

## AM I THE BEST BOSS I CAN BE?

Let's discuss striving to be a great boss, a truly effective leader.

I've been a senior executive in the corporate and not for profit fields for forty years and now have a leadership consulting and coaching practice. Based on my experience, I would like to offer these viewpoints on leadership:

- Leadership is not about control; it is the ability to influence people.
- To influence people, we must be able to relate to them as teammates.
- Our people work hardest when they feel inspired by us and they trust that we have their interest at heart.
- As a boss, we have an obligation to strive for continuous improvement and actually determine our level of effectiveness.

Surveys reveal that as many as 50% of the people in business in the United States do not feel they have a productive working relationship with their boss. Yet, how many of us assume we are doing fine? In fact, it is highly probable that most of us do not realize it when we are ineffective as leaders.

Here's what I think about leadership:

*To inspire people to higher levels of performance and teamwork, there are certain things you must **be, know and do**. These may not come naturally, and can be acquired through continual work and study. We must continually learn and work toward improving our leadership.*

To me, it means we must humbly accept that we have leadership competencies that we can improve. In addition, we must have the inner confidence to tell our colleagues that we are aware that we have areas of potential personal development and that we welcome their feedback and help.

Asking for feedback, ideas and advice from our team members is attractive and is a signal of our strength and commitment. Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable leads to trust.

Keep in mind that it is likely that all of our team members want to do good work and be successful. We, as bosses, need to help by *letting them know our expectations so they know what success looks like*.

People do try to live up to expectations, especially when they feel respected, understood, and appreciated.

In fact it is critical that we show appreciation for dedication and hard work. 75% of people leave their jobs because they do not feel appreciated.

We need to assure that our people have the resources they need, and that they know we want them to be successful. Our help and encouragement means a great deal.

### **How Do I Become a Better Leader?**

How do I know whether or not I am a good boss? The fact is, the higher we rise, the less honest feedback we receive. We gain a sense of how we're doing by asking our colleagues to tell us honestly what they think about our leadership. Surveys can be designed and distributed to our team members, which can be somewhat helpful.

In my executive consulting business, I have found that the best method for gaining invaluable insight into our leadership effectiveness is the 360-assessment.

The 360-assessment is a high performance executive leadership tool. It is a unique and intense personal development opportunity for leaders dedicated to building exceptional teams.

The 360 identifies distinct areas where there may be gaps between how we are viewed and how we may wish to be viewed by our colleagues. Such clarity is critical for equipping us and our team with the tools necessary for breakthrough performance.

Having facilitated numerous 360 assessments, I am privy to candid feedback from more than 500 business people. My clients very often learn that their team members want them to be a source of positive energy, to share information, to listen to understand, to keep their composure under stress, to recognize successes, to show appreciation and not to micro-manage, not to play favorites, to ask for their opinions and ideas, and to genuinely care about them.

To take this critical step toward breakthrough team performance, we begin by explaining to our colleagues that the 360-assessment is an investment in our effectiveness, individually and as a team. We ask them to be thoughtful and honest in offering their perception of our leadership. We assure them that the 360 is private, confidential and it is not used for any decisions.

A 360-assessment gives us a thorough, detailed picture of how our colleagues perceive our strengths and what we could do better - and we all have areas in which we can improve. If we are receptive, this is a vital opportunity for us to become a better boss. The best leader is within us!

If we accept our obligation to be a good boss and to learn how we can best encourage and help our team members, we will make a real difference for our company and for our people. This will bring a sense of deep satisfaction and significance.

### **About The Author**



John Keyser is CEO and founder of Common Sense Leadership which offers business leadership consulting and coaching to executives wanting to develop winning organizational cultures that produce sustainable outstanding financial results, and seek continuous improvement, their own and their team's. His web site is [www.commonsenseleadership.com](http://www.commonsenseleadership.com).