannot keep or have no intention of keeping – employees can see through that. Do not be duplicitous or political. In the long run, if you are 'plain dealing' with people you will earn their respect, loyalty and trust. And that is how a great boss leads.

The Science behind Good Leadership

Be Nice, Not Tough

No one sets out to be a bad boss, but that is exactly what happens sometimes. If you are willing to invest your time and effort into becoming a better leader, you might just discover that your employees will also perform better and will be more satisfied with their jobs.

Science is actually on your side: Implementing a few research-backed changes can help you engage your employees, reduce workplace stress and turnover, and build a stronger, better team.

One proven way to be a better leader is to be nice, not tough. Many leaders believe that being tough and maintaining a distance between themselves and their employees is a way to gain their respect. But research shows the opposite is true. Being nice is good for business.

Being tough on employees does nothing but cause stress and we all know that people do not perform the best under stress. Pressure actually increases stress and anxiety and decreases productivity and well-being. All of this results in poor performance. If a team member is not performing to the best of their ability it causes a weak link in the chain which, in turn, causes the team to perform badly. This ultimately results in the boss not being seen in the best light.

Think back to a time before you were the boss. As a project deadline approached and your co-workers were all working frantically, pressure 'from above' did nothing to alleviate the stress of the situation. Instead, it probably caused a lot of the team members to become cranky, irritable and disengaged in the task at hand. High work-related stress can also result in high staff turnover, which can lead to further stress ... and the cycle continues.

Business News Daily reports that a study in the journal BioMed Central found that health care expenditures for employees with high stress levels were 46 per cent greater than those for employees without high stress levels. Putting less pressure on your employees and being a more caring, understanding boss can help prevent issues like this.

Leaders who project warmth and compassion are more effective bosses because employees are more likely to trust them. Of course, there is such a thing as being too nice to your staff. There is a fine line between being a nice boss and being a pushover. Set some boundaries to make sure your employees do not take advantage of you but do keep in mind the old adage: You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

Work-Life balance

Many employees report they left a job because it was too demanding and they craved a better work-life balance. Many people stay with a company or a leader because they have flexibility and a great work-life balance.

With electronic gadgets like smartphones and tablets and other communication devices becoming the norm, it is really easy to get caught up in checking emails and doing work-related tasks outside of the office. Employees may feel like they are getting ahead just a wee bit by checking their email before they go to bed or putting out a potential fire before going to a family barbecue, but studies actually show that this inability to unplug can harm a person's mental health.

Psychological detachment from work during non-work times is important for employee health. Not taking **time to unplug** can make it harder for employees to relax and recharge for work the next day. By not separating from work while at home, it is also harder in the home life of the employee in the long run.

This all affects you. If you want to be a better boss and manage a happier, healthier and more productive team, encourage your employees to unplug after work. Otherwise, your employees will not be able to destress and do their best work.

Negative Attitude

You may be familiar with the saying, "One bad apple can spoil the bunch." That popular phrase is used to refer to a situation in which one person's negative attitude or behavior can affect a whole group of people, influencing them to have a similar negative attitude or to engage in the same bad behavior. No matter how great your team is, one or two bad employees can ruin the work experience for everyone. A good boss will recognize that disrespectful and lazy employees can bring down morale which will drag productivity and performance right down with it.

A study entitled "How, When, and Why Bad Apples Spoil the Barrel," which looked at the impact different team members had in the workplace, found that having one negative employee in a group of employees can decrease performance by 30 to 40 per cent, The Wall Street Journal reported. If you want to keep good employees happy and productive, you will need to identify your problem employees and work with them to help them improve — and if the issues are severe and not fixable, hard as it is, it may be time to let them go.

But more important than fixing or firing problem employees is that bosses need to be able to recognize these harmful employees during the hiring process to avoid problems in the first place. Once you have taken care of all your problem employees, make sure you take a look at your hiring process and make changes to keep out any future bad apples. Your employees will thank you for it.

Feeling Valued

One of the most important things you can do as a good boss is to make your employees feel valued. Showing your employees that they are valuable to you and to the company can have a positive impact on their mental and physical health and their self-esteem, which can, in turn, increase performance and job satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

Employees who feel valued are then more motivated to do their best work; those who are not motivated will feel under-challenged and may seek to find more challenging work elsewhere. If you value your employees and the skills they bring to the table, then tell them that!

One way to make your employees feel valued is to be open to feedback and encourage your team to share ideas on how to work smarter and improve company culture and morale. If employees know they can come to you with questions, concerns and suggestions and feel like they are being heard, they will likely feel more positive about coming to work every day.

Another way to make employees feel valued is to plan team-building activities. Hosting team-building activities both in and out of the office is important: Research shows that having friendships at work can help employees perform better and decrease turnover. Making it a point to facilitate team building at your company can help to encourage and foster those important office friendships.

Team Building Activities

Can you think of some team building activities you could do at your workplace?

Rewards Program

It has been said time and time again: Employees like to be recognized when they go above and beyond. Celebrate great work. This cannot be stressed enough.

Under the right leader, every employee wants to do a good job. And when they do a good job, employees want recognition from their bosses. Unfortunately, few bosses do much in the way of recognizing and rewarding employees for a job well done.

But the good news is that there are many things bosses can do to recognize employees that cost little or no money, are easy to implement, and that take only a few minutes to accomplish.

Cash is king but when it comes to rewarding deserving employees, money is not a long-term motivator. Sure, employees love a check — who does not? — but finding ways to engage with them rather than pay them off will result in more loyal, harder working employees. A good boss will have a relationship with their employees and will have an understanding of what would mean the most to them as a reward.

For example, an employee who loves to read would appreciate the newest release from a favorite author or a gift card for a bookstore or online book downloading business. A staff member who loves to garden would be thrilled at the thoughtfulness of a basket containing seeds, gardening gloves and garden implements. A sports fan would be delighted with tickets to the next big game, and a movie buff would smile at the kindness of movie money or a movie pass.

Recognizing the achievements of employees is an important tool for effective and successful managers. It can mean the difference between an employee who feels valued and appreciated, and one who feels that no matter how much they accomplish or how hard they work, it will never be recognized.

Today's business climate is such that many companies feel cash strapped and limited with what they can do to show appreciation for those employees who go above and beyond to accomplish a goal.

Celebrating Your Team

Imagine your team at work just completed a \$250,000 project. How could you celebrate that? Think about ways that involve both spending money and not spending money:

Emotional Intelligence

Displaying Emotional Intelligence

A successful leader displays emotional intelligence, which is defined as:

- An ability to accurately identify emotions in ourselves and others
- Understanding and managing emotions
- Using and effectively communicating emotional feelings

These bosses are self-aware and are able to manage their own emotions while under pressure or stress. It is an important skill for leaders to possess because dealing with others — employees, colleagues or customers — takes tact and diplomacy.

Emotional intelligence allows leaders to understand the points of view of others, empathize with them, and adapt their approach to each team member.

Fostering Emotional Intelligence

To develop emotional intelligence, consider the following:

Identify Emotions

Reflective Questions

- How do I recognize emotions?
- Where do I hold emotions in my body?
- How do I know for sure that what I believe is true?

Skills and Concepts

- Be empathetic: Pick up on emotional and social cues to react appropriately. Work to understand others, read body language, and use other non-verbal communication.
- Self-honesty: Accept your own qualities and faults and recognize your own patterns of behavior that help and hinder situations.
- Recognize that emotions can get in the way of accurately accessing emotions in others.

Understand and Manage

Reflective Questions

- Will my response help or hinder the situation?
- Can you increase your awareness of your actions so that you see their effects?
- Am I hearing the unspoken messages?

Skills and Concepts

- Reason and motivation: Weigh your decisions and behavior by identifying and prioritizing what is important.
- Manage feelings: Use simple techniques, like a pause for reflection, to act or not to react.
- Choose to affirm the positive: Accept that you have choice, that you can make a difference, that you are an important part of the community.
- Develop social behaviors: Respond to people's needs, build conflict resolution skills, accept feedback.

- Interdependence: Recognize your place in the larger community; your awareness and decision making takes into account the short- and long-term consequences of your actions as well as the context/culture.

Use and Communicate

Reflective Questions

- What is this emotion telling me?
- Do I know how to use emotional language to help understanding?
- Am I healing or hurting?
- What will my emotional reaction have on others?
- Will this emotion help me reach my goal?

Skills and Concepts

- Apply consequential thinking: Evaluate cause and effect and anticipate outcomes.
- Empathy: Use your compassionate awareness to guide your choices.
- People will remember the emotion of the situation long after they have forgotten the words and deeds.
- Express emotions appropriately.
- Practice integrity: Hold yourself to high standards and do what is right – even when it seems hopeless.

Emotional Intelligence Activity

Use the reflective questions and skills and concepts to formulate reactions to the scenarios below:

Situations

- Your supervisor has increased your workload, but you have not finished a previous assignment. How do you deal with this?
- You and a colleague are working together on a project. He tells you he is almost finished his part, and that he will submit it. However, he does not deliver it by the deadline. You are angry because of the missed deadline and because you feel that he lied to you. How do you deal with this?
- In a meeting, a colleague takes credit for work that you did. How do you handle this?
- A client calls with a complaint about your product and is angry and rude to you. What is your response?
- Your company has been encouraging respect for racial and ethnic diversity, and has offered training about this. What do you do when you hear a colleague making anti-semitic remarks?
- You are a supervisor. An employee who reports to you is not performing up to standards. How do you handle a conversation with him?

Employing Emotional Intelligence

Building on the concepts discussed in the previous section, according to Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves in their book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, using emotional intelligence involves four main concepts:

- **Self-awareness** – taking time to notice and understand your own emotions, and how you feel about a situation
- **Self-management** – using awareness of your emotions to actively choose what you say and do; reading emotions effectively and then reacting
- **Social awareness** – a skill used to recognize and understand the moods of others
- **Relationship management** – work required to maintain a relationship that meets the needs of both parties

These skills must be learned and practiced in order to master them. To carry out emotional intelligence, it is important to think before you speak or act.

Scenario

Let's practice using the following scenario.

In this case, Ben should pay attention to his own emotions while also considering Susan's feelings.

Dave is an account manager and his company is developing an elearning course for another company. Dave arranged the sale with the client, ABC Company. Ben works with Dave and is in charge of the elearning course development project. He works with a team of six staff members – a writer, a graphic designer, an instructional designer, an editor, a quality control specialist, and a learning specialist – who are developing the course. On Friday Dave had to give a project update to the client because Ben, who would normally provide this, took the day off in order to have a long weekend. When he returns to work on Monday, Ben receives a visit from Dave, who is angry because he was not able to give a full report to the client because Susan, the instructional designer, did not respond to requests for an update on her part of the project. When Susan arrives at work, Ben asks to speak with her. Here are three different ways the situation could unfold, depending on how it is handled.

The Conversation

Ben: Hi Susan. Dave stopped by my office this morning to let me know he is upset with you regarding the elearning project for ABC Company.

Susan: I do not understand. I think everything is going well. I have been updating him regularly on my progress. Why is he upset?

Response 1:

What is Ben thinking and feeling?

Susan is not taking responsibility for her actions and is acting like she did not make a mistake. This is serious and it is reflecting poorly on me.

How the conversation may play out:

Ben: I know that you know what the problem is. You promised to send a briefing on the project to Dave and you did not. You should know that this makes us both look bad.

Susan: Sorry, I really did not know what you were referring to. I have put a lot of work into this project and I am insulted that you would accuse me of not doing my work.

Is this a good approach? _____

Why?

Self-awareness:

Self-management:

Social awareness:

Relationship management:

Response 2:

What is Ben thinking and feeling?

I am frustrated with Susan. Usually she is an excellent worker. I do not understand how this could happen. I need to let her know how upset I am with this situation.

How the conversation may play out:

Ben: Dave visited my office this morning about the elearning project for ABC Company. He was upset with you and so am I. Because of your experience I did not expect to have any issues like this.

Susan: You know you can count on me and I do not understand why you are so upset. Can I tell you my side of the story?

Is this a good approach? _____

Why?

Self-awareness:

Self-management:

Social awareness:

Relationship management:

Response 3:

What is Ben thinking and feeling?

I feel that Susan has let me down, but this is unusual behavior for her. I need to find out more information about the situation before I react. Starting off with an accusatory tone may cause her to become defensive.

How the conversation may play out:

Ben: Dave called me this morning about the report on the elearning project for ABC Company, which you were supposed to give to him on Friday. Can you tell me more about what happened?

Susan: Certainly. I believe he asked for a report in order to update the client. I did not submit one to him because I thought the verbal briefings I had been providing every few days were sufficient. I am sorry that I misunderstood.

Is this a good approach? _____

Why?

Self-awareness:

Self-management:

Social awareness:

Relationship management:

Elements of Success

Additional Tips

These additional tips have worked for other successful leaders, and you may want to keep them in mind as you continue your work toward becoming a good leader yourself. You may be able to put some of them into practice immediately, while you may revisit others at a later time. It would be difficult and not advisable to try implement all of them at the same time. Remember, your efforts are part of a journey of improvement.

- **Stay true to yourself**

It is a good idea to identify traits in other leaders that you would like to emulate, but remember that you should not try to be exactly like someone else and that you do not have to act any differently because you are in charge.

- **Make time for and listen to employees**

Make time to speak with employees, and if they raise an issue, be sure to give them your undivided attention. Also employ active listening skills to ensure you have heard and understood what they are trying to tell you. Help employees work out a problem on their own by having them talk through it to develop a solution.

- **Focus on team strengths while acknowledging staff expertise**

Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of employees. Emphasizing the positive attributes of team members and not dwelling on their weaknesses will help achieve goals faster than trying too hard to change unwanted habits or behaviors. Play up to these strengths and acknowledge the expertise of staff members. By the same token, a strengths-based management style ensures that managers are aware of their own strengths and interact with employees and the leadership team in a way that capitalizes on their own strengths as well as those of their employees.

- **Empower, motivate and coach**

Learn how to be an effective coach in order to develop employees to their full potential. Motivate staff members and empower them to make reasonable decisions about their work.

- **Develop yourself through continuous learning**

Becoming a better boss is an ongoing process. These skills need to be learned and practiced, and there are always new skills to acquire. While your team needs development opportunities, so do you as the leader. Take the initiative to enrich yourself through learning, and make sure growth and improvement are priorities for everyone at your workplace.

- **Delegate wisely**

Maximize your leadership through judicious delegation of tasks in order to develop employee confidence and get the job done efficiently.

- **Be organized**

Manage undertakings with effective planning and scheduling. A successful boss is well organized.

- **Resolve conflict**

Confront issues head-on and find solutions. Much bigger problems will be created if the problems are ignored and left to fester.

- **Be efficient and effective**

Efficient is defined as performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort. The definition of effective is 'successful in producing a desired or intended result.' The difference between effectiveness and efficiency can be summed up shortly and succinctly – Being effective is about doing the right things, while being efficient is about doing things right. Good leaders are both efficient and effective.

- **Demand excellence**

Set high expectations for both yourself and your employees that are achievable, and expect results. Your team will come through if you expect more from them. Setting the bar too low will not produce the desired results.

Further Reading:

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