

8 signs you're a bad boss

Auckland, 22 November 2017 – A manager has a wide range of responsibilities, from setting clear expectations, to making sure business goals are met or even exceeded. A good boss manages staff effectively so that they are able to perform to the best of their ability, fix any issues and establish a positive and productive working environment.

On the other hand, a bad boss can cause a great deal of frustration and stress.

Megan Alexander, General Manager of Robert Half New Zealand said: *“A bad boss can have an immediate impact on a company through lower productivity, poor morale and higher staff turnover. Not only is poor leadership frustrating for the people they directly manage, it can have direct consequences for the wider business through missed objectives and increased costs, which can significantly decrease company revenue.”*

“Companies need to be proactive in fostering positive working relationships and eliminate any negative behavior in the workplace. It’s important to identify where managers may go wrong in their behaviour by assessing how effectively they interact with their staff and asking for their direct reports’ feedback in their performance review – so they can aspire to be the best boss they can be.”

So how do you know if you are a bad boss? Here are nine common traits:

1. Inability to communicate

As a boss, you need to be able to communicate effectively, whether you’re giving instructions, sharing praise, setting deadlines or announcing news. You need to be comfortable addressing people on both a one-to-one basis and as part of a group. Without this quality, employees may be less likely to follow your instructions, or execute projects the way you assigned them.

“Communication is a two-way street, so your team should feel they can communicate openly with you too. As a boss, you’ll also be the first port of call for employees who have problems, so you need to be sensitive, empathetic and understanding with the way you communicate as a leader,” Megan Alexander added.

2. Hide behind a veil of secrecy

When you're the boss, there will be some instances when information needs to be kept private. However, if you're not being transparent, it will be difficult for your team to trust and respect you.

“Wherever possible, keep your staff informed as to what is going on in the company, both within your team and the organisation. Employees will appreciate your openness and it reduces the likelihood of rumours spreading.”

3. Make inconsistent decisions

Inconsistent decision-making is a key sign of a bad boss. If you respond in a different way each time the same situation arises, employees will struggle to take you seriously or to predict the next steps.

“Make sure your management style is consistent and if you do make any decisions that are out of the usual, explain to your team why you have made that choice.”

4. Take the credit and pass the buck

A classic sign of a bad boss is someone who takes all the credit when things go well for their team, but deflects criticism onto others when results are less positive.

Megan Alexander said: *“Being in charge of a team means you are the one responsible for performance and so there can be no shifting blame. Concurrently, if you try to claim the glory when one of your team members makes a valuable contribution, this will undoubtedly have a negative impact on your workplace relationships going forward. Instead, make sure you give credit where credit is due and keep people motivated when things don’t work out as planned.”*

5. Micro-manage everything

There's nothing worse than a bad boss who watches over employees all day, scrutinising each move they make, whilst giving constant instructions.

“To get the best out of your employees, you need to give them autonomy in the workplace, especially if you’re the kind of leader who believes in fostering their career development. If you're not confident in their ability to do the job to the required standard, then delegate the work to another team member, or invest in training.”

6. Make unreasonable demands

A bad boss may expect employees to come into the office early, stay late, work through their lunch hour, or cancel their annual leave at short notice. Pushing staff to their limits will inevitably sour relations and make it difficult to maximise productivity going forward.

“As a boss, you should avoid asking your employees to do anything you wouldn’t be prepared to do yourself. Whilst unreasonable demands may come from even higher powers, as a good boss, try to push back and encourage more realistic expectations.”

7. Pick favourites

A bad boss likes to pick favourites and treats team members differently in the workplace.

“Favouritism is one of the quickest and easiest ways to undermine your own authority. Your job is to manage everyone effectively, not to pick favourites so you must be seen to treat everybody as equal.”

8. Shout to get heard

As a boss, not everything will always go your way. When this happens, you can’t snap at employees, or storm out of the office. You also can’t shout to ensure everyone hears your opinion.

“As a manager, it’s important to be able to control your emotions, whilst expressing your views in a clear, controlled, effective and professional manner,” concluded **Megan Alexander**.

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