

# The Best Bosses Follow These 7 Rules

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There is huge pressure on you, the manager, to be a great boss, one who motivates and inspires people not only to stay in the company, but also to do their best every day. Employees place enormous value on their relationship with you. People place “a bad boss” as the No. 1 reason for leaving a job.

First, relax: know that great bosses are not born, they’re made. Most people end up in a management position because they did a good job in a subordinate role, not because they possessed some innate and undeniable leadership quality. If you practice your skills, and seek to follow these seven rules, you will be well on your way to being one of the best.

The book “How to Be a Great Boss” will help you acquire and use the seven hallmark qualities outlined below that all great bosses have.

## 1. Empower your people

Employees perform best when empowered and trusted to do well in their jobs. Think back to the times you felt most inspired to do your best. Chances are it was when you were trusted with real responsibility. To be set up for success, your people will need more than just a project handed to them. Make sure they can positively answer all the following questions. If not, you have more work to do.

## 2. Provide growth opportunities

Provide the kinds of opportunities that will really grow the talent on your team. Training is one thing — and often necessary — but growth is more than just learning how to do new tasks. Ask yourself how your employees can really grow their potential — should you challenge to provide creative solutions? Offer coaching? Encourage them to take the lead? Great bosses know how to develop talent, in addition to skill.

## 3. Train through feedback

Workplace surveys show time and again that what employees crave is continuous feedback. As a manager, you know that it’s easy to put off giving constructive criticism, but feedback is really only effective in the moment. Always follow the rule: praise in public, critique in private.

## 4. Make the tough choices

Sometimes, the job of a great boss means more than just managing. Sometimes, it means letting someone go. Low-performance employees drag down the productivity of the company and undermine the morale of those around them. Hopefully, you can often turn a situation around before it comes to firing, but if, in the end, you have to let someone go, be empathetic, and treat the person firmly but kindly. Keep it brief but respectful, and know that however hard the choice is, you’re doing the right thing for your team and your company.

## 5. Give thanks

Great bosses make gratitude a habit. Often, it’s easy to get wrapped up in the work and forget the simple act of saying “thank you” for a nagging problem solved, a point well communicated, or a job well done. Don’t forget to make it public when appropriate (praise in public, critique in private) and make it specific. Thanks for a task done

well is far more meaningful than a generic thanks for hard work. Make sure to brag about your team farther up the chain, too.

## 6. Create a positive workplace

Work doesn't have to be a grind. The best workplaces do everything they can to make coming to work a positive, uplifting experience. Make yourself available and really try to engage with your employees — the simple question “How can I make your job easier?” is a powerful way to start a great conversation. Let them know you've got their back when they need your help or advice.

## 7. Show your people the future

Your job is to show your people the world. We each tend to view corporate decisions through the lens of how they will affect us and our jobs. As a manager, you likely have a larger view of the big picture. Some info will be confidential or sensitive, of course, but whenever appropriate be sure to bring that vision to your employees and help them to understand.

No one is born a naturally great manager; with dedication, you can make these skills an innate part of the way you interact with others. What habits have you already brought into your daily life? What skills do you find the hardest to practice?