

## How Do You Rate As A Boss?

by John Tschohl - September 14, 2011

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Ask anyone in a supervisory or managerial position to identify the traits of a good employee, and you're sure to be on the receiving end of a litany of appropriate skills, behaviors, and attitudes. Ask that same person to list the characteristics of a good boss, and more than likely they won't respond so quickly. Too often, we find it easy to judge the actions and attitudes of employees, but we fail to look inward, to put ourselves under that same microscope.

Some bosses are tyrants, expecting their employees to perform at their best simply to avoid the wrath that is sure to come their way if they don't meet expectations. Or they are "buddies," thinking that if they act like "one of the gang," their employees will like them and perform well. Neither role is one that will make you a good boss. If you intimidate your employees, they will come to hate their jobs—and, possibly, you. Intimidation is a roadblock to improved performance and productivity. On the other hand, if you become too friendly with your employees, you will lose the authority that is necessary to manage them.

So, what defines a good boss? Read on.

1. Recognize, reward, and respect your employees. Too many bosses think that money will motivate their employees to perform well. Money will get you into the game, but it will have no impact on performance. If you really want to motivate your employees, acknowledge their accomplishments—and do so publicly. This costs you and the company nothing, but it results in employees who are proud of their accomplishments and who will continue to work to earn your approval and praise. Celebrating even small successes will improve employees' self-esteem and lead to bigger successes.
2. Build a strong team. Hire for attitude, then train for skills. Technical skills can be learned, good attitudes cannot. Hire people you can motivate and who enjoy working with people. Then train and nurture those people. Give them the tools they need to do their jobs—and to do them well. And don't micromanage your employees; doing so will kill their creative-thinking and problem-solving efforts.
3. Terminate non-performing employees; they are a cancer in your organization. They either do their jobs poorly, or they don't do them at all. Those employees often have negative attitudes that drag down other members of your team. Get rid of these people as quickly as possible.
4. Set clearly defined goals. Establish a game plan for the year that revolves around measurable goals and target dates. To simply say, "We will increase sales," is not enough to increase performance. On the other hand, if you set a goal of increasing sales by 10 percent, it gives employees a specific target.

5. Maximize your employees' potential. Empower them to make quick decisions that will keep your customers coming back to you. Support their use of empowerment, and trust them to do the right thing for your customers.
6. Listen to your employees. They are the experts when it comes to improving your products and services. The suggestions they will make, if asked, will help to reduce costs, improve operations, and add to your company's profits.
7. Take a good look at your own skills. Are your managerial skills what they should be? You should spend a minimum of 20 hours each year developing and improving your leadership skills. Don't wait for the company to pay for any courses you want to take, set money aside each year and pay for the programs yourself, if necessary. It's an investment you won't regret.

A good boss will hire the right people, nurture them, and reward them. The result will be a strong team made up of employees who will drive your organization's sales and profits—and who will make you look good in the process.

John Tschohl, the internationally recognized service strategist, is founder and president of the Service Quality Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Described by USA Today, Time, and Entrepreneur as a "customer service guru," he has written several books on customer service and has developed more than 26 customer-service training programs that have been distributed throughout the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online.