

# 11 Habits of Highly Ineffective Managers

Being the boss is hard work, but it's even harder if you're stumbling over your own mistakes. Here are 11 common management **behaviours that make a boss seem weak and clueless**, along with descriptions of what top entrepreneurs do differently.

## 1. Being a Know-It-All

**Weak bosses** quash discussions that might reveal their ignorance, belittle the true expertise in the group, and then (often without being aware of it) recruit and retain second-rate "stupider than *moi*" employees.

**Strong bosses** surround themselves with the smartest and most talented people they can hire. Rather competing to see who's a bigger brainiac, they draw on the expertise of the entire group in order to make better-informed decisions.

## 2. Managing Numbers, Not People

**Weak bosses** spend more time with their spread sheets than with their employees. While they give lip service to employee morale, they're all about the bottom line--even if it means making everybody miserable.

**Strong bosses** see the numbers not as a reason for managing employees but as a measure of how well those employees are managed. These bosses consider coaching to be top priority and trust that investing in people will cause the numbers to improve.

## 3. Embracing the Status Quo

**Weak bosses** feel the need to control employee behaviour. They consequently monitor web traffic, social networking, emails and messages, all the while expecting to discover disloyal behaviour. Some even use GPS to track employee movements.

**Strong bosses** realize that corporate snooping is not only pointless (because any half-wit can avoid it) but creates an atmosphere of paranoia that drives employees to become even more secretive.

## 4. Spying on Employees

**Weak bosses** secretly believe that "the only people who like change are wet babies." Since the status quo put them in power, the status quo (by definition) must be the best of all possible worlds. After all, "if ain't broke, don't fix it."

**Strong bosses** don't value change for its own sake, but they do recognize that both teams and individuals must swiftly adapt when the situation changes. While this might sometimes put the boss's power base at risk, it's a risk that they're willing to take.

## 5. Believing the Technology Myth

**Weak bosses** swallow the malarkey (endlessly promoted in high-tech ads) that computer technology automatically makes employees more productive. They're thus ready to shell out big bucks ... even when the last three IT projects died on the vine.

**Strong bosses** are well aware that new technology can eat up resources without providing much benefit. They are skeptical about which technologies to embrace, and they encourage their employees to be selective when deciding what to use.

## 6. 'Divide & Conquer'

**Weak bosses** pit individuals and teams against one another other, hoping that competition will spur everyone on. These internal conflicts tend to create work environments that are seething swamps of resentment and pique.

**Strong bosses** discourage internal competition in favor of external competition. They encourage employees to see rival firms, not the guys down the hall, as the ones that deserve a good drubbing.

## 7. Refusing to Delegate

**Weak bosses** believe that delegating makes them less important. They therefore cling to their authority, relinquish it with great reluctance, and then micromanage the results, hoping (secretly) that the employees will conclude that the boss is essential.

**Strong bosses** know that delegating makes them *more* important. They realize that there's a limited amount of time in each day and every hour spent doing something an employee could do is just an hour wasted.

## 8. Expecting Employees to Read Your Mind

**Weak bosses** believe employees will stay on their toes if they never know exactly what the boss is thinking. When such bosses provide feedback, it's something like: "Nope, that's not it!" or "Back to the drawing board!"

**Strong bosses** are explicit and specific about what they want and what needs to happen. They explain exactly how every project will be measured, and intervene only when those measurements show the project is going awry.

## 9. Refusing to Commit

**Weak bosses** are afraid to take a stand. If asked for an opinion, they'll say: "That depends." If asked for a decision, they'll say "I have it under consideration" or (if they're feeling frisky) "I have it under *active* consideration."

**Strong bosses** realize that delaying a decision is, in itself, a decision—and usually it's the decision to fail. They therefore make decisions quickly, without expecting or requiring exhaustive analysis and debate.

## 10. Ignoring Non-Performers

**Weak bosses** hope against hope that an employee who can't do the job will somehow manage to soldier through. Meanwhile, as everyone else on the team has to pull a little harder to drag the deadweight along, resentment builds and morale suffers.

**Strong bosses** understand that when a job isn't right for a particular individual, and it's clear that further training or coaching won't change things, it's better to cut that employee loose, so that he or she can find a better match.

## 11. Stealing Credit

**Weak bosses** find a parade and get out in front of it. They jump in at the end of a project, add a little bit of "management input," and then stick their name at the top of the victory presentation. If the project fails, though, the team "acted without my knowledge."

**Strong bosses** give their employees the credit for doing the actual work, secure in the knowledge that bosses contribute in subtle but essential ways: resolving conflicts, coaching individuals, and providing perspective. And they take the heat when things go wrong.