

Hello. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks for tuning in as always, pay attention to bootcamp there's an announcement down below. So, take a look there.

This week I want to ask a simple question. Are you a bad boss? And why is this important? Well, come on, who wants to be a bad boss? The problem with us as bosses is so often in our companies, we don't get a lot of feedback. As the senior leader, you probably get less feedback from the newest person than the newest person on your team who gets at least an annual review.

For many of the people watching this blog, you don't get any form of review from anybody. So, you just kind of have to assume you're doing a good job. I have a couple thoughts on that a little bit later, but we had a Boot Camp exercise back in February 2020. And also, I got a little information from an article from Bamboo, from March 2019. Mostly from Boot Camp, we identified about nine characteristics that make for a good boss and six characteristics that make for a bad boss. So, let's go down. Let's start with bad. Okay, six bad characteristics first. All right.

The first was that the boss is negative. Doesn't present a compelling, optimistic vision for how today is going to go, how this year is going to go, et cetera. The boss doesn't give positive praise. The way one of our former consultants used to say it is there's a lot of butt kicking kind of feedback, but there's not a lot of pat on the back, you did a great job kind of feedback. And butt kicking those of us my age, we remember Vince Lombardi and Vince Lombardi was famous for chewing his players out and never giving the praise because by gosh when they did something praiseworthy, that's what they were supposed to do.

Today, the Vince Lombardi method doesn't work so well. People very much want that pat on the back that you did a great job. And if you're constantly, chewing butts, that that doesn't get it. Micromanaging, that was the number one negative in our bootcamp feedback, people that micromanage. And I know that would drive me berserk. Hopefully you're not doing that.

Little to no feedback. So, no reviews, no butt kicking but no positive pat on the back either, just nothing. Just kind of, how am I doing? There's no metric for how I'm doing, or can I advance my career or anything else. A lack of accountability, and it goes two ways. If you're not holding me accountable and nobody's holding you accountable, it's a two-way street. And then the second part of it is, doesn't hold other people accountable. And that is a common problem among our clients. They have people on the team that really are not pulling their weight. And everybody knows really on analysis who those people are, but nobody's really holding them accountable, which makes the other productive people on the team have to work harder. So those are the six bad characteristics.

What are the nine good characteristics? Some of you can probably imagine. The boss is disciplined in his personal habits or her personal habits. The boss is a planner, so we know what to expect this week, this month, this year. We have clear goals and mileposts that we can all see. So, upon achievement, we know we're there we know we're making process. The boss is a concise communicator. I think maybe this gets at the micromanaging thing. So many of us are not concise in our communication. I'm trying to be concise in this blog, but just get to the point. It seems to be with the bootcamp folks we're getting it. Just get to the point, be straight, be direct, let me know what I need to do and by gosh, I'll go out and do it.

Listens. The boss listens. The boss is willing to accept constructive criticism. Perhaps listen to new ideas about how to get things done. The boss has a good clear vision that we can all share, and the boss makes quick decisions. Again, on this list,

accountability, the boss is accountable to us and the boss holds other people accountable. So, you can see so many of these things are two sides of the same coin.

Bamboo says that the number one most hated behavior of bad bosses is when they take credit for the work of other people. They don't give credit where credit is due. Our bootcamp folks didn't mention that, and I personally don't see that, that much, but it's out there. So, think about that as well.

Now, how do you know if you're a bad boss? What are the tools that you might use to find out? If you have an inkling that maybe you're not quite where you want to be as a leader, well, first you can ask your people. How am I doing? How am I doing it? What would you like to see more of, what would you like to see less of? You can ask for direct blunt feedback. That's a part of that accountability piece.

The best tool for senior leaders in businesses is the 360-degree evaluation. They're not always fun. I can tell you personally, they're not always fun. There are some things ... You know, we all have blind spots. We all probably overestimate what we can do over here and maybe underestimate what we can do over there. So, getting a 360 from time to time, once every two or three years is probably a good thing to help you coach yourself, maybe have an outside coach to be a better boss and a better leader in your closely held company.

This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute, sure would like to have your feedback.