



**LEAD LIKE A BOSS
WITHOUT BEING BOSSY**
THERE ARE CLEAR ROLES TO BE PLAYED

Prepared by:
R. Shawn McBride, CPA
The R.Shawn McBride Law Firm, PLLC

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Lead Like a Boss Without Being Bossy

It sounds like a misnomer. How can you be a boss without being bossy? We need to stop and dissect the term. "Boss" is a title given to a supervisor or a leader of an organization, and "bossy" is a way to describe someone who micromanages, is pushy, or forces others to do things that they don't want to do. When we think in those terms, we can create a situation where someone can be a boss without being viewed as bossy. It's about leadership and management style. So, we want to dissect the business. Think about the roles of the employee and the supervisor, and how the two interplay. Do we see a structure and a culture where the leader can lead without subordinates feeling bossed around or pushed about?

A lot of this comes down to human autonomy. The boss has jobs, roles and organizational functions to complete; no doubt there's a lot of work involved with being a "boss." And employees want to do a good job. They want to help the organization, but they want to do it in a way comfortable to them. Most human beings don't want to be micromanaged. They don't want someone looking over their shoulder. So we have a boss who must do certain functions and jobs and who needs the employee to help get those functions and jobs done, and we have an employee who wants autonomy and independence. How do we balance these two competing demands?

Like so many things in business, it often comes down to philosophical differences that determine whether a boss is considered to be "bossy" or a true leader or management guru. As you'll see in the material, as we break down the roles and the differences between a boss and a leader and a manager, one of the keys a boss should keep in mind is the distinctions between a leader and a manager. If

someone keeps making strides to be more leader and less manager, I believe you'll see organizational shifts. Our experience shows that people who view themselves as leaders and act as leaders are perceived as being less bossy than those who over-manage or over-control.

Often a boss viewed in a positive light is more leader, less manager, when taking on roles and responsibilities. In a later section, we'll deal with the difference. You'll want to keep that concept in mind constantly. You want to be a leader, not a manager. You want to take the roles that are a good fit for a leader, not a manager. There are many pieces to this, and we break it down into several sections to help you be a boss, not bossy.

Section 1. There Are Clear Roles to Be Played

Almost every organization at some point in its journey ends up being hierarchical. Some people are clearly in senior or supervisory positions, and others are in junior or reporting positions. This makes a lot of sense from an economic standpoint. The people who are in the higher positions have responsibilities for completion of projects, overall bigger-picture items, and the organization's long-term direction. Those in roles lower in the organization typically are responsible for smaller projects, getting things completed, and other more task-oriented activities.

From the viewpoint of greater economics, this makes a lot of sense. Those who have greater skills are typically put in higher positions where they see the bigger picture and lead others to get things done. Those with newer skill sets are learning and developing; they report to those in higher positions. This can work very well for the long-term development of organizations. That's why you see this

almost universally across the developed world. It's not wrong. This is simply inherent in how we put together companies. We want to know that everyone plays a role.

There's nothing wrong with having a supervisor or "boss" lead an organization. The way to shake off being called bossy is not to give up the role of boss. The way is to take a higher-level view as a leader or a manager and work with those who report to you. It's not about changing the employee-supervisor relationship. It's about how the relationship works and evolves.

1A. You're on the Same Team.

It should be clear regardless of what's going on within the business and the organization that everyone is on the same team. The employees and the supervisors all work together to accomplish certain tasks. Everyone should aim to get things done for the good of the client and the good of the company's ultimate objectives. There should be no doubt that the supervisors and the employees are a team, much like a football coach and the players are a team.

We can say that the quarterback is often viewed as the leader or the boss of the offense as he leads the team toward its goal – usually a touchdown. On the sidelines, the offensive coordinator and the head coach signal information to the quarterback. Players on the field work toward the goal, but they take different roles in that organization. There's no doubt that everyone on that football team wants to score a touchdown or do what's best for the team. Sometimes at the end of the game, you just want to run the clock out rather than take aggressive plays.

1B. Your Role Is Different

We've established that everyone is on the same team, but we have different roles. Your job is to manage the completion of the

project and to get more done. Other members of the team have different roles. Their job is to get tasks completed, work on smaller projects that help bigger things get done, do routine functions such as take calls from customers or answer client inquiries. Everyone on the team has a role, and you need to understand that as a supervisor, it is okay that your role is unlike any other.

Sometimes people say that a boss should do some of the work that their employees do to show that they're part of the team. This can be an effective strategy from time-to-time. But it doesn't fully contemplate how the organization should work. Everyone takes a different role to complete the project. We wouldn't ask the quarterback to switch to offensive tackle for a few plays because that would fundamentally change how the team works. The players might not play the positions that best fit their skill sets. We want to be very clear about it, but we still want to work as a team. We need to understand our role is different, and we're not going to do what the other people on the team do. That's okay. It is not necessary for you to do the same work as the people who report to you for you not to be bossy. It's more about how you interface and work with them.

1C. Make It a Team.

While we have clear roles, we want to make everything part of being a team. This is key to not being bossy: Everyone understands that they're on the team. Everyone's heading in the same direction for the same goal, and this is about sharing goals and responsibilities and knowing that we're all part of the same process. Hopefully, you communicate with your employees what the overall company mission and goals are, and what project and task goals and missions are going on within that. Everyone should strive to achieve those goals. It's particularly helpful if you make those goals more global. Rather simply

say, "Our goal is to service our customers," it would be more powerful to say, "Our goal is to help our customers achieve their dreams," if that's part of your overall model.

Each team member should understand what everyone's trying to do together. That will help them understand the roles and how the organization works. When viewed that way, the employees can often see the distinction between your leading and pushing. Always keep the conversation focused on what the team tries to accomplish and how everyone's role helps the team. This will help avoid the perception that the boss is bossy or controlling. Hopefully, the employees who report to the boss will see the boss works on big-picture goals and does what is needed for organizational success, and doesn't just push people around to make a point.

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