It’s OKAY to be the BOSS

Assess Your Management Style

- Select the answer that best describes you.
- Be honest. This is for your eyes only.
- Don’t ponder too long, go with your first impression.

1. My management style is:
   _____ a. Hands off: I get involved when there is a problem or my employee needs me.
   _____ b. Hands on: I believe in managing all the details of my employees’ work and jobs.

2. Employees work best when:
   _____ a. They fully manage themselves and their own work.
   _____ b. They follow my guidance and directions.

3. I believe in:
   _____ a. Empowering my employees so they are responsible for their own success.
   _____ b. Guiding my employees every step of the way and sharing in their successes.

4. When you leave new employees to sink or swim, many will:
   _____ a. Figure it out and then feel good about their accomplishments.
   _____ b. Flounder and get frustrated with the lack of direction they are receiving.

5. It’s important to treat all your employees:
   _____ a. The same because if you make special accommodations, everyone will expect special treatment.
   _____ b. Differently, according to their performance and effort.

6. My motto is:
   _____ a. Don’t sweat the small stuff: I let small problems slide and focus on big issues.
   _____ b. Where there is smoke, there is fire: I address all problems, small and big.
7. Basic supervision is:
   _____ a. Unnecessary: We’re all adults.
   _____ b. More important than leadership: It’s my job to keep everyone on track.

8. HR rules and policies:
   _____ a. Can easily interfere with my ability to manage.
   _____ b. Help me do my job better.

9. There is not enough time in the day to manage my team and my tasks, so:
   _____ a. It’s a good thing my employees know how to manage themselves and their work.
   _____ b. I manage my employees and their work according to the level of support they need.

10. I (complete the sentence):
    _____ a. Want my employees to like me as a person and a boss.
    _____ b. Don’t care whether my employees like me as a person and a boss; I just want them to focus on getting the job done.

Note the number of “a” responses you have and the number of “b” responses you have. If your “a” responses outnumber your “b” responses, you may be undermanaging.

Four Steps to Becoming the Manager Your Employees Need

1. Establish One-on-One TIME to talk about the work

Meet one-on-one with each of your employees: one person at a time, one day at a time. Talk about the work. Make a plan. Make a checklist.

2. Talk Like a COACH

Use descriptive language. Break things down. Spell things out. Set up a time to check in and follow up. If you have remote employees,
schedule calls and talk like a coach on the phone. Use e-mail to prepare for the phone call. Describe bullet points for discussion. Ask remote employees to summarize the phone call in e-mail. Follow up. Create checklists.

3. Make ACCOUNTABILITY a process, not a slogan

Define your expectations so your employees know exactly what they need to do. Establish real consequences attached to performance and explain those too. Commit to noticing their performance and explain how you will monitor their performance. Get your people in the habit of knowing that they are going to have to give an account of their performance.

4. Deal with LOW PERFORMERS

Meet with low performers who lack skill or will twice a day. Explain what you need them to do for the next four hours. Give them a checklist. Coach them into their job. Then, follow up.

Who are your low performers?

Do your low performers have an ability, skill or will problem?

- Lacking ability? Change the task or change the person.
- Lacking skill? Get the person more training or get a different person.
- Lacking will? Determine whether the problem is an inside or outside problem. If the problem stems from something personal—an inside problem—refer the employee to HR for employee services. If it is an outside problem, deal with the problem, circumstance or other person. Work with them to help them succeed. If they don’t let you help them, get a different person.

If you broke the day’s tasks for your low performer into four-hour increments, what would the checklist look like?

What obstacles might you face as you try to accomplish this in your workplace?

How can you overcome those obstacles?
CONCLUSION

It’s never too late to become the manager your employees need. With preparation and commitment, you can fight the under-management epidemic and become a stronger manager. As you start, be honest. Tell your employees you haven’t been as strong as you need to be to help everyone be successful. Tell them you have good news. You’re going to try to help them. Good news. You realized you haven’t given as much guidance and direction as you need to, so you’ll be more involved. Be the Good News Boss. Good luck! – Bruce Tulgan

About Bruce Tulgan

Bruce Tulgan is highly sought after as a keynote speaker and leading expert on management, including managing the younger generations entering today’s business sector. He is founder of RainmakerThinking, Inc., and he has written or co-authored 16 books, including Managing Generation X, Winning the Talent Wars and Not Everyone Gets a Trophy.

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