

Kind bosses are better managers

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Thoughtful and compassionate managers are more effective and help to create engaged employees.

A good manager needs soft skills training and the necessary people skills to help lead a team from diverse backgrounds effectively and efficiently.

According to Jenny Boxall, convenor of The New Manager, an Executive Education programme at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB), managers who empathise and show compassion towards staff are crucial to building a successful organisation.

And research from Stanford University, recently published in the *Harvard Business Review*, supports this. The study indicates that a "softer" management style results in healthier and happier employees, lowering the heart rate, blood pressure and strengthening the immune system.



Jenny Boxall

Boxall says: "Many CEOs and company owners don't realise that their managers may be the most important cog in the machinery of success because of the role they play in motivating and demotivating the rest of the team."

She says management is a professional competency that requires a unique skill set, many of them soft skills, in order to manage effectively and, often, first-time managers still need to acquire these skills.

"There are very few companies, municipalities, businesses or organisations that can afford to have an unskilled manager at the helm," Boxall says.

Boxall, who has extensive experience in the management development field says, often managers are promoted to management positions according to performance strength with very little management training.

"First-time managers are often promoted with little or no training in managing and find themselves overwhelmed by the work at hand," she says.

According to Boxall, The New Manager programme will help managers better understand how to work together and to be more efficient and effective. She says some of the key elements participants will focus on are: lack of confidence in a manager's own abilities, lack of trust in a team, and the inability to motivate.

Participants are also encouraged to share and interact with each other, build networks and explore various ways to deal with typical work situations.

"(Managers) need to be masters of communication. An insecure manager is a bad manager, unable to delegate properly, control and motivate his team," Boxall says.

And the ability to manage a team is considered important to any organisation, and can have serious consequences on productivity. A recent poll, conducted by Gallup indicated that poorly-managed work groups are about 50% less productive and 44% less profitable than well-managed groups.

"(During the programme) we also focus on how to delegate, how to let go and get others to do the work that managers previously had to do themselves," Boxall says.

Kumeshnee West, acting director of Executive Education at the UCT GSB says South Africa and Africa lack proper skilled managers.

"We want to give people the tools to become better managers. South Africa and the continent desperately need better managers in the private and public sector," she says.

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