



Module Twenty: How Do You Manage?

So far we have been discussing lead management as it relates to current or past managers you have experienced. However in this Lesson, I'd like you to begin thinking about how you are as a manager. In your assessment, I'd like you to consider two questions. First, what kind of a manager do you think you are? And second, what kind of manager does your staff/employees think you are? Sometimes these will be a match and sometimes your perceptions and the perceptions of those who work for you will be discrepant. If you really don't know what your workers' opinions of your management skills are, then you may want to ask.

Your Need Strength Profile

Remember in Lesson 4, you completed your own Need Strength Profile. In my experience, your higher need strengths will determine which side of the Lead Management continuum you will naturally lean toward.

If your high needs are power or survival, then you will be more likely to naturally be a boss manager. The power people will feel the need to control and micromanage their employees. They believe that if they don't watch people, they will naturally be lazy. Without their vigilance and control, workers would be aimless.

High survival people are most concerned with dotting i's and crossing t's. They are concerned about getting things right and avoiding negative consequences. This can cause a survival boss to be hard on his or her employees.

If your high needs are freedom, fun, and/or love & belonging, then you would more naturally lean in the direction of the Laze-Faire Manager. High freedom managers value their own freedom and in indulging that need, they often offer freedom to their workers. This way the managers have freedom from closely supervising their employees.

High love & belonging people just want everyone to get along. They want to be liked by their employees and to avoid conflict. This profile tends to lean a person toward the Laze-Faire type of management.

Similarly, if fun is your highest need, then your focus would be more on the people and less on the output of the product or service. You would be most concerned with having a good time, and if the work gets done, that is secondary.

Knowing your need-strengths is not the whole story though. It only gives you clues as to which side of the management equation you might naturally fall. The rest is up to you. Once you know you are more of a Boss Manager and you'd like to be more of a Lead Manager, then you would work on developing your relationship skills with your employees. You would work at getting to know each one individually and understanding what they need from you, each other, and the job. Then you would work on helping them get to know each other and to function better as a team. Your goal would be to focus on the environment and the conditions you create for employees to get their needs met within the context of their work.

If, however, your need-strengths cause you to be more Laze-Faire in your management style, then you know you need to focus more on the quality, and perhaps quantity, of the goods and services that are being produced. You must pay attention to the bottom line, increased quality and meeting goals.

If you are serious about moving your natural style of management more toward a Lead Management style, then coaching can be a great help to you. Coaching provides you with the right balance of support and accountability to help you develop the new habits of an effective Lead Manager.

Lead Managing in a Boss-Managed System

It never fails. Whenever I teach middle management about Lead Managing, they always want to know if I'll also be teaching their bosses the concepts. Sometimes the answer is yes, and other times, no. But whatever the answer, it's irrelevant.

Why? Because if you want to be a Lead Manager, you want to be a Lead Manager in all types of environments, not just the ones that make it easy. Of course, the best-case scenario is that everyone in your company uses Lead Management principles and all are on the same page. When this happens, it's truly utopian.

However, this isn't always the case. At times, you will be managed by either a Laze-Faire or a Boss Manager. And then, you will have to ask yourself the question, "What type of manager do I want to be in this situation?"

You will do well to remember the only person whose behavior you can control is your own. Spending a lot of time frustrating over the fact that your boss isn't the manager you want him or her to be will only result in greater frustration. You won't be able to magically turn your boss into a Lead Manager.

The only thing you will be able to do is to decide what behaviors you want to engage in. Just because your manager bosses you, do you want to boss your people? Or because your manager is lackadaisical, does that mean you should be Laze-Faire with yours?

The way you are being managed is inconsequential. The relevant issue is the type of managing you do is completely up to you. Your manager may act like a Boss with you but that does not

mean you have to do the same. Your manager may take a totally hands-off approach with you, but you can still turn around and be a Lead Manager with your people.

I do recognize there may be some instances when your Boss Manager insists you carry out some orders in a particular Boss Management way. Does this mean you have no choice in the matter? There is always a choice. Do you remember when we talked in lesson 14 about the three options of change it, accept it or leave it? It can also apply to this situation.

When you are told to do things in a Boss Management way, you can change it but you may want to consider the finesse with which you execute that option. The way I would recommend is some version of this: "Mr. Boss, I definitely understand what you are asking us to do and I want to be sure to accomplish that goal. I was wondering if possibly I could present it in a slightly different way? Knowing the people I have, they tend to respond in a contradictory way when approached strongly and I want to be sure I get maximum compliance on this request from you." Of course, you can say it in your own way. You are not criticizing your boss for handling things his way and you aren't telling him you and your people won't produce the deliverable. You are simply saying with your knowledge of your people, there is another way to increase cooperation that has worked well for you in the past.

Of course, there other ways to "change it." If there is any possibility for misinterpretation, then you can do it your way and claim to your boss that you didn't realize he or she wanted it handled differently. Another option is to just do it your way and hope your boss never finds out. If you consider either of these two options, you need to also consider the potential consequences of each action and whether or not you are willing to pay the price. You will also measure the benefit against your Quality World picture of yourself. If total honesty is a strong value, then you may not be willing to consider these options.

Another possibility is to simply accept that you have a Boss Manager and you can in turn, treat your employees the same way. This will likely take its toll on you, however, because you are not being the manager you really want to be.

The final option is to leave. You can find another job.

There are several options and you need to decide for yourself the best course of action. Keep in mind you can't make anyone do something they don't want to do, nor can anyone force you to do something you don't want to do. However, when you resist, you must consider all the consequences and decide if you are willing to pay the ultimate price.

Lead Managing Your Boss

Another thing I want you to consider is how to get what you want from your boss regardless of his or her style. I don't have a magic pill or formula to guarantee this will happen every time but I definitely have a system for increasing your odds of getting what you want.

Part of what you need to do is accurately assess your manager's need strength profile. If you are in conflict with each other, your natural inclination is to assess your boss as having a high power

need. I'm not saying this isn't true, but I'd like you to consider what would be his or her highest need if it wasn't power. The reason I ask you to do this is because it takes your boss' behavior out of the personal realm. If you think your boss has a high need for power, then every time something happens you don't like, you will believe your boss is just trying to make your life miserable. I'd like you to consider alternative explanations.

Once you believe you are clear what your boss's highest need strengths are, then your job becomes figuring out how to help your boss meet those needs within the context of your relationship.

If you think your boss has a high need for survival, then you will want to speak the language of safety. Whenever you ask permission to do something, you will want to make sure your presentation covers any issues of risk.

If your boss's highest need is love & belonging, you may want to make it your goal to find something you can like about him or her. Make an effort to get to know your boss better. Ask your boss to lunch or inquire about things you know are important to him or her. Empathize with their feelings.

If you think your boss's highest need is freedom, then you want to be sure you are not the one attempting to impinge upon that freedom. Do your best with your work so your boss does not have to spend extra time correcting or instructing you.

If fun is your boss's highest need, then you may want to first assess what type of fun he or she enjoys. Whatever it is, you may want to attempt to engage in fun activities with your boss provided it is not too much of a stretch for you. Do not attempt a fun activity with your boss if it is going to be painful for you. This will not accomplish your goal.

And finally, if after reassessing, you still believe your boss's highest need is power, then you want to feed that power need. Do not openly challenge your boss. Always defer to his or her best judgment but speak your mind about what you have found useful with your particular group. You always want to mention things you know your boss is good at and that you appreciate. You want to show due respect. If your boss doesn't see you as a threat, then he or she will no longer feel the need to power over you.

Helping your boss get his or her highest needs met within the context of your relationship will help you greatly increase the odds you will get what you want. Give it a try.

Conclusion:

Your assignment this week is to complete worksheet and write a narrative about the type of manager you want to be. You will write out what it looks like, sounds like and feels like when you are being that person. You will take inventory of what you are already doing that's in line with your picture, as well as the things you may be doing that doesn't match up. Together we will make a plan for the changes, if any, you want to make so you can become more of the leader you want to be.