



# *The Boss* Workplace Guide for Developing Leaders

## The facilitator's guide

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# Introduction

Thank you for choosing to use *The Boss* as part of your leadership journey and in helping others with their journey.

Being based on true events, *The Boss* provides realistic management scenarios.

In the Workplace Guide at the end of the book we pose questions relating to the leadership characters in the book and questions on six of the chapters. The six chapters have been chosen because they cover the common and universal events in the daily life of a manager – the normal challenges that represent the typical leadership opportunities when managers demonstrate their competence (if they do them well) or incompetence (if they manage these events poorly).

Being a novel, the book describes the implications of these “management events” on the energy and output of staff, and in particular through the eyes of the principal character, Lauren Johnson.

By exploring what the managers in *The Boss* do well or poorly, the aim is that managers take the learnings from the book to increase their own effectiveness.

## **This guide**

This facilitator’s guide is written for the coach or trainer who will be guiding the managers through the learnings from the book and from the questions asked at the end of *The Boss*.

The facilitator might be:

- A leadership educator/trainer
- An executive coach
- An internal human resources or OD/L&D professional
- A more senior manager.

The learning environment might be:

- one-on-one coaching
- informal mentoring
- formal classroom programs or
- small group workshops.

Throughout the guide we refer to the people you will assist as “the readers.” The “readers” you are assisting are likely to be managers. By referring to your participants as “readers” this allows us to be clear that we are referring to people you are assisting.

The chapters and this guide provide a flexible tool to promote learning, self-reflection and growth in a supportive environment. They encourage inquiry into a manager’s leadership behavior and choices a manager might choose to make.

The intent is to provide a learning experience through the true events described in *The Boss* so as to help create productive and constructive workplaces.

Regards

*Andrew O’Keeffe*

# General Questions about the Leaders in *The Boss*

The following questions are listed on page 259 of *The Boss* (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).



## Question 1

Which characters in *The Boss* reminds you most of yourself? What aspects of that character serve you well as a manager, and what aspects might be causing interference?

### Facilitating Discussion

The aims of this question are to:

- Commence the reader's self-reflection on their own leadership style, and
- Cause a realization that there are usually positive and negative implications of a manager's style.

In exploring this question, the facilitator should encourage the readers to be specific. You should guide the reader to refer to specific instances in the book and have them compare these situations to situations that they themselves have faced. Have them explore how they dealt with that situation and importantly, to consider the consequences of their behavior.

By recognizing the strengths of their style and acknowledging any interference caused by their behavior a manager is better placed to make a leadership choice; what behavior serves me well and what should I change?

### Leadership characters

The main leadership characters in *The Boss* have a dominant style that characterizes their leadership. The styles come from the Human Synergistics model. The Human Synergistics model says that leaders rely predominantly on one of three leadership styles. Leaders are other predominantly constructive, passive or aggressive. Constructive is the most desirable and is positively correlated to individual effectiveness and sustained organizational performance.

If you are not familiar with the Human Synergistics model that will not be a major disadvantage to your facilitation of the leadership lessons from *The Boss*. If you are familiar with the Human Synergistics model and your readers are also familiar, then you will be able to use *The Boss* as part of your Human Synergistics coaching.

A snapshot of the main characters is:

**Constructive** (Achievement, Self-actualizing, Humanistic-Encouraging, Affiliative)  
James Swann

**Passive** (Approval, Conventional, Dependent, Avoidance)  
John Squires  
Marcus Pomfrey (with a fair dose of aggressive)  
Gus Wearing

## ➤ Question 1 (Cont.)

**Aggressive** (Oppositional, Power, Competitive, Perfectionistic)  
Nicholas Strange  
Maxine Savage  
Ryan Gunn

In facilitating the discussion of this question asking readers to identify the character that they most associate with, you should have readers explore the implications of their style – both positive and negative. The negative implications are likely to be where the person’s prime learning will be discovered, so it is fair to spend more time on that aspect.

In the questions below we explore the advantages and disadvantages of each of the styles: John Squires and Marcus Pomfrey as passive, Nicholas Strange as aggressive, and James Swann as constructive.

## ➤ Question 2

**What is the key management style of CEO John Squires? What are the advantages of this style in a CEO, and what are the disadvantages of this style? What could John do differently?**

### **Context for facilitators**

The reason to have readers ponder the styles of the specific executives is that it assists them to reflect on pros and cons of different styles, and to reflect on their own style and which elements of each character they see in themselves.

### **John Squires**

Key elements of John’s style are:

- He is a “passive” leader
- While he’s a nice guy, he has withdrawn from his CEO duties and allows Nicholas a high degree of latitude
- He is much more externally focused than internally
- He tends to deny reality (for example, believing that the culture of Harlow Kane is still the old positive culture that he would like to believe)
- He prefers not to get involved in issues and conflicts but ultimately will get involved and take a position if there is no alternative.

### **Advantages**

Readers might identify the following advantages in John’s style:

- Delegates to his staff
- Does not micro-manage
- Allows people to be themselves
- Focuses on the external environment and stakeholders
- Is ultimately prepared to step in and take a position and resolve issues

## **Question 2** (Cont.)

### **Disadvantages**

Readers might identify the following disadvantages in John's style:

- In the absence of the CEO taking the leadership position, the organization suffers from a lack of a single leader
- Nicholas (an "aggressive" leader) becomes the key personality and driver
- Other leaders vie for position and influence
- Culture is diluted as people might desire the culture espoused by the CEO yet see that violations to that culture are not addressed (or are addressed slowly). John is saying one thing and team members like Lauren see something different.

### **John could do differently**

Overall, John's style is a net disadvantage because he is in a position of primary leadership but does not fulfill that obligation to the organization.

While John is in the CEO role he should fill the range of responsibilities as the CEO, including:

- Balance his focus externally and internally
- Lead strategy development
- Lead the operational execution of the plan
- Coordinate relationships across the organization to increase synergy and reduce silos
- Lead the executive team (including chairing the executive team meetings as "his" meeting)
- Set the standards of performance and holding people accountable
- Set the standards of behavior and hold people accountable
- Address shortfalls in performance and behaviours.



### Question 3

**How would you describe the leadership style of Nicholas Strange? What are the advantages and disadvantages of his behavior? What are the implications of his behavior for other managers and for Harlow Kane team members?**

#### **Nicholas Strange**

Readers are likely to identify the following dimensions of Nicholas's style:

- He is an “aggressive” leader
- He is a driver of performance and wants to be in control
- He leads through fear and makes people anxious
- He's impatient
- He's arrogant, meaning that he sees things from his point of view only
- He is preoccupied with winning.

#### **Advantages**

Readers might identify the following advantages in Nicholas's style:

- He focuses people on performance
- He is impatient so he likely delivers outcomes
- He is a focused, no-nonsense manager
- He appears to be technically competent
- He is confident in his role
- People know where they “stand” with Nicholas – they know his opinion of them.

#### **Disadvantages**

Readers might identify the following disadvantages in Nicholas's style:

- He scares people – so people act out of fear and self-protection
- People who share Nicholas's style are the ones likely to get ahead
- He is impatient so can be quickly agitated
- He has low emotional control, so is quick to anger
- He doesn't care about the views and feelings of others, so he displays his anger and frustration.

## ➤ Question 3 (Cont.)

### Implications

The implications of Nicholas style includes the following points that should be drawn from your facilitated discussion with readers:

1. **Abuse of power:** One of the implications and learnings regarding Nicholas's style is that he abuses his power. People in high power positions can often disregard the views and feelings of less powerful people. An implication of this is that Nicholas can sap the energy of others, and because of John's hands-off style, the CEO, who could constrain Nicholas's inappropriate use of power, does not do so.
2. **Others become passive:** An aggressive leader can cause others below them in the organization to become "passive" (dependent, defensive, conventional, and risk-averse). We see this in *The Boss* in a number of Nicholas's reports.
3. **Modeling on Nicholas:** Nicholas's style will appeal to some managers, who will model themselves on Nicholas and which will win them Nicholas's approval. He sees himself in them. More of these managers will "get ahead", and more constructive leaders (such James Swann) will find it harder to be accepted and to progress.
4. **Performance not sustainable:** Another implication of Nicholas's style is that the improved business performance that he has delivered is likely to be temporary and not sustainable. Team members might be acting out of fear and self-protection, which is not a model upon which sustain results can be built.
5. **Energy sapping:** Team members are likely to find that their energy is diminished. We certainly see through Lauren that her motivation is sapped, even though she has the skills, background and interest to do a great job.
6. **Impact on culture:** Nicholas's force of personality forms the culture. Managers and team members become defensive. They are likely to blame others for mistakes as a means of avoiding criticism themselves. It is likely that people in different divisions don't help each other as there is little to be gained in making others look good as having someone else look good may expose yourself.



## Question 4

How about Marcus Pomfrey? How would you describe his management style? What should he do differently?

### **Marcus Pomfrey's management style**

Marcus is preoccupied with managing up, and places little interest in managing down. As a “passive” leader, with a strong dose of “aggressive”, he:

- Has a need to be accepted by his peers and by Nicholas. His self-worth is dependent on the approval of others.
- Attends to the priorities set by Nicholas, even to the extent that his calendar is driven by Nicholas's demands.
- Is unclear in the way he delegates work.
- Has little interest in new ideas or novel solutions, much preferring to keep within the existing bounds of performance and services.
- Lacks courage and avoids conflict with Nicholas or risking his relationship with Nicholas. If there is tension, he compromises his relationship with his team members (the less powerful people) rather than risk his relationship with Nicholas.

### **What Marcus could do differently**

Readers will identify a range of behaviors that Marcus could do differently and better. These include:

1. Gaining clarity from Nicholas on Nicholas's key expectations so that Marcus gains more freedom in the way he, Marcus operates.
2. Lead the team more effectively by setting team goals and actions within the context of the team's obligations to the organization.
3. Relocate to be with the team.
4. Be prepared to voice his own opinions.
5. Develop a wider range of relationships so that has a broader range of influences than Nicholas and Maxine and other like-minded people.
6. Give permission for team members to try different things, as he will likely find that his team members succeed.
7. Respect calendar commitments of team members, including declining other requests that would cause him to be late for a committed meeting (“Sorry, I can't meet right now, Nicholas as I have a prior commitment. I will be available in one hour.”).
8. Hold regular team meetings (that are productive) so that the team is connected and focused and shared goals.

9. Have regular individual meetings with team members to understand progress and offer support and guidance (and obviously demonstrate his interest in their work).
10. Look for opportunities to acknowledge the work of his team members.
11. Put in place development plans for his team members that include commitments by him to support their development.



## Question 5

**What insight do you have into James Swann's leadership style? What actions does James take that endear him to Lauren and her colleagues?**

### **James Swann**

James is a constructive leader. He is satisfied with his own self. He values people, he connects with people and he puts priority on the needs of others. Consequently he increases people's energy and output.

Readers are likely to identify key elements of his style as being:

- Caring
- Consistent and predictable
- Manages down (with his people well)
- Does not manage up well (in reporting to Nicholas) and James's future at Harlow Kane might be short-lived if John Squires was not there to support him.
- Maintains his personal power (and does not concede power to Nicholas).
- His leadership style is the exception to others on Nicholas's team (and hence he is tested and relies on personal courage to maintain his constructive style to the extent of defying Nicholas).

### **His actions**

James endears himself to Lauren and her colleagues through his actions. From the book we see:

1. When Ben first talks about the executives, he comments positively on James as one who supports and includes Marketing (as a support function).
2. In Lauren's first phone call to him, we see he is immediately friendly.
3. In meeting Lauren the first time, he is punctual (meaning that he is respectful of others and not dismissive of people with less power than himself).
4. In their first meeting over coffee, James reveals something of himself to Lauren (without transgressing the line of being overly familiar).

## ➤ Question 5

(Cont.)

5. James chooses to sit with his direct reports, rather than sitting remote from them on the twentieth floor.
6. At the end of the Sales Managers Meeting, James is the one who acknowledges Lauren for her work.
7. From Lauren's first appraisal we know that James is one who is known to be prepared to say positive things about others.
8. We learn from Emily discussing recognition that James thinks about staff and lets them know his appreciation ("Once, not long after I came back from maternity leave, I was working on a project for James that took me away from home for two weeks. It was a tough time for my husband and me, but I really wanted to do the assignment. Well, James sent a letter of appreciation home to Jack, acknowledging the impact my business trip was having on us, and offering any help he could. Jack and I really appreciated that").
9. In the executive meeting, we see he is prepared to defend and protect a less powerful person being attacked by more powerful people.
10. In the executive meeting, we see that he has the courage to express a point of view even when he knows it will be unpopular with Nicholas.
11. When Lauren needs reassurance (such as after her project review meeting with Nicholas and after the strategy conference), James is available and guides Lauren in her choice of action.
12. In supporting Lauren after the incident in the car park when Maxine confronted Lauren, we learn James is prepared to take a position on what he considers to be right (and wrong).

Not surprisingly, we find from the engagement survey results that James's division has the most engaged staff.

## ➤ Question 6

**If you were featured in a novel, what would you like to have written about you? Write down five words that you would like your team members to say about you. What specific actions are you going to take over the next twelve months to live up to these five words and be an effective leader of your team?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

The purpose of the "five words" test is for a leader to be clear about the impact they want to have on their team members. What type of leader does the person wish to be?

There are not many managers who set out to be like John, Nicholas, Marcus and the other executives at Harlow Kane. Most would like to be like James Swann. If we are clear about the impact we would like to have, then we have a better chance to be that person than if we had given the topic no thought.

## **Question 6** (Cont.)

While writing *The Boss* it became clear that people are not neutral about the topic of their boss! Generally, asking people about their boss triggers an emotional reaction – the reaction can be a positive one or a negative one, but rarely neutral.

### **A case study**

We once helped a leader who was appointed to run a subsidiary office in a foreign country. We posed the five-word test to him. We said, “If I check in with the HR manager in your new country three months after you start, what five words do you want staff to be saying about you?”

He listed:

1. Sharp
2. Caring
3. Professional
4. Demanding
5. Appreciative.

Three months after the executive had been appointed I checked in with the country HR manager to find out what staff were saying about their new leader (the HR manager had no knowledge of this exercise nor the leader’s intent). She said that overwhelmingly staff are saying that he is:

1. Quick
2. Cares about people
3. Professional
4. Asks a lot
5. Tough but fair.

### **Five-word test**

In using the five-word test and planning a course of action there are two steps.

#### **Step 1 – The Five Words**

We recommend choosing five and only five words so that it allows leaders to cover a reasonable number of topics yet tight enough to avoid the list becoming meaningless.

In asking readers to list their five words, use the discipline that each word is different in meaning to each other word (so there is no duplication).

The words should be developed with due thought and reflection, and not just to meet a timeframe in a training exercise.

#### **Step 2 – Actions**

Ask the readers to be specific as to what actions they plan to take to live to the intent that they have decided.

If you are supporting more than one manager, you could have then share their resolution with the group or with a colleague.

# Interviewing Potential Employees

## Chapter 2: The Search

### ➤ Overall purpose

The overall purpose of generating discussion on this chapter is to provide insight into the interview of a prospective team member as a leadership event. By using this chapter as an example of how one leader conducts a job interview, you can elicit the key dimension of an interview to ensure the experience is a positive one for both the interviewer and the candidate.

The job interview is often the first experience between a manager and a prospective staff member. It should be used wisely by the manager. The candidate knows that it is an important event for them, but from our experience managers do not treat the interview as a critical event for them. The event is critical in setting the foundation of the relationship between the manager and the successful candidate.

Managers tend not to plan the interview nor thoughtfully use the interview as a foundation event. In the absence of planning, the manager is leaving the interaction to chance. This means they miss the opportunity that the interview provides in both the information they gain and the impression they leave with the candidate.

We will also explore the importance of first impressions in the next chapter.

*The following questions are listed on page 259–260 of **The Boss** (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### ➤ Question 1

**What is your overall impression of the interview?**

#### **Facilitated discussion**

The reader is likely to describe their impression as positive and refer to the following:

- The interview is a positive experience for both Meg and Lauren. On Meg's part she has learned a significant amount about Lauren and has impressed Lauren. On Lauren's part she has been given the opportunity to present herself in the best possible light and is left feeling that she wants to work for Meg and Harlow Kane.
- The interview was a "two-way street." Meg conducts the interview knowing that both she and Lauren have a decision to make. Meg respects that Lauren has a choice regarding who Lauren works for. On Meg's part she obviously is deciding if Lauren is right for the role.
- Meg demonstrates what she will be like as a manager by her professional yet informal, relaxed style.



## Question 2

**What is your overall impression of the way Meg conducts the interview? What does she do well? What does she not do well?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

The reader is likely to describe their impression as positive. As you lead the discussion through the points about what Meg does well in the interview, it provides a way to demonstrate the implications of our behavior as leaders. For example, if we are on time or if we are late to interview a candidate, the implication of this choice is the message that it sends to the candidate and the impression they take with them, including their conscious or unconscious interest in working for you.

### **What Meg does well**

The following points should emerge from the discussion:

- Meg was on-time for the interview (a powerful indicator of the significance of the meeting for her and of her respect for Lauren as the candidate).
- She welcomed Lauren with a smile and was obviously pleased to see her.
- She was relaxed and informal (going to the kitchen to get a drink).
- She had organised the seating so that Lauren and Meg were side-by-side rather than allowing the table to be a barrier.
- Meg set the scene about the shared objective of the interview.
- She asked probing questions about Lauren's experience (and provides the candidate the opportunity to cover important aspects of their background and capability).
- She invited Lauren to ask questions which Meg answered candidly.
- She offered for Lauren to conduct reference checks on her.
- She organised for Lauren to see John Squires, the CEO.

### **What Meg does not do well**

Overall, Meg conducts the interview well. There may be observations that she does not accurately describe the culture of Harlow Kane, and consequently Lauren is surprised when the true culture emerges.

You could extend the readers' thinking about this point by asking them how Meg could manage the balance of having a good candidate interested in the role without scaring them off in a discussion about culture. Presumably Meg had a dilemma of attracting a good candidate while Meg herself was experiencing challenges in working with several of the key executives (although at this point she had no plans to resign).

Ideas on how Meg could balance the two dimensions might include:

- Encouraging Lauren to identify the attributes of a role that are most important to her, so that Meg is covering topics that are most critical to Lauren. If Lauren identifies “culture”, then Meg can talk about this.
- Meg could flag to Lauren that “at Harlow Kane we don’t have a perfect culture and we find the normal challenges of working in large organizations.” Covering the topic in this way could have diminished Lauren’s later shock.



### Question 3

**Through her behavior, what messages does Meg send Lauren? Are these messages positive or negative? Does Meg’s behavior assist her overall goal of hiring a strong candidate?**

#### **The messages**

The messages are strongly positive. They include:

- Meg is interested to learn about Lauren as a person and as a professional.
- Filling the role is a high priority for Meg and the organization.
- The role is a critical one to the organization.
- Meg appears to be a constructive manager and energizers Lauren.

In summary, Meg has thoughtfully used the opportunity of creating a positive first impression – by definition we have only one opportunity to make a first impression, and Meg uses the interview well (in contrast with Marcus’s first impression which we will look at in the next section).

Meg’s behavior and the impression on Lauren obviously assist in the goal of hiring a strong candidate.



### Question 4

**List five words that describe your impression of Meg. Are you left with a feeling that you would like to work for Meg?**

#### **The impression**

The concept of the “first five words” (that James recommends Lauren uses to summarize her impressions of the executives) is that it helps leaders think about the feelings and emotions they generate in other people, including their team members. It is a given that leaders generate impressions – the only question is whether leaders use this phenomenon thoughtfully or not.

Readers are likely to include the following words, or similar, to describe their impression of Meg: engaging, sincere, positive, considerate, and professional.

If readers use negative descriptions, it will be worth asking them to explain those impressions. If you are facilitating a group discussion, you could invite others to comment on the negative impressions one of the participants has expressed. Did others feel the same about Meg? The discussion may help readers to think about their own actions and how they create impressions in their people.

Most readers will be left feeling that they would want to work for Meg. If readers say, “no”, then explore why they have this view. Certainly from Lauren’s point of view she is left wanting to work for Meg.



## Question 5

**Describe the key interview technique Meg uses. Does she gain useful information to make an informed hiring decision?**

### Key technique

The key interview technique, although referred to only briefly in the chapter, is that Meg asked questions in order to visualize how Lauren will behave in the role. This is the interview technique of “behavioral interviewing”.

In a behavioral interview, questions are asked to gain evidence of how the candidate behaved in the past in similar situations relevant to the role. Behavioral questions are aimed at extracting a story or situation and to explore what the person did in that situation:

- What was the situation?
- What did you do and why?
- What was the result or outcome?

By using this questioning, or conversation, approach, the interviewer can observe how the candidate behaves, and can assess the similarity of situations that would be involved in the role being filled. The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior in similar circumstances.

Asking about past situations also avoids hypothetical questions where the candidate can “make up” the answer and where the interviewer can not be sure whether this is how the candidate would actually behave on the job.

Through the interview Meg gains useful information to help make an informed hiring decision. Of course, given that the interview is just a small part of the story in *The Boss*, the interview could not be exhaustively covered.



## Question 6

**Think about the people you have hired. Of the people you have employed, how many would you employ again? Is there information you learned about the people after they were employed that you would like to have known before you employed them? What questions could have been asked at the interview?**

### Facilitated discussion

In this discussion encourage readers to talk about their experiences. It is likely that readers who have hired a number of people in their careers will likely report that they were happy in their hiring decisions about 30% of the time. Managers who are effective at selection and use the range of tools available to them might report that they are happy in 60% of cases. This still leaves a high chance of “failure”.

In the discussion the group should identify the type of questions that could be asked to uncover useful information during the interview. Have the readers compare these better questions with the questions they currently ask. The most effective questions are those that elicit a story from the candidate about a situation they faced. These questions often start with, “Tell me about a situation when...”. Or, “Have you ever encountered a situation...”. The least effective questions are the hypothetical, future-related questions such as, “If you had a situation where...how would you manage that?” To these questions the candidate can make up an answer to please the interviewer or that the candidate would indeed want to be the case, but the interviewer can have little confidence that this indeed would be how the candidate would actually behave.



## Question 7

**Learning from *The Boss*, what are you going to do to be more effective in using the job interview as a key management responsibility and your first interaction with a potential new team member?**

### Facilitated discussion

The point of this question is to help the reader reflect and learn from Lauren’s experience described in *The Boss*. A reader should be able to specify a number of concrete behaviors they will demonstrate from this point on – so that they use the first interaction with a prospective team member positively. The positive list from Meg’s behavior in Question 2 above is a helpful checklist.

Through this reflection they should understand their behavioral choices as a leader.

## Summary of overall learning

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of an interview as a management event. They should have refreshed their thinking of why the basics of conducting a job interview in a thoughtful way is critical to their relationship with a new team member. In particular:

1. Demonstrating the importance of the candidate and the role being filled.
2. Building rapport and making the candidate feel comfortable at the outset, so they allow the candidate to present in the best possible light.
3. Approaching the interview as a “two-way street”, respecting that the candidate has a decision to make as to whether the role is right for them.
4. Using “behavioral interviewing” questions that probe the candidate about specific work competencies and behavior that relates to success in the role.
5. Using the event to establish the foundations of the relationship between the manager and the successful candidate.

A manager who chooses not to use the job interview thoughtfully is most likely compromising their own interests.

# First Impressions

## Chapter 11: The ATC

### > Overall purpose

The overall purpose of generating discussion on this chapter is to provide insight into the power of the first interaction a manager has with their team members. By using this chapter as an example of how one leader managed their first interaction, the facilitator can demonstrate the critical nature of the first impression.

In this chapter, the first impression takes place with the manager, Marcus Pomfrey arriving to take up his position. More usual is when a new team member joins the team. Most often the very first impression is formed at the job interview that we covered in the prior section. On the first day on the job, a further impression is formed by the staff member. This impression has a significant impact on the relationship between the manager and the team member. The first day at work is a significant event that a manager should use effectively.

From our experience, managers tend not to be thoughtful about their first interaction with their staff. By not managing the first interaction, managers leave the first impression to chance. They then often miss an opportunity to establish a positive relationship from the start.

*The following questions are listed on page 260-261 of **The Boss** (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### > Question 1

**What is Lauren's first impression of Marcus? Write down five words that describe Marcus from Lauren's perspective. What is it about Marcus's words and actions that create this impression?**

#### **Facilitated discussion**

Readers are likely to use the following words, or similar, to describe Lauren's view of Marcus (and indirectly their own view about Marcus): Sleaze, arrogant, self-absorbed, narcissistic, insensitive, disinterested, ambitious, hierarchical, political.

With a first impression like this, one can predict where the relationship is likely to go!

#### **The very first impression**

In the discussion you facilitate, it may emerge from a reader that Lauren's very first impression of Marcus takes place not in the office (the apparent first impression). It actually takes place in the car park. The point is that sometimes the first impression occurs when we are not even expecting it. Partly this means to a manager that they should best be thoughtful about how they manage the first impression.

A reader might also argue that Lauren's first impression of Marcus is influenced by the Ben's opinion expressed after the team meeting where Marcus's appointment is announced. This is an accurate observation.



## Question 2

**What does Marcus do on his first day? What impact do Marcus's actions have on his authority to lead?**

### **His first day**

A person demonstrates their priorities through their actions. In this way you gain insight into their thinking.

In Marcus's case, this is what he does on his first day:

- Instantly announces his plan to meet with people to review projects.
- He calls a meeting of his team and talks about how good he is as a people manager and talks mostly about himself.
- He announces that he is relocating his office to the executive floor rather than being with his team. Irrespective of whether this is a good decision, by making this his first decision he risks his team interpreting this decision negatively. The team concludes that he is more interest in higher management than he is in his team.
- He asks his team to complete a responsibility matrix which the team considers unnecessary.
- Lauren is demotivated by her first meeting with Marcus (which takes place the next day). To Lauren, Marcus is distracted and disinterested in her and her work.
- He appears to show little if any interest in his team as individuals. He shows no interest in getting to know Lauren as a person which negatively impacts their possible relationship.
- Marcus declines to have an individual meeting with his assistant, Kathy Bailey. Kathy is not the only team member who considers this rude and embarrassing to Kathy. He sends a negative message to other team members.

### **Impact on his authority to lead**

As the facilitator you could ask this "killer" question: At the end of the first day, is Marcus better placed to be Lauren's manager than before they'd ever met?

The answer is that he is worse off! Which means, as the manager, he really blew the opportunity of managing the first impression. He either did not treat it as a significant management event, or he planned and executed poorly. The fact that he behaved congruently (to his true self) is no excuse, as managers are better served by being thoughtful about their behaviors and self-regulating and adjusting behaviors that are derailing them.

At the end of the first day, Marcus has ground to recover and trust to restore if he is to have the moral authority to be Lauren's manager – at least to be the type of manager who adds energy for Lauren in her work and increases her motivation and output.



### Question 3

**Given Lauren's and Marcus's different personalities, Marcus has challenges in being Lauren's manager. How could Marcus have used his first meeting with Lauren to better understand her and how to most effectively be her manager? What management style do you consider would allow Marcus to get the best out of Lauren?**

#### **A better first meeting with Lauren**

In adjusting his style to suit what Lauren is likely to most value from her manager, Marcus could have:

- Spent time getting to know her as a person
- Understand her background and career experience
- Suspend his own judgment to first understand her
- Provide a basis on which they can share ideas, and for Lauren to have a manager who adds to her thinking.

#### **Preferred management style**

The preferred management style that will most energize, and hence get the best out of, Lauren is one that:

- Provides support
- Provides an open and safe environment
- Is intellectually challenging
- Is focussed on professional outcomes
- Is respectful of each person as an individual
- Allows freedom for Lauren to do her work
- Is interested in her work and impact.



#### Question 4

**What are the possible consequences for Marcus in having Lauren leave Marcus's office dissatisfied with their first meeting?**

##### **Facilitated discussion**

The primary consequence for Marcus is that he has reduced the energy and likely output of one of his team – an unfortunate and self-defeating outcome for Marcus.

The elements that contribute to this, and likely to be identified by the readers, include:

- The relationship gets off to a bad start
- There is an absence of rapport
- Marcus has not gained the emotional connection of Lauren
- Lauren does not look forward to the next interaction with Marcus (and presumably may well be happy to minimize further interaction)
- Lauren is likely to talk to others about her dissatisfaction (which influences the opinion that others in the team have of Marcus)
- She is demotivated.

Interactions are rarely neutral. In his early interactions with Lauren and the other members of his new team, Marcus will either cause a positive impression that adds energy to his team, or a negative impression that reduces people's enthusiasm.



#### Question 5

**Imagine that you are Marcus and you are planning your first day. Write down your plan for the day:**

- a. **What is your objective for the day?**
- b. **What do you want your team members to say about you at the end of the day?**
- c. **What are your first actions?**
- d. **What is your approach in a first meeting with individual team members?**

##### **The objective for the first day**

Encourage readers to have a simple statement of objective. An example might be: To establish rapport with each person by getting to know them, their background and the job they do.

## **Question 5** (Cont.)

### **What staff will say**

In facilitating what a reader would want people to say about Marcus, and by extension themselves if they were the manager, encourage them to identify emotional statements; statements that capture the emotion that would be shared by the team member. For example:

- “What a great boss.”
- “He was supportive, personable and positive.”
- “Marcus was really interest in me. I am going to love working with him.”
- “Marcus has an interesting perspective and I think I am going to learn a lot working with him.”

### **The first actions**

In facilitating discussions as to what the reader, as Marcus, might do on their first day, have the reader think about the emotion generated by their actions, not just the process. Readers might include:

- Casual introductions at the beginning of the day to meet people around their work stations.
- A morning tea with the team (coffee, muffins etc) so there is a comfortable interaction.
- Outline your plan for the first 30 and 60 days (eg, first 30 days is becoming familiar with the environment, the business challenges and our focus, the next 30 days planning our priorities).
- Schedule meetings with individual team members during the first week (see below for the focus of these meetings).
- Schedule meetings with the senior executives (Marcus’s peers and boss) to form a relationship with them (or in Marcus’s case reconnect as he has worked with some of them before his international assignment).

### **Individual meetings**

Again, the focus of the reader’s learning should be on the emotion associated with the individual meetings Marcus has with his team members in the first week. To generate the desired emotion, the focus should be:

- On the person – their background, experience and home life and interests (so the person knows that the boss “knows them”).
- For the boss to reveal a little about themselves, without going to extremes or being self-absorbed.
- On the team member’s perspective of the organization, the challenges and the team’s response.

- On the team member's level of engagement ("what's working well for you right now, what's not?").
- On the team member's expectations from a boss ("what do you most value?").
- On the team member's current projects, their purpose and status.
- For the manager to outline their values and expectations.

## Summary of overall learning

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of a first day as a management event – either their first day appointed to their team or the first day when a new member joins the team. In particular:

- You get one opportunity to make a first impression.
- You can and should plan and manage this event.
- Be mindful of the emotions generated, and try to generate positive feelings.
- Treat each staff member as an individual and be interested in them as a person.
- Be willing to share information about yourself and your background.
- Use the event to set the scene as to the type of manager you'll be.

In a nutshell, the way in which a manager conducts the interactions on the first day affects their authority to lead from that point onwards. It's worth managing thoughtfully.

# Performance Appraisals

## Chapter 20: Torture Chamber

### ➤ Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the performance appraisal as a management event. Through a person's appraisal experience, a manager and the individual can be closer or they can be further apart. By using this chapter in *The Boss* as an example of how one manager conducts an appraisal, the facilitator can assist managers learn how to make the appraisal discussion work better for the team member and the manager.

From our experience, most managers see the appraisal as a routine process. Most managers tend to treat the appraisal as a transaction. But the appraisal is primarily emotional and managers are well advised to prepare well for the review and to conduct it thoughtfully.

A poorly conducted appraisal has a negative effect on a team member's morale and performance. A well conducted appraisal can be a learning experience and enhance the working relationship between a staff member and the manager.

*The following questions are listed on page 261–262 of **The Boss** (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### ➤ Question 1

**What are at least five attributes of a productive appraisal review?**

#### **Facilitated discussion**

Encourage the readers to think about their own experience as either a manager or a person being appraised. What do they expect of their own manager when they are having their appraisal review? What do they expect in the reviews of their team members?

Readers are likely to identify a range of attributes of an effective review and might include the following points:

- Appropriate time is set aside for the discussion
- Both people have prepared well
- Ensure role clarity and that accountabilities and outcomes of the role are clear
- Ensure the person is clear about how their role fits in context with the team and the organization
- To discuss performance against the agreed objectives
- To provide recognition for good achievement
- To identify any poor outcomes and set in place a plan to overcome performance barriers

- To discuss and provide direction with any peer or customer relationship challenges
- To provide guidance and support with career aspirations and development
- To provide an opportunity to discuss any issues getting in the way of performance or high morale.

### **The one key reason**

As the facilitator, you could choose to ask the group as to the one key reason why they conduct performance appraisals of their team members. The purpose of having managers think about a single most important reason is that their reason can guide them in the way they plan to conduct appraisals. By being clear about the primary objective they will have a guiding principle that will assist them in their behavioral choices in the way they conduct appraisals.

The primary reason for appraisals generally fit into one of two categories:

1. To rate people in their performance so that we have a number to record and use in other management systems (pay, bonus, promotion) or,
2. To enable constructive conversations between team members and their manager focusing on learning and development.

We list these two primary reasons as alternatives as they are in conflict; it's difficult to achieve both outcomes at the same time. Hence a manager and their organization should be clear about their desired primary purpose as this guides design of the system and behavior during the review.



## **Question 2**

**How does the appraisal in this chapter rate on your list of attributes? In your view, what are the aspects of Lauren's review that represent good practice, and what aspects represent poor practice?**

### **How does Lauren's appraisal rate**

Lauren's appraisal is all about the rating. Marcus's focus is on recording the rating. He appears to be uninterested in having a conversation with Lauren about her work, her achievements and her challenges.

From Lauren's perspective, she wants to have the conversation with her boss. Consequently she is deflated in the way it unfolds.

We see in this appraisal the conflict of the two competing objectives of appraisal ratings – the manager's primary objective being to decide a rating (as perhaps driven by the system) and the team member wanting mostly to have a developmental conversation.

## **Question 2** (Cont.)

### **Good practice**

There is little to be said for Marcus in terms of good practice. Marcus conducts the meeting as a routine transaction, whereas an appraisal is heavily, and primarily, emotional. In appraisal meetings there is underlying emotion that we will look at below.

In searching to give some credit to Marcus, some readers might identify the following aspects as good practice:

- He does hold the review
- He does provide a rating
- He does get to make his point about his performance expectations, so at least Lauren can be clear about that even if she disagrees.

### **Poor practice**

Marcus's review of Lauren represents poor practice in quite a number of ways:

- He communicated first by email that it was review time – good practice would be to communicate in person.
- He was late for his review meeting with Lauren (if the matter with Nicholas had been a genuine emergency, then at least Marcus or his assistant could have called Lauren to delay the meeting rather than having Lauren wait on the twentieth floor).
- Marcus seemed uncertain as to the purpose of the meeting.
- He had no thoughtful opening to the discussion that set a positive context.
- There was little sign he had prepared for the discussion (he had forgotten Lauren started working at Harlow Kane only four months ago).
- Marcus hadn't given any thought to job goals, and provided no acknowledgement that clarity about job goals was important to Lauren.
- He raised the negative issue insensitively and in a way that Lauren became defensive ("I have some reservations.").
- Marcus's expectations regarding his performance measures were not known to Lauren (revenue, profit and customer satisfaction). And he would not entertain Lauren's views on the measures.
- The rating scale was a mystery to Lauren.
- Marcus is blunt in the way he gives and explains the performance rating. (His view that a new employee could not be rated more than a "3" may be reasonable if he is able to explain his point of view).
- Marcus projects a tone that the appraisal discussion is merely a routine process. He does not seem to be aware of the emotional aspects of the review for Lauren (or any team member).
- He seems to consider that this communication is "stand-alone". But this communication affects subsequent communication and the ongoing relationship between him and Lauren.



### Question 3

**What is it about appraisals that cause concern to team members?**

To facilitate this and the next question, you could do the following:

1. If you are facilitating a group, use two flip charts, one on either side of the room. On the first you will capture the team members' perspective, and on the second the managers' perspective in Question 4. The two flip charts allow you to “compare and contrast” to enhance the point.
2. If you are facilitating a single reader, you could draw a line down the middle of a blank page and capture the answers to Question 3 on one side of the page and the answers to Question 4 on the other side of the page.

#### **Facilitated discussion**

Readers are likely to identify the following concerns. As a team member:

- I'm unsure of what the feedback might be
- I'm being judged
- I'm anxious
- I'm not sure my boss really knows what I do so I believe they are not qualified to assess me
- I might need to defend myself
- I am about to be rated (if our organization has a rating system) and there are certain consequences of the rating (pay, bonus, promotability, self-esteem and reputation)
- My manager might treat it as a routine “form-filling” process.



## Question 4

**What is it about appraisals that cause concern to managers?**

### Facilitated discussion

Readers are likely to identify the following concerns. As a manager:

- I might be in for an argument
- The team member and I might have different perceptions of their performance (if different, the team member has mostly a more positive view of themselves)
- I might be delivering bad news
- I'm not good at having these conversations
- (If a new manager) I have don't appraisals before
- How my staff member and I talk in an appraisal review is unnatural and not like we normally interact
- If I am delivering negative feedback that can be uncomfortable
- The team member might become emotional, including angry
- I'm restricted in the number of positive ratings I can give because of the bell curve.

A conclusion from the answers to Question 3 and 4 is that the concerns of team members and managers are similar. They go to the emotion associated with appraisals.



## Question 5

**How did Lauren feel that night when she went home and over the weekend? What is likely to unfold in Lauren and Marcus's relationship if nothing changes?**

### Lauren's feeling

Readers are likely to describe Lauren's feelings as follow:

- Disappointed
- Deflated and miserable
- Frustrated because she was expecting the review to be useful
- Distracted and sapped of her energy, so she can't bring herself to do the work she had planned to do that weekend.

### **Impact on the relationship**

An event such as an appraisal review does not just happen in a vacuum. It is part of an ongoing relationship that both parties are continually reassessing based on experience. If nothing happens to recover both Marcus's and Lauren's negative experience of the appraisal, then one can predict what is likely to unfold:

- The relationship will deteriorate
- Future interactions between Lauren and Marcus will be increasingly strained
- They will tend to avoid each other
- The relationship might get to a point where both want to no longer have a working relationship (which might necessitate one of them, usually the team member, looking for a different job within or outside the organization)
- Marcus considers Lauren a "difficult employee"
- Increasingly, Marcus has less moral authority to be Lauren's manager.

All this is self-defeating for both Lauren and Marcus. As the manager leading the review, the deterioration and recover is mostly in Marcus's hands.



### **Question 6**

**Imagine that you are Marcus and preparing for Lauren's appraisal. Write down your plan for the review:**

- What is your objective for the review? What outcome do you want?**
- How do you plan for the review?**
- How do you start the review?**
- How do you point out any concerns you have? Write the first sentence you will use to point out concerns.**
- How do you cover the sensitive subject of the appraisal rating? Write down the words you will say to Lauren.**
- What words do you want Lauren to use to describe her appraisal to Paul when she goes home that night?**

### **The objective and outcomes for the review**

Marcus would be well served to include the following points in his objective for the review:

- To have a productive discussion with Lauren about her role and her achievements.
- To discuss her performance against her objectives, and in the absence of objectives, to develop them so she has role clarity.
- To identify her development needs so that you can assist her and provide opportunities for growth.

## **Question 6** (Cont.)

- To commence discussions about her career goals.
- Discuss and hopefully clear up any issues diminishing Lauren's energy and effectiveness.
- After the review, leave the impression that :
  - o I treat the review seriously
  - o I am here to provide support and guidance
  - o I value her contribution
  - o I am prepared to discuss and resolve any issues.

### **Planning for the review**

Marcus should plan as follows:

- At a relevant team meeting (or in person in some other way), inform the team it is appraisal review time and that you are looking forward to having the discussion with them.
- Contact Lauren and organise for relevant planning documents to be completed. Ensure the planning documents ask Lauren to summarize a) what she feels she has completed successfully, b) what she feels she has not done well or not yet completed, and c) what assistance she needs from Marcus as she looks into the coming year.
- Book time in your diaries.
- Ask Lauren who she would recommend you contact to gather feedback on her performance.
- Make contact with the agreed contacts and gather feedback on Lauren's performance.
- Complete relevant planning documents which would include assessing performance against the agreed objectives and thinking about relevant development actions.
- Plan your opening statement and key points.

### **Starting the review**

As facilitator you should guide the reader to the significance and sensitivity of their opening sentence which begins the review. You should have them explore the emotions triggered by their opening statement. If you are coaching a group, have one person make their opening statement to another person and ask this recipient to describe how they felt in response to those words (often just one careless word can trigger an unintended negative emotional response).

Guide readers to tailor their review to their key message and the emotion they want to engender as the foundation for the review. In this case, Marcus could begin the review as follows:

## **Question 6** (Cont.)

“I’m really pleased for us to have this discussion. It gives us an opportunity to acknowledge your achievements and cover any barriers for you.”

Marcus would have found out in his planning that Lauren has built generally good relationships with the executives and that she has made significant progress on her project.

Marcus would also need to acknowledge that job goals have not yet been clarified and documented (Marcus’s predecessor, Meg had discussions about project steps but nothing was recorded). So, first Marcus and Lauren need to discuss and hopefully agree her job goals.

### **Pointing out any concerns**

Negative comments from the manager carry great weight with the staff member. So care needs to be taken by the manager to express their concerns sensitively yet accurately. A manager needs to be carefully that a comment does not generate concern in the mind of the team member greater than the manager intended.

Have readers prepare and practice the words they might use to raise a concern with a staff member.

Here is an example of what a manager might say in raising a concern with the team member:

- “Now let’s talk about anything you feel you have not achieved to your expectations. This might identify areas for your development or areas that I can assist with. It might also identify ways to reduce any frustration you might be experiencing in your work.”
- Before jumping in with what you think, you might ask her, “What areas are top of mind for you?” Listen to her perspective before offering your view.
- If Lauren doesn’t raise a topic that you want discussed, you might say, “I having been giving some thought to what observations I can share to help you be as effective as possible in your role. There is one thing that occurs to me....”

### **The sensitive subject of the appraisal rating**

It’s helpful for managers to know that the delivery of the rating is, generally, heavy with emotion (for both the manager and the staff member). The manager should use their words carefully.

Suggestions are:

- “Let’s move on to the overall performance rating.”
- “Given what you have achieved and what’s still to be done on the project, my overall assessment of your performance is....”

If the team member has reservations about their rating (usually displayed on their face if not in words) it is best for the manager to have the discussion with them about

their feelings. This allows them to share their view and at least be heard, and hopefully understood. It is better to discuss the topic rather than suppress the negative emotion which is then released by the team member outside the room with friends, family or colleagues.

### **How Lauren will describe her appraisal that night**

How the team member talks about the event later to friends or family is a good test of how the manager conducted the review and managed the emotions associated with a review.

Ideally, Marcus would have managed the review so that Lauren says to Paul that night, words such as:

- “It was a constructive conversation.”
- “I am inspired and motivated by Marcus.”
- “I feel valued and supported.”
- “Marcus is really helping me develop.”
- “We are working together for me to achieve great things in my job and for Harlow Kane.”



## **Question 7**

**What will you do differently in the future based on your learning from this chapter?**

### **Facilitated Discussion**

In this discussion the reader should be able to demonstrate their learnings from the discussion and be specific about things they will do different. Being specific demonstrates fresh insight that can be applied.

## **Summary of overall learning**

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of an appraisal review as a management event. In particular:

- The need to carefully plan the review.
- The emotion associated with how things are said, so to plan the key expressions.
- The impact appraisal reviews have on the ongoing relationship between the manager and their team members.
- The potential for negative messages to override the whole discussion.
- The emotion associated with performance ratings.
- To consider the mood in which you want the person to be in at the end of the meeting, measured by what they will say about the review afterwards.

# Salary Review

## Chapter 22: Oh, to Feel Valued

### ➤ Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into the salary review as a management event. As a management event, a manager can conduct the review well or they can conduct it poorly. By using this chapter in *The Boss* as an example of how one manager conducts a salary review, the facilitator can assist managers learn how to make the review discussion work better for the team member and the manager.

The salary review discussion is significant as it's primarily emotional to the team member, and the manager is likely to manage it poorly if they overlook the emotional dimensions and treat it as merely a routine "transaction".

The key concept to manage a salary review discussion well is for the manager to consider what they want the team member to *think* about their review. If the manager wants the person to think that "I am valued" then the manager should act and speak in that way. If the manager wants the person to think that "my increase is moderate" then that likewise guides the manager in what they say and how they say it.

*The following questions are listed on page 262-263 of The Boss (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### ➤ Question 1

Why does Lauren feel the way she feels?

#### Facilitated discussion

The aim of this discussion is for managers to realize that events such as pay reviews are significantly emotion. They are not just process. We can see this through Lauren's eyes.

It is likely that readers will include the following reasons for why Lauren feels deflated:

- Lauren feels that her work and contribution is not valued.
- This leads of course to feeling that she herself is not valued and she feels a diminished person.
- There is no appreciation of Lauren and her work in what Marcus says.
- Marcus didn't explain the reasons for his decision. Lauren is left to try to make sense of it herself.
- Marcus delivered the message in a blunt way which becomes part of the emotional experience for Lauren.



## Question 2

What has Marcus done well during the review? What has he done poorly?

### Done well

Marcus has at least held a discussion with Lauren. He has at least advised her of her increase. Some managers just leave a letter on the team members' desks or mail it in the "internal mail" or just pass the letter across the desk with no or little commentary.

### Done poorly

Primarily, Marcus has not put himself in Lauren's position. He hasn't demonstrated that he can take Lauren's point of view.

He could have:

- Better planned for the discussion
- Given the reasons for his decision including Harlow Kane's approach to pay
- Put the 1.5% in a better light
- Bumped Lauren's increase up even 2% to have a more positive meaning for Lauren (not that Marcus thinks about that)
- Provided Lauren with an opportunity to discuss how she felt about the increase.



## Question 3

What are the factors that a manager takes into account when reviewing salaries? How can you incorporate these factors into your conversation with a team member informing them of their salary review?

### The factors that impact salary review decisions

Encourage readers to list the factors that a manager should take into account in reviewing someone's salary. The point of this list is that managers need to exercise judgment and that salary reviews can not just be driven by a formula.

The factors that managers consider in the review of salaries, especially professional staff not covered by an industrial contract, include:

1. The pay review budget approved by the executive team.
2. Market rates and an organization's salary ranges.
3. The individual's position in the range.
4. The team member's performance.

## **Question 3** (Cont.)

5. The team member's pay relative to others in the team (relative in terms of role level, responsibilities and outputs). Two team members might be doing the same role and at the same level of contribution. Person A has been in the role for a long time and is paid more than person B. Person B might have just been promoted into the role. It is likely that Person B will, for some time, have larger percentage increases in their salary than will Person A.
6. The team member's skills. Often a particular skill is in high demand in the marketplace so to attract and retain these skills the salary for the role needs to be inflated.
7. Potential may also be taken account – to ensure high-value people are not exposed to attractive offers from competitors.

All these factors need to be taken into account by a manager in making salary review decisions. A manager needs to exercise judgment.

### **Incorporating review factors in salary review conversations**

The importance of the conversation is that it helps the team member make sense of their salary review. Here are some key aspects to salary review conversations:

- It is important that the conversation be planned. The manager should plan the key message that they want to share and the words that convey the meaning and emotion attached to that message.
- The manager might explain the number of factors that are taken into account in the review, such as the organization's budget, market benchmarks, internal relativity and an individual's performance.
- The manager needs to take ownership of the review. If the manager concedes that the increase is "driven by HR" or "that's what the formula calculated" then the manager is reducing their own influence. In the eyes of the team member, the manager has lessened their management authority.
- The manager should be empathetic about how the message is received by the team member.
- The pay review discussion doesn't happen in a vacuum, so this interaction will influence future interactions and the relationship between the manager and the team member.
- If the team member is disappointed with the review, then it is best that this disappointed is expressed and discussed, rather than suppressed.



## Question 4

**What are the aspects of salary that most impact a team member's satisfaction or frustration with their salary raise? What are the likely aspects of a salary review discussion that can cause concern to a team member? What can be done to avoid these potential negatives?**

### **Satisfaction or frustration**

The importance of this discussion is for managers to be conscious of the drivers of satisfaction in the minds of the team members, so that managers can incorporate this factor in their salary review decisions.

A team member's satisfaction with pay is primarily driven by internal relativities. If people feel that they are fairly paid compared to others in their organization, then the individual is likely to be satisfied with their salary. This is a more significant factor than comparisons with people in other organizations.

Likewise, the quickest trigger of frustration with salary is if a person feels that they are unfairly paid compared to others in their organization. For example, if a new person is hired in a similar role to an existing staff member, and the new person is paid more than the current person, that current person can instantly become dissatisfied with their pay if and when they find this out.

### **Causes for concern**

Readers might list the following aspects of the conversation that might cause concern:

- If a manager does not appear to take the review seriously and doesn't demonstrate care in the review.
- How the manager delivers the message is important. For example, it should not be delivered "on the run". Even though the discussion might only take five or ten minutes, the discussion should be dedicated to this subject and held in a quiet place.
- The manager should acknowledge the person's performance and contribution.
- The message should be congruent with the quantum of the review. That is, a modest review should not be overstated.
- The manager should give the explanation that allows the team member to make sense of the review. For example, if the review is higher than the average for the organization, this should be stated. If the review is relatively low, then the reason for this should be given (such as, the person is positioned high in the band and hence the increases are slowing for that person).



## Question 5

Imagine that you are Marcus and you are about to conduct Lauren's salary review. Write down your plan for the review:

- a. How do you start the review? What words do you use?
- b. What explanation do you give for Lauren's salary review?
- c. How do you want Lauren to feel when she leaves your office?
- d. What words do you want Lauren to use to describe her salary review when she goes home that night?

### Starting the review

Have the readers identify the words that they have used in the past and with this fresh insight to consider how they now feel about those words. Are there opening words they would now prefer to use? The opening words set the tone, and should be planned.

Here are some examples of opening words:

- "I have pleasure in letting you know your salary increase this year. I'll take you through your increase, and then I'll explain the various factors that contributed to the review."
- "I've scheduled this meeting to discuss your pay review. It's important to me because it is an opportunity for us to discuss your pay and how it links to your performance."

### Explanation to Lauren

The key aspects of a desired approach by Marcus are:

- That her increase is in line with increases with her peers.
- That a significant factor is that she has only just started with the organization so that the increase is prorated as a percentage of 12 months' service.
- That the salary reflects the good job she is doing and her successful orientation to Harlow Kane.
- The factors that influence salary reviews at Harlow Kane.
- What she can do that will most impact her review next year.

### Lauren's feelings

The importance for a manager to think through how they want the team member to feel at the end of the conversation is that it helps the manager set the tone and decide their approach.

Marcus should want Lauren to feel:

- Positive and appreciated
- Motivated to continue her good work and her discretionary effort
- Content with the explanation of her salary increase
- Valued as a member of her team
- Looking forward to what she needs to do next year
- Pleased she is working for a thoughtful boss.

### **Words Lauren will use to describe her pay review**

Thinking through the words the team member will use afterwards provides another test for the manager on how they approach and discussion and the words and tone they use in the conversation.

Hopefully Lauren will say to Paul at home the night of her review words such as:

- “My achievements and contribution have been recognised in the short time I have been with Harlow Kane.”
- “Marcus appreciates my work.”
- “Marcus treated my salary review very seriously. He put a lot of thought into it, and gave me a lot of information about how reviews happen.”
- “My increase was pretty modest, but Marcus explained why. And I know what I need to do for next year.”



## **Question 6**

**What will be you do differently in conducting future salary reviews based on your learning from this chapter?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

In this discussion the reader should be able to demonstrate their learnings from the discussion and be specific about things they will do different. Being specific demonstrates fresh insight that can be applied.

The discussion could also include specific matters relating to the salary review policies and processes in their organization.

## **Summary of overall learning**

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of salary reviews as a management event. In particular:

- The importance of the manager having a discussion with the team member.
- The need to plan the message and how it is delivered.
- The importance of the emotional aspects of the review and discussion.
- The various factors that a manager takes into account when reviewing a person's pay.
- The impact of the review and conversation on the ongoing relationship and the motivation of the team member.

What might be a five minute salary review conversation can significantly add to or detract from the relationship between a manager and their team member. It's wise to handle it with care.

# Developing Employees

## Chapter 23: Feeding the Horses

### ➤ Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into a person's career development review as a management event. As a management event, a manager can conduct the review well or they can conduct it poorly. By using this chapter in *The Boss* as an example of how one manager conducts a team member's development review, the facilitator can assist managers learn how to make the review discussion work better for the team member and the manager.

Like the other review meetings we have covered, the development review discussion is significant as it's primarily emotional to the team member, and the manager is likely to manage it poorly if they overlook the emotional dimension and treat it as a routine event.

Managers often struggle with the value that they can add to a team member's career planning and development. In discussing this chapter, managers can identify ways in which they are able to add value to the team member.

*The following questions are listed on page 263 of The Boss (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### ➤ Question 1

Lauren was angry after the meeting. What was it about Marcus's behavior that provoked her response?

#### Facilitated discussion

Encourage the readers to be specific about Lauren's feelings and Marcus's behavior. The key learning is in the detail of how emotions can be triggered by the behavior of others and our interpretation of those behaviors.

The readers are likely to identify the following elements of Marcus's behavior:

- Marcus accused Lauren of being late to the session – which puts a negative tone on the discussion at the outset, let alone that Marcus is himself often late for meetings with Lauren.
- He said the discussion was centred on “completing a form for HR” – a statement that is reasonably interpreted by the staff member as meaning, “You and your career are not important.”
- At the outset he framed the discussion as a career promotion discussion rather than a learning and development discussion which was Lauren's preference.
- He made negative and judgmental comments about Lauren's style.
- He included in the discussion feedback from other people that was obscure and distracting.
- He framed the discussion based on his bias and opinion rather than enquiring to assist Lauren with her thinking and her preference.

In short, the discussion was about Marcus, not about Lauren.



## Question 2

**What are the desired outcomes of an effective development discussion between a manager and a team member?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

The following items should be identified from the discussion with readers:

- The team member leaves the discussion with fresh insight about their career and their development options.
- The team member feels supported and encouraged by their manager.
- The manager has added value to the team member's thinking in relation to their career and development.
- The manager has added a valuable perspective into how people progress both in this organization and in their career generally.
- The manager has been able to point to career paths followed by senior people in the organization.
- The team member feels valued and their energy has been lifted.
- The manager has gained fresh insight into the team member as a person and the team member's aspirations.
- The manager has gained fresh insight into where "work" fits into the person's life plans.
- The manager gains insight into the employee's strengths and development needs so the manager can guide and develop them.
- The manager and team member commit actions to assist the team member in their development.



## Question 3

**What questions might managers use to help their team members think through their development and career options?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

Managers often struggle with how to add value in helping a team member plan their development. The list of questions below, or questions like them, should help managers assist team members think through their development. The questions assist the team member gain clarity in their thinking, and the answers allow the manager to gain insight into the team member's aspirations and plans so that the manager can assist in the person's development.

- What aspects of your role do you most enjoy?
- What's your best, most enjoyable role ever? What was it about that role you enjoyed?
- What has been your favorite challenge in your career or your proudest achievement? Why was that? What aspects made it such?
- What activities do you think you perform well? How can you continue to apply your strengths?
- What activities do you most struggle with or get frustrated by? How important are these and do they point to a development need?
- If you had the best role ever for you, what responsibilities would be involved in the role?
- When one day you retire and look back on your career, what do you want to see?
- In terms of your overall life goals, what does success look like for you, and what part does your career play?
- How specifically will you know you have been successful in your career?



## Question 4

**What are some strategies and tools that managers can use to assist others in planning and developing their career?**

### **Facilitated discussion**

Many managers equate “career development” with promotion and/or training. Development should not be limited to these two aspects, and if they are then that limits the value the manager can add.

For a manager to be a boss who develops their people, the primary dimension is that the boss supports and challenges their people. If a team member works for a manager who enables the team member to achieve things that the team member never thought they could, then this is a manager who develops their people. This has nothing necessarily to do with progression or training.

The strategies and tools might include:

- Challenging projects
- Expanded responsibilities
- Temporarily covering other people during absences
- Cross-functional teams and projects
- Joining and being active in a professional organization
- Joining a local business networking group
- Reading books and journals (and discussed with the manager)
- Training programs., seminars and conferences



## Question 5

If a team member has *not* identified a development point that you consider to be important, how would you raise this?

### Facilitated discussion

Sometimes a manager has identified a “blind spot” or an “interference factor” in a team member’s behavior or performance, but the manager may either find it hard to raise that observation or may raise it in a blunt fashion. If the manager doesn’t raise it, they are denying the team member the opportunity for development, and if they raise it too bluntly then they might cause harm to the person’s self-esteem and the relationship between the manager and the team member.

So, how does a manager raise a sensitive but important point for development? Here are some ideas:

- The manager’s intent should be constructive, in which case the observation is more likely to be received as constructive and helpful.
- If the observation is raised during a session that is already positive and constructive, then it is more likely to be received positively than if it is raised in a meeting that is tense.
- The manager can lead into the development needs by asking a question such as, “What areas of development do you think would most help you in your role?”
- A manager could go to a specific observation by saying, “As I think about what would help you be more effective in your role, and one area that comes to mind is.....” It would be helpful for the manager to provide a specific example when this skill or attitude diminished the team member’s effectiveness.
- The manager should ask for the team member’s view on this observation and whether any clarification is required.
- The manager can then go to, “Would you like to think about how we could develop your skills in this area?”



## Question 6

Imagine that you are Marcus and are planning the career development discussion with Lauren. Write down your plan for the meeting:

- a. What do you do in preparation for the meeting?
- b. How do you start the discussion? What words do you use?
- c. What outcome do you want to achieve?
- d. What words do you want Lauren to use to describe her career discussion and you when she goes home that night?

### Preparation for the meeting

- Familiarise yourself with the most recent performance and/or career discussions with the team member.
- Refresh your knowledge on career planning tools in your organization.
- Refresh your knowledge of the type of activities you can encourage your team members to participate in.
- Complete relevant planning documents provided by the organization.
- Encourage the team member to prepare for the discussion (what do they enjoy most and least, what development do they most need, what are their career aspirations).
- Allocate enough time for the discussion (“time” reflects the subject’s importance).

### Words to start the discussion

Words should be carefully chosen to reflect the emotion that the speaker intends. Words to commence a development discussion might be:

“We’ve scheduled this meeting to discuss your career development. I value this time because it’s going to help both of us gain clarity on what we need to do to help you develop to where you want to go. It will help you think through your development, and help me to understand the help you most want from me. Thanks for your planning documentation which I have read.”

### The outcome

If a manager is clear on the desired outcomes then they will have greater clarity in how to guide the conversation. Outcomes should include:

- A team member who is positive about their growth and development is more energized, more productive and more likely to choose to remain with the organization.
- This in turn helps the organization’s success through team members contributing to their full potential.

**➤ Question 6**  
(Cont.)

- People in other organizations may be attracted to join an organization that has a reputation for developing its staff.
- The manager is contributing to the growth and development of another person, which can be its own satisfaction for a manager.

**Words Lauren will say**

The words Lauren will say afterwards reflect her feelings about the discussion. Have the readers list what they would like Lauren to say and feel afterwards. They might list:

- “I had a fantastic discussion today with Marcus about my development.”
- “Marcus is helping me achieve my career goals.”
- “Marcus provided great insight for my development. He had really good observations.”
- “Marcus really believes in me.”
- “We identified some specific development actions.”

Compared to how Lauren felt in the car as described in *The Boss*, if Marcus had handled the discussion well she may have been joyfully singing, “I love my job, I love my job!!!”

**➤ Question 7**

If a team member has *not* identified a development point that you consider to be important, how would you raise this?

**Facilitated discussion**

In this discussion the reader should be able to demonstrate their learnings from the discussion and be specific about things they will do different. Being specific demonstrates fresh insight that can be applied.

The discussion could also include specific matters relating to the career development policies and processes in their organization.

## **Summary of overall learning**

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of career development discussions as a management event. In particular:

- The importance of a manager being interested and supportive of a team member's growth and development.
- The need to plan the discussion, and not just "wing it."
- How opening words can set the tone for the discussion.
- How to lead the discussion positively and sensitively.
- How to maintain focus on the individual.
- The impact on a team member's energy and motivation.
- The range of development options, not limited to promotion and training.

# Review with the Senior Leader

## Chapter 29: First Looks

### ➤ Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into interactions with senior leaders as a management event. By using this chapter in *The Boss* as an example of how one meeting with a senior leader unfolded, the facilitator can assist managers learn how to make review meetings work better for the team member, the manager and the senior leader.

The chapter looks at the damage to a team member's energy that even just two words from a senior leader can have.

This case study has learnings for the immediate manager and the senior leader in how they think, behave and talk in these daily meetings.

*The following questions are listed on page 264 of The Boss (second edition, Greenleaf Book Group, 2009).*

### ➤ Question 1

**Explain the events in this meeting from the perspective of each of the characters: Lauren, Marcus, and Nicholas.**

#### Facilitated discussion

The key points identified by readers should include the following.

##### *From Lauren's perspective*

Heading into the review with Nicholas, Lauren believed that she had the support of her immediate manager, Marcus. Two key things happen to Lauren. First, she is totally deflated that Nicholas is “completely underwhelmed” by her proposal, without him at least seeking to understand and clarify her proposal. She is embarrassed and feels diminished. Second, she is annoyed and betrayed that, in the face of Nicholas's criticism, Marcus abandons her by withdrawing his earlier support.

##### *From Marcus's perspective*

In the face of opposition by Nicholas, Marcus was probably conflicted between supporting his direct report, Lauren and protecting himself from criticism from his boss. His drive for self protection won! He lied to Nicholas about a prior review of Lauren's presentation and then apparently faked a phone call after the meeting to avoid discussing it with Lauren.

##### *From Nicholas's perspective*

At the start of the meeting Nicholas was keen to hear the status of the marketing strategy review. As Lauren presented the update he lost interest. His attention wandered. At the conclusion he was unimpressed and said so.



## Question 2

What are the likely implications of Nicholas's response to Lauren? How did Lauren feel that night when she went home?

### Likely implications

For Lauren, this is a significant negative event. As a consequence of this meeting and Nicholas's declaration that he is "completely underwhelmed", it is likely that:

- She loses respect for Nicholas and associates negative feelings and energy with him.
- She will seek to avoid him in future and dread future meetings with him.
- She loses confidence in herself and her ability.
- Her motivation for her project is reduced. As a consequence her outputs will likely suffer.
- To protect herself from future negative assessments she will be defensive and overly cautious.
- She will be less likely to bring forward another idea.
- Her connection to the organization is reduced due to this negative experience and embarrassment.

### How she feels that night

Lauren feels:

- Deflated
- Demotivated
- Diminished
- Angry with Nicholas for his rudeness and arrogance
- Angry with Marcus for his lack of support
- Angry with Marcus for his lack of courage
- Angry at herself for not defending herself and her proposal.



### Question 3

Knowing that each interaction with a person influences the relationship (positive or negative or both), in your opinion what impact would this review have on:

- Future interactions between Lauren and Nicholas?
- Future interactions between Lauren and Marcus?
- Future interactions between Marcus and Nicholas?

#### **Future interactions between Lauren and Nicholas**

- Tense and anxious, at least on Lauren's part which will in-turn affect the rapport between her and Nicholas.
- Less likely to occur, as Lauren may well seek to avoid interacting with Nicholas.
- Less productive, as Lauren will be defensive and protective, and hence in a less energetic state.

#### **Future interactions between Lauren and Marcus**

- Lauren loses respect for Marcus.
- Lauren considers Marcus a coward who is unsupportive of his staff.
- Lauren loses trust in Marcus, and knows she can not rely on him.
- Lauren considers Marcus more focused on "managing up" than "managing down."
- Marcus has reduced his leadership authority.
- Their relationship is eroded and less productive.

#### **Future interactions between Marcus and Nicholas**

- Nicholas has increased his power over Marcus.
- Marcus and Nicholas are likely closer due to Marcus's support for Nicholas in favor of his support for Lauren.
- Marcus will be even less likely to put at risk his relationship with Nicholas (he has recommitted to the relationship).



## Question 4

**Why does Marcus not support Lauren? What motivates Marcus to make the choice he makes? What are the advantages and disadvantages of his choice? What would you have done, specifically, if you were Marcus?**

### **Why Marcus does not support Lauren**

Marcus chooses in that critical moment not to support Lauren. Marcus is likely fearful of the implications for him if he supports Lauren. If he supported Lauren it is highly likely that Nicholas would consider that Marcus is opposing Nicholas. Marcus will likely have observed Nicholas in similar situations before and knows the consequences to him if he gets Nicholas offside.

### **Marcus's motivation**

It is likely that self-interest is motivating Marcus. Marcus would consider it in his interests to continue to have Nicholas's support. Likewise, Marcus would know the negative consequences for him if he "fell out" with Nicholas.

### **The advantages**

The advantages to Marcus of his choice are:

- Continuing to have the support of Nicholas.
- He can gain Nicholas's support to his own ideas if he has Nicholas as an ally.
- Future rewards and promotions depend on Nicholas's support and patronage.

### **The disadvantages**

The disadvantages to Marcus of his choice are:

- He alienates a team member.
- It is likely Lauren will talk about this to her colleagues, so Marcus is reducing his leadership authority over more team members than just Lauren.
- He reduces the energy and output of Lauren.

### **What would you have done?**

Encourage the readers to see the solution other than as a binary "either/or". That is, Marcus does not need to choose to support either Nicholas or Lauren. He could manage the moment with better finesse without needing to choose.

Certainly, given Nicholas's intimidating nature and short fuse, Marcus would understandably be cautious to avoid annoying him and possibly sacrificing his own career.

Readers could identify the following actions Marcus should have done:

- When Nicholas disagreed, Marcus could have asked questions. He could have asked Nicholas to better explain his observations.
- Marcus could have sought to change the assessment from a universal “underwhelmed” to be more specific in detail. There may well have been elements that Nicholas favored, and the elements he opposed could have been isolated. Marcus could have reduced the potential negative impact for Lauren and himself.

It would also have served Marcus and Lauren well if Marcus had paid attention to the subject when Lauren first met with Marcus prior to the Nicholas meeting. Marcus would then be in a better position to suggest any improvements to Lauren which could well have avoided the whole issue.



### Question 5

**With the benefit of hindsight, what should Nicholas have done at the point where he began to doubt the value of Lauren’s proposal?**

#### **Facilitated discussion**

The key aspect of observing Nicholas’s behavior in this chapter is the impact that even just a few words can have on the spirit and energy of a team member (and in Lauren’s case an intelligent and dedicated professional keen to do her best).

Not that Nicholas needs to be agreeable to everything and everybody. The question is how he manages his opinion, his approval and the withholding of approval. Here are some options:

1. Nicholas could have first suspended judgment and asked questions of Lauren to gain a better understanding of her proposition.
2. He could have explained his concerns and how his concerns fit with other aspects of the organization that only he might be aware of. Lauren might benefit from his insight.
3. Nicholas could be more open to the opinions of others and less dismissive of points of view different to his own. There may be benefits in other people’s ideas.
4. He should have avoided an emotional negative response of being “completely underwhelmed”. This response is blunt, hurtful and deflating to Lauren.
5. He could have identified the aspects of Lauren’s proposal that he supports, and identified those aspects that he questions or needs to explore further.

For Nicholas, reducing team members’ energy and output is self-defeating.

## **Summary of overall learning**

From the discussion of this chapter, readers should have a fresh perspective on the significance of interactions with senior leaders, and the impact senior leaders have in their organization. In particular:

- Suspending judgment and listening to another person's point of view.
- Seek clarification by asking questions.
- An immediate manager's role in supporting a team member to higher management.
- The impact of the comments, opinions and behaviors of a senior leader.
- The damage to a team member's energy and output that even just two words can have.

# Conclusion to this workplace guide

The aim of the questions and this guide is for leaders to learn from Lauren's experience in *The Boss*. Through the eyes of Lauren, we learn that impact on team members' energy and output that management events can have. We learn that the regular events in which team members interact with their manager can be positive or negative – they are rarely neutral. They are negative or positive because they are primarily emotional experiences, particularly for the team member.

Managers are well advised to make these events positive experiences for their good performing team members, which will be the overwhelming majority of their team.

Through your facilitation of these chapters, managers should be better equipped to use the daily management events thoughtfully and positively to increase people's energy and output.

## Continuing your knowledge journey

The organisation behind this workbook, Hardwired Humans, writes a monthly newsletter. The newsletter reports on aligning people practices to human instincts, which is one of the leadership principles underpinning *The Boss*.

You are welcome to subscribe to this free newsletter via [www.hardwiredhumans.com](http://www.hardwiredhumans.com)



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