

## "Bad Bosses" - by Anne Howard

### Maybe...

....it's the time of year or maybe it's the time of man (with apologies to Joni Mitchell - Woodstock). In the last while I have heard an amazing number of complaints from friends, family and colleagues about their bosses. Along with a few that were unprintable the following are some of the things I've been told.

"My boss blamed me for not doing something I had never been told was my job to do. He didn't provide me with a job description and didn't train me. I just got thrown into the job and have been figuring it out as I go along and now he says that I am not doing a good job. Whenever I've asked about job tasks and performance expectations he said I don't need that just get to work. I've never had a bad performance review before this."

"My boss is super moody. On her good days she is great. On her bad days – I look out! If you get on her bad side you get fired. I just keep my head down, and never talk to anyone here because you don't know what mood she'll be in, what causes her moods or what gets you on her bad side."

"My boss takes credit for my ideas and my work. She never acknowledges my contributions and she takes the credit from her boss for my work. If something she does do goes wrong she blames me or one of the other people in our department."

"My boss is rude and disrespectful to me. He talks to me like I am an idiot. He is impatient. He never has time to answer questions or explain what is needed in an assignment. He doesn't let me explain my work or my reasons for doing things. He walks right past me in the hall and doesn't even acknowledge me."

"My boss is a micro manager. She tells me what to do and how to do it. She isn't interested in any ideas or suggestions on how to improve. She doesn't let me express my opinion. She gets mad if I try to offer ideas or suggestions on how to improve. The only ideas she likes are her own."

"My boss asks me questions about personal things that are none of her business."

"My boss has his favorites. They are all sports fans. If you're not a fan you don't get the good assignments and aren't on the inside at work."

Among the top reasons people leave their jobs is having a bad boss/supervisor. In a world where there are more workers than jobs, bosses can get away with bad behavior. In this world of talent shortages and more jobs than people, a boss who behaves badly is a liability a company cannot afford.

The characteristics of good bosses include:

- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Good personal qualities (such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, accountability, reliability, emotional maturity,)
- Good fit with the company culture
- Ability to get results
- Have the supervisory and managerial skills to do the job (such as delegation, fairness, consistency, organization and time management, ability to set expectations and provide feedback)
- Good strategic skills
- Being in the right job
- Having enough experience to have developed the skills noted above as needed for the job.

The practice of promoting workers because they are good technical or professional employees and assuming they will become good supervisors or managers has always been a poor practice. When coupled with an absence of supervisory and managerial skills training (as is frequently the case) it becomes a recipe for high turnover, poor morale, unmotivated workers and productivity that is less than it should be.

