

The cure for horrible bosses

*There are great managers and leaders in every organisation. These are the people who value their employees, appreciate their efforts and celebrate their contribution to the business, but how would you approach a day in the office if your boss was just the opposite? **Jessica Sichone, senior media buyer and strategist at DAN Zambia**, identifies three boss personalities that might need an intervention.*

Issued by [Dentsu](#) 16 Apr 2020



When the “Dilbert” comic strip launched in 1989, it was one of the first to focus primarily on the workplace, but since then egotistical, autocratic, petty and dishonest managers have often been the comical focus of movies, television series and books. From *The Office* to *The Devil Wears Prada*, bad managers have become an easy target, but perhaps they have a few gripes of their own, muses *Harvard Business Review*.

“Our research found that many managers themselves don’t seem to feel very positively about managing. Yes, they welcome the status, privilege and power, but they either see the job as detracting from their ‘real work’, or they conceive of management quite narrowly – as focusing on organisational structure, short-term strategy and the next quarter’s profits. By seeing themselves as catalysts for positive change, and working to make those changes happen, managers can become heroes in their organisation and beyond.”

When a bad boss happens to a good person

It’s a reality that there are good bosses and bad ones, and the latter can be extremely challenging. They can even [negatively affect the health of an employee](#). And while these manipulators and micromanagers are damaging your health, they could also hinder the company morale and progress.

Staging an intervention

While you might be tempted to pack up your desk and walk out with your pet goldfish or office mascot, don’t be too hasty. There might be a way to approach the pointy-haired boss after all.

#1 The helicopter boss

A micromanager means well, but checking every infinitesimal detail undermines employees and negatively affects morale and confidence.

Countermeasures: There are generally three reasons for micromanagement. The first is a fear of failure, the second pressure to perform and the third is that it’s probably the only model they know. Have a candid conversation so that you can

counter the first reason with “I’ve got your back”; the second with “Let’s set up regular meetings so I can give you a progress report”; and the third with “I follow an amazing business coach on Insta who gives great tips on how to improve your work life.”

#2 The idea thief

You barely slept for a month working on a project your boss assigned to you. Later they share your work with their managers and passes it off as their own.

Countermeasures: It might be difficult to imagine, but your manager is a real person with real insecurities and passing an idea off as theirs when it’s not is a clear sign. Always leave a paper trail so that your contribution is well documented. Insecurity withers in the presence of honesty, so let your boss know that you expect to be recognised for your contribution.

#3 The superhero

You know the one – the caped crusader who neglects everything and everyone, and then swoops in to save the day. The marvel even creates disasters so she can save the world (or the office) from annihilation.

Countermeasures: There has been much talk lately about breaking down silos and fostering closer cooperation between departments. Strengthening relationships between colleagues is the best way to deal with a boss that might be trying to undermine everyone so that they can shine. There is always strength in numbers.

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