



CUTTINGS

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Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

The High Cost of Bad Bosses

An article by Anne Lindberg on the AMA website makes for sobering reading...

She catalogues the range of abuse experienced by the workforce and the equally wide-ranging effects: at one extreme, suicide or violence, at the other workers who simply quit.

Some costs of bad bosses are relatively straightforward: increased sick leave, loss in productivity and high employee turnover. Then there are the costs that are not so easy to quantify. "When employees feel they're mistreated, they get even," says Timothy Judge, professor at the University of Florida in a 2006 study, with revenge including everything from griping and gossiping to actually stealing resources from the company.

Bad and even abusive bosses seem to be commonplace. Results from a poll of U.S. adults in March 2007 by the Employment Law Alliance found that 44% of workers have worked for a supervisor who they consider abusive.

Among the instances of abuse the poll's respondents had witnessed or

experienced were sarcastic jokes (60%), public criticism (59%), interrupting in a rude manner (58%), yelling or raising one's voice (55%) and ignoring you as if you were invisible (54%).

The U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey reports that 37% of U.S. workers say they have been bullied at work. That's about 54 million people, and most of them (57%) are women.

Few studies have been done examining how bad leaders they got that way, but a recent one by Bond University in Australia indicates that some bad bosses start out as bad people. But also good people develop into bad bosses due to such things as a skills mismatch, too much pressure and too much deviousness, or bullying for the purpose of furthering their careers.

John Hoover, in his book *How to Work for an Idiot: Survive and Thrive Without Killing Your Boss*, agrees that many people become bullies when they are promoted out of their competency zone. Such a promotion creating insecurity and defensiveness.

Lack of training could be another factor. An August 2007 survey by the Institute for Corporate Productivity in conjunction with HR.com found that almost half of organisations surveyed have no training programs for new supervisors. And the majority of organisations that do provide such training do not measure its effectiveness.

Such studies point to potential ways of preventing the problem before it arises. Employers can, for example, provide formal training programs that include follow-up procedures and a way to measure success. They can also look for ways other than promotion to reward workers.

Good management usually results in a more attractive and productive workplace. Employee engagement practices point the way to bottom line success as well as good management practice (see next article).

Anne Lindberg, Institute for Corporate Productivity writing for the AMA online magazine

Rules of Engagement

A global survey by Towers Perrin has shown clear connections between levels of employee engagement and bottom line results. With just 21% of employees around the world engaged and fully 38% wholly or partially disengaged, the opportunity for improvement is enormous.

In terms of bottom line, the survey found that firms with the highest percentage of engaged employees collectively increased operating income 19% and earnings per share 28% year to year. Those companies with the lowest percentage of engaged employees showed year-to-year

declines of 33% in operating income and 11% in earnings per share.

Looking at a longer time horizon (three years), the firms with the highest levels of employee engagement achieved a 3.7% increase in operating margins, while those with the lowest levels of engagement suffered a drop of 2%.

The survey found that senior managers and corporate reputation were equally important to employees as the relationship with their immediate manager:

Employees need their senior leaders to demonstrate inspiration, vision and commitment. Only 38% of employees surveyed felt senior management

communicates openly and honestly, and just 44% agreed senior management tries to be visible and accessible.

The study also shows that employees are optimistic about their jobs and have a strong desire to learn and grow. More than three out of four employees love or like their job but just 36% agreed they have excellent career opportunities, and more than two-thirds said they are frustrated by their organisation's people-related decisions.

Top drivers of higher engagement are well within the organisation's control.

Towers Perrin Global Workforce Study 2007 www.towersperrin.com/gws

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Snippets

A seasonal bumper collection of thought provokers and quotations to help you through the winter months...

- ✂ **The parable of the cautious man**
"There was a very cautious man / who never laughed or cried. / He never risked, he never lost, / he never won, nor tried. / And when he one day passed away, / his insurance was denied. / For since he never really lived, / they claimed he never died!" *Told by Ravi Sekharg*
- ✂ "It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well." *Rene Descartes*
- ✂ "Black fella, white fella/Yellow fella, any fella/It doesn't matter what your colour/ As long as you are a true fella." *George Rurrambu (Aboriginal songwriter, 1957-2007)*
- ✂ "When you have given nothing, ask for nothing." *Albanian Proverb*
- ✂ "it is a requirement for entering management to have the ability to make excuses for why it is impossible to do things that most people agree are important." *Jeffrey Pfeffer*
- ✂ "Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination; on cooperation, not intimidation." *William Arthur Wood*
- ✂ "If your day-to-day is making you miserable, your long-term prospects are not going to be much better." *David Dickter*
- ✂ "Some people like my advice so much that they frame it upon the wall instead of using it." *Gordon R. Dickson*
- ✂ "Skills shortages, and the need for continuous change, are forcing employers to recognise the strategic importance of learning and development. The survey shows that these professionals are the shock troops in the war for talent." *Charles Cotton CIPD Reward Adviser on the Personnel Rewards Survey 2007*
- ✂ "If you want to make peace, you don't talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies." *Moshe Dayan*
- ✂ "By attempting to manage people you are limiting their potential." *Byron & Catherine Pulsifer*
- ✂ "Management gets the workforce it deserves" *Frederick Herzberg*
- ✂ "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change." *Charles Darwin*

- ✂ "This is a good time to be a guru. People want answers so badly they will listen to anything." *Richard Pascale*
- ✂ "Ownership is about the way we feel about something, not how much we paid for it." *Tony Hines*
- ✂ "First, we must understand what workers want. Then, we must give it to them!" *David Sirota*
- ✂ "This paper by its very length defends itself against being read." *Winston Churchill*
- ✂ "When the best leader's work is done the people say, 'We did it ourselves!'" *Lao Tzu*
- ✂ "In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free." *Abraham Lincoln*
- ✂ "Over 70% of people leave their jobs because of the way they are led." *Norman Drummond*
- ✂ "Change is disturbing when it is done to us, exhilarating when it is done by us." *Rosabeth Moss Cantor*
- ✂ "Only 4% of an organisation's problems are known by top management, 9% are known by middle management, 74% by supervisors and 100% by employees." *Sidney Yoshida*
- ✂ "The working environment has become so socially toxic that many people are seeking early retirement." *Nick Baxter*
- ✂ "You cannot change people, people can choose to change." *John Seddon*
- ✂ "3% of problems have figures, 97% do not. It is people who count not the figures." *W Edwards Deming*
- ✂ "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists." *Lao Tzu*
- ✂ "To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasise in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something, If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however a small way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory." *Howard Zinn*
- ✂ "The most humble person in your organisation is the most important" *Jack Cohen*
- ✂ "People will forget what you said ... people will forget what you did ... but people will never forget how you made them feel." *Prashant Iyer*
- ✂ Players play, managers manage. Managing is too important to be a part-time pursuit. If you are a manager, concentrate on getting the best out of others" *Pat Summit*
- ✂ "Build people up instead of wearing them out." *Sam Deeks*
- ✂ "Even now I know that I have savoured the hot taste of life / Lifting green cups and gold at the great feast. / Just for a small and a forgotten time I have had full in my eyes from off my girl / The whitest pouring of eternal light." *Chaura-panchasika, 1st century*

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 23-26 September (in English)
 30 September-3 October (in Dutch)
for details: www.learningconsortium.eu
Managing Technical Professionals
 3-4 April
Getting Results without Authority
 21-22 January, 3-4 March, 15-16 May, 3-4 July
Internal Consulting Skills
 13-14 March, 1-2 July
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