



HOW  
TO BE A  
GREAT  
BOSS

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *TRACTION*

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## WHY THE WORD “BOSS”?

Consider this for a minute: no matter what title is on your business card, be it foreman, supervisor, manager, director, vice president, president, or chief executive officer, the people who report to you call you their *boss*.

The word “boss” comes from the Dutch word “baas,” originally a term of respect used to address a person in charge. We use “boss” purposely because that is what you are—someone in charge, who leads and manages people. If you are ever in doubt, please come back to this definition.

We urge you to wear the title “boss” with pride. You’re in charge. Be in charge. Don’t be apologetic or tiptoe around it. Don’t give in to all the politically correct and watered-down titles such as “team leader,” “coach,” or “people champion.” These terms certainly describe what a great boss is and does; they’re just not all-encompassing titles. Take pride in the responsibility, but don’t become arrogant or take the title “boss” for granted.

Never use the phrase “I’m the boss” in an overbearing or entitled manner. No one respects people like that. Instead, they whisper behind the backs of bosses who are so stuck on themselves that they take their authority and responsibility lightly.

Walk through the offices or visit the production floors of great companies and you're likely to find engaged employees who are well led by great bosses. Those bosses create an environment where people show up every day because they want to be there, not because they have to.

So, if you're a leader or manager of people and you aspire to be a great boss, this book is written for you. You need only keep an open mind and commit to becoming great. We'll provide you with the tools to help you get there.



## CHAPTER 1

# being a great boss

*“If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming.”*

—GOETHE

WHAT IF EVERY DAY YOUR PEOPLE brought their “A game” to work? Do you believe that is even possible?

In the next 154 pages we intend to show that it *is* possible, and we will teach you the tools that will transform how well your people perform for you. You will discover how to:

- effectively delegate work and free yourself up to truly lead and manage,
- assess your team and surround yourself with Great People,

- apply five leadership practices and five management practices of all great bosses,
- communicate powerfully with each of your employees, and
- deal with employees that don't meet your expectations.

This book is different from any other leadership or management book you've ever read—and literally tens of thousands of them have been written. What makes it different is its practical application and immediate impact. It offers no theory. Instead, it offers a straightforward game plan to help you become a great leader and manager. We can say that because every word and tool in this book have been tested and proven by thousands of leaders and managers whose influence and results are undeniable.

In the last twenty years we have personally worked with the leadership teams of more than 180 companies and more than 2,000 leaders and managers. In addition, our organization, EOS Worldwide, has 150 EOS Implementers around the world who have taught these tools to another 2,500 companies and more than 25,000 leaders and managers. Because we have tackled day-in, day-out problems with so many bosses, we know what works and what does not.

Gino's first book, *Traction*, which has sold hundreds of thousands of copies, uncovered a vital need in the small business world: a need for a simple, real-world guide to help the leaders and managers of entrepreneurial companies become great bosses. That compelled us to write this

book and provide that simple formula. Anyone with direct reports who is seeking a practical, proven way to excel at what they do can follow these steps to bring out the best in their people.

This book is for you if:

- you are a leader, manager, or supervisor of people in a privately held, 10- to 250-person entrepreneurial company; or
- you want to get the most out of your people and seek a simple, effective, and impactful way to become a great boss.

This book is also written to help the “not-so-good bosses” get out of the way—to help them acknowledge that they lack the basic understanding, desire, and capacity to develop the skills that will make them great.

We have learned that to get the most from your people—to have a highly motivated workforce—you, in your role as boss, must create an environment where your people will thrive. Matthew Kelly, in his book *Off Balance: Getting Beyond the Work-Life Balance Myth to Personal and Professional Satisfaction*, points out that highly motivated employees enjoy both personal and professional satisfaction from what they do. “They work hard . . . they enjoy the people they work with; they feel respected by their boss; they feel their work is making a contribution to customers’ lives; they find the challenge of their work matches their abilities; and they know why they go to work each day.”

This may be apparent to you already, but what is surprising is this: Kelly, in his efforts to find a link between “work-life balance” and a highly engaged workforce, interviewed well-respected people at dozens of the world’s best companies. He asked these companies if he could interview people who they thought best exemplified work-life balance. What he discovered after interviewing these people was that they actually worked an average of nine hours *more* per week than their counterparts did. They valued job satisfaction over work-life balance. So, when you focus your efforts to improve your people’s satisfaction level with their jobs, versus the number of hours they work, think of the upside.

Here’s something else we’ve learned after we surveyed our clients at EOS Worldwide. When asked why they engaged us, 82.4 percent reported they were not getting enough out of their people; they weren’t on the same page, working together to win. In fact, “people issues” are one of the most common frustrations shared by bosses—not sales, not profit . . . people! However, keep this in mind: *as frustrated as you might be with your people, the fact is, they are your number one competitive advantage.*

Think about that for a minute. You may hold patents, own proprietary technology, and have tremendous brand awareness, but in the end, it all boils down to people. So, for better or worse, the people you employ or who report directly to you are your only real differentiator.

Competitors can steal your ideas and copy your products. After all, they essentially do what you do. They can



even steal your playbook—how you do what you do. But it doesn't matter because in the end, being a great boss comes down to execution—doing what you do better than the competition. Here is a great example. During the 1960s, opponents of the Green Bay Packers, who won two Super Bowls and five NFL Championships during that decade, had seen Vince Lombardi's famous "Power Sweep" so many times that they not only knew the play inside and out, they also knew when it was coming. But they still couldn't stop it. Lombardi was that good at leading his players to become that good at running that play.

The advantage of being a boss like Lombardi is that you have the opportunity to surround yourself with people who you want to work with and who want to succeed. You have the responsibility to hire them and fire them. If you're not satisfied with the performance of the people reporting to you, you have to accept the responsibility of doing something about it. However, before you fire anyone, you must ask yourself, "Have I done everything possible to make them successful? Have I failed them in any way?" Make sure you've done your part.

As we've mentioned, the tools we teach in this book are simple; they have to be, because the journey to become a great boss is not easy. People often confuse "simple" and "easy." The definition of "simple" is *not elaborate, not complicated, easy to understand*. The definition of "easy" is *not hard or difficult; requiring no great effort; free from pain, discomfort or care*.

The tools and exercises that comprise this "how to" guide have been honed while working hands-on with thousands

of bosses. In each chapter we share stories from every type of boss—owners, leadership team members, managers, and supervisors—to show you that these tools truly work for bosses at any level. They will help you lead, manage, and retain the sort of employees we call Great People. And the more Great People you surround yourself with, the more Great People you will attract to your organization. These Great People will free you from the day-to-day grind that has kept you from getting the most from your business and living a more fulfilling life. If we've piqued your interest, read on.

## **STATE OF THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE**

Since 2000, the Gallup Organization has been conducting an annual survey of American workers. The results haven't changed much year to year and reveal that only 31.5 percent of full-time American workers are "engaged" at their jobs. These employees show up early, leave late, come up with creative solutions, attract and retain customers, and bring energy to the workplace. Jim Clifton, Gallup's CEO, asserts that this group more than likely works for a great boss.

However, Gallup reports that 17.5 percent of American workers are "actively disengaged" at work. This group likely works for a boss that makes them miserable, and as a result, they spread their discontent throughout the organization. These employees are more likely to steal from their employer, miss days at work, and drive customers away.

Sadly, the survey shows that the remaining 51 percent of American workers are “not engaged” at work! These employees meet the minimum requirements, but they don’t view their jobs as a major component of their daily lives. They’re flying just under the radar while collecting their paycheck. It’s been estimated that their lost productivity costs American businesses a staggering \$500 billion annually.

Clifton goes on to state that the single most important decision that business owners make is deciding whom to hire or promote to management positions. Choosing the right people propels their companies forward, while the wrong people hold them back. Additionally, a 2015 Harris Poll revealed that 39 percent of employees have no idea of their company’s goals and objectives, 47 percent are unfamiliar with the state of their company’s performance, and 44 percent don’t understand how the role they play helps the organization meet its goals.

Think about the implications for your organization. Gallup suggests that only a third of your employees are actually driving your results. If everyone were actively engaged at work, what results could you achieve?

Whether your results are better or worse than those revealed by these polls, you can see that significant opportunity may well exist in your organization. Are you willing to take responsibility for all the issues that have caused employees to disengage? For example, if you are constantly frustrated with people who don’t meet your expectations, but you don’t explain your expectations, you may be part of the problem. Acknowledging and taking responsibility for poor

employee performance and engagement is the first step. Poor bosses don't grasp this and will blame factors "beyond their control." Great bosses will rise to the challenge. Which boss are you?

We're facing a crisis that is not just measured by a lack of opportunity for the workforce, but also by the lack of enthusiasm that the workforce has for their jobs. We're losing our competitive advantage. You cannot expect to meet your goals with half your team sitting on the bench—and 17.5 percent actually heckling you. You need an engaged, raring-to-go workforce. Your choices are to lead, follow, or get out of the way. You must decide. And remember, choosing not to be a great boss is okay. Just get out of the way and be willing to follow.

So, do your people truly matter to you? Do you view them as your number one competitive advantage? Are you excited about building a team of highly motivated employees and getting the most from them? If so, then get ready to answer the question that starts the next chapter.

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