



DEALING WITH THE "PROBLEM BOSS"

ROSS FRENCH, UC RIVERSIDE
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Conflict vs. Competition

Steps to Dealing With the Problem Boss

1. Remember that you aren't going to change the Boss
2. Find allies
3. Create your definition of success
4. Be accountable
5. Address perceptions and identify the problems
6. Communicate
7. Stop wishing
8. Remember that the grass isn't always greener
9. Network

How to Communicate:

1. Control your response and reaction.
2. LISTEN! and acknowledge.
3. Focus on solving the problem.
4. Deal directly with the problem behaviors.

Important Questions to Ask the Boss

1. What is your number one priority? What specific results do you expect of me?
2. How would you define a top performer? How will I know if my performance displeases you?
3. What level of decisions would you expect me to make in money, resources and authority?
4. How much do you want to know about a problem?
5. What should I do if I think you are making a mistake?
6. How can I tell if something is important to you?
7. How do you handle conflict?

Types of Difficult People (Not just bosses! Are you one of these?)

1. Know-it All - Doesn't need to listen, has all the answers
2. Staller - Waiting for that sign from above before making any decision.
3. Sniper - Likes to shoot down any and all ideas.
4. Sherman Tank - Can be unmovable, can drive relentlessly forward.
5. Super-Agreeable - Yes is their answer to every question, but they may not follow up.
6. Complainer - Nothing is ever right.

Definition of Accountability

To be accountable means that I realize that:

- I create my own life.
- I am not a victim of bad luck.
- I don't blame others for my misfortunes and hurts.

- I have choices in my life; I can choose:
 - the thoughts I think.
 - the people I spend time with.
 - the activities I take part in.
 - how I react to other people and events.
 - how I react to my own feelings.

- If I don't like the choices I have made in the past, I can make other choices in the future.
- I can look at my life and see the results of my actions.
- I appreciate myself as a worthwhile person.
- I appreciate my accomplishments.
- I cherish my dreams for the future.
- I accept that I sometimes make mistakes.
- I learn lessons from the mistakes I have made.
- The good news is - I create my own life.

Top 10 Tips on How to Become the Problem Boss

These things take practice, but you too can become the Problem Boss with these 10 simple steps.

1. Never trust anybody, especially your employees. Pay surprise visits when they call in sick. Make sure they are really home. Take their temperatures.
2. Take credit for your employee's good ideas and hard work, but don't recognize their contributions
3. Stick to your guns. Be decisive. Never change your mind. It shows weakness.
4. Don't train your employees. Make it impossible for them to get other jobs or do theirs with skill and enjoyment.
5. Reward punctuality and diligence above innovation. Employees noses should be kept clean and to the grindstone.
6. Keep secrets. Missions and goals, financial situations or other issues should be kept quiet. Closed door meetings are good to keep an air of mystery.
7. Keep business and personal matters separate. Tell people to leave their lives and problems at home. Reward long hours and penalize people who would rather spend evenings with the family than the photocopier.
8. Run a tight ship. Monitor everything: e-mails, pencils, photocopies.
9. Make clear distinctions between senior staff and everybody else.
10. Keep "them" in their place. Don't promote, don't encourage improvement, don't worry about burn-out. Just know that there is another crop of replacement workers graduating from college any moment now!

Most content from handouts and readings from Richard Sherman's "Conflict Management- BUAD 692" of the University of Redlands Whitehead Graduate Program. For more information or questions, you can contact me at ross.french@ucr.edu.