

Manager, Manage Thyself

Statistics overwhelmingly show that “bad bosses” are rising in number and power. According to Harvey Hornstein, author of the book, “Brutal Bosses and Their Prey,” 4 million or more people in the U.S. workplace are laboring under a brutalizing boss. According to a Gallup survey of more than one million employees, the main reason that good people quit is the behavior of their immediate boss. These statistics could point to a reason why 80 percent of new businesses fail within the first five years and 90 percent of these failures are due to poor management decisions.

In viewing statistics and reading opinions of the experts it seems we have lost our perspective with regards to managers and management. Simply said, a manager is someone who is responsible for directing and controlling the work and personnel of a business, or of a particular department within a business. To be responsible for something or somebody means being expected to deal with something or take care of somebody. When the terms are broken down it all seems so simple. Then why the epidemic of bad managers?

It seems for the most part that lack of experience is the reason: lack of experience in running the business; unbalanced experience (past experience is not sufficient for current responsibilities); lack of managerial experience in managing people; and lack of market-specific experience. Instead of succumbing to the statistics, managers need to heed the wakeup call and manage themselves.

The first step is a reality check: assessment of strengths and weaknesses in an impartial manner. Can weaknesses be overcome with training? Perhaps an Executive Coach, who offers private training in the areas of personnel management, is the answer. In important areas such as human resources, marketing, or finance, it is very often advisable to hire people who possess these attributes to build a strong team. When hiring these people, rely on their expertise, but not totally; after all, they still need to respect management’s authority. It is essential to get feedback from these people so management learns from their expertise and still has their finger on the pulse of the business. Too many managers view the position as manager to mean, “I’ll tell you what to do and I’ll go have fun.” People like to work for people who work hard themselves. People care about businesses when the people they work for care more. Managers should allow themselves the opportunity to sit at each desk and have the employee working that desk train them. This gives the employee a chance to exhibit their knowledge (or in some cases, lack of it). Employers then know where they are weak within their business, if they need to hire more, or are overstaffed.

A secure, knowledgeable manager is a better manager. Many employees are present for work but not engaged in their work, and this has a negative effect on productivity. Poor management, lack of motivation, lack of accountability and no defined goals are the top reason for the decline in productivity. Managers too often avoid conflict instead of finding a resolution. Manager, manage thyself and everyone will profit in the process.

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