

How to Be A Bad Boss



A 10-step Recovery Guide For
Managers Suffering A Leadership Deficit

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Bad Boss #2

Takes Credit for Other Employees' Work



People leave bosses, not companies, goes a popular saying. And at the top of the list of bosses that people are eager to leave is the credit-stealing boss -- the one who has no qualms about swiping the glory for someone else's hard work.

This is almost sociopathic in that it shows a lack of regard for another person's effort. It speaks to the insecurity inherent in a bad boss.

It's a manifestation of the ego-driven nature of a bad boss, and it's steeped in fear... If the work is really good, giving someone else credit will make the true originator look stronger and them weaker – thus vulnerable for takeover.

Inappropriately claiming credit for another's work also can demonstrate a short-sighted view of business as a dollar grab. It says, "I'm at the top, so you'll have to wait your turn." This is reminiscent of the serfdom system of feudal lords. There's not enough for everyone, so you have to aggressively take the goods to get ahead.

Most working professionals have had to deal with such unscrupulous individuals. This approach is pervasive and has become an accepted way of doing business. But it takes no creative skill at all. It reduces business to a negative political contest and hurts the organization. To quote a popular ad, "It's so easy, a caveman could do it."

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Doing the opposite is equally problematic. When work is viewed as “bad,” then the creator is isolated and ridiculed. Scapegoated. Suddenly, the “team” becomes a *Gang of One*.

Either way, the approach is myopic. Either way, you’re “gumming up” productivity and hindering creativity. If you continually fail to give others credit when credit’s due, you’ll earn a reputation in which people question your true depth and skills.

Bosses who constantly take all the credit or deflect responsibility may experience a short-term win, but long term? You set yourself up for a greater loss. You’ve killed people’s incentive to give you their best, and then who looks bad? *You*, the manager of an uninspired, unimaginative team.

This is an old-world approach with a zero-sum gain.

The Correction

Take a more holistic approach, one focusing on increasing the asset of human capital. The best places to work are businesses that focus on development at all levels of the organization; growth and encouragement shouldn’t merely be processes reserved for a few.



In an environment where you foster people’s best work and give them credit for it, you will grow as well. You’ve done a great job guiding and coaching someone to produce this

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wonderful work, haven't you? You'll be credited for creating a milieu that cultivated this success.

In the worst case scenario, even if you *are* replaced, the skills you've developed to help others succeed will always serve you well.

When Someone Keeps Stealing Your Thunder...

Getting credit for your ideas depends not only on when they are communicated, but on how they are communicated. Here are five communication techniques that'll help you get credit when credit is due.

1. Communicate with Confidence

In meetings, speak more directly, more loudly, and at greater length than your co-workers. Do less prefacing of your ideas with disclaimers such as "You've probably already thought of this, but..." or "I don't know if this will work, but..." These types of preambles dampen the power of what you're about to say, and get you ignored.

Women, in particular, are often conditioned not to brag about their accomplishments; men are trained to do the opposite. Women should mimic male confidence when presenting ideas. If you float an idea out at a meeting but do so without conviction there's a chance it will be overlooked – even if it's brilliant. Or worse: Someone else who recognizes its value may quickly take it on as their own.