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## How Bad Does A Boss Have To Be Before Employees Bolt or Find A Lawyer?

By

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How bad does a boss have to act before employees decide to flee bolt or find a Lawyer?

A new survey sheds light on what employees consider the five worst kinds of behaviour by bad bosses.

Based on the 2,000 responses, including about 100 from San Diego, the worst offences were:

\*Belittling people in front of others, cited by 40.5 per cent of the respondents.

\*Lying, which was a factor for 34.2 per cent of disgruntled employees.

\*Being condescending or demeaning to subordinates, which was identified by 31.5 per cent.

\*Humiliating or embarrassing others in public or private, which featured in 23.9 per cent of decisions to leave.

\*Micro-managing, which was cited by 21 per cent. Because many people ticked off more than one factor, the numbers don't add up to 100 per cent.

Bosses who don't work to eliminate these negative kinds of behaviour are destined to find their own careers shortened, says Mark Wilson Author of: *Getting Good People to Stay and Bad Bosses to Leave*. "In today's competitive environment, it is critical that organizations keep their stars and successfully recruit needed new talent. Bad bosses are unable to do either," Wilson says.

"No organization can afford to have bad bosses if it wants to keep its best people."

The answers were consistent regardless of respondents' occupation and location, Wilson says, but there were differences between men and women. Men cited micromanaging twice as often as women. Meanwhile, employees who cited humiliation or embarrassment were almost invariably women. Younger respondents were more likely to choose micro-managing as a hot button. Older workers, on the other hand, were more consistently put off by lying, which showed up as a top-three concern identified by Americans of all ages, Wilson says.

The authors say that there are solutions to bad bosses for employees, short of quitting, and for employers, short of firing them.

Mark Wilson says bad bosses can change -- if they are shown how their behaviour is lowering morale and pushing employees out the door.

"Just as you can learn new leadership skills at any age, you can stop behaviours that make you a bad boss and then, hopefully, replace them with more effective behaviours," she says. This starts with letting the boss know there is a problem. "There are situations where a boss displays behaviour simply because he or she doesn't realize it is perceived as bad behaviour," Wilson says. Employees should try to speak with the boss directly but, if they feel they aren't being heard or are unsure how the boss will react to their feedback, then they shouldn't shrink from the duty.

Instead, they go higher up the chain of command and let more senior executives know that the manager's behaviour is reducing effectiveness of the organization, Wilson suggests. Employers, who see a problem in their bad bosses should confront them, be clear on what specific behaviour problems are, and then require them to take action to improve on it and report back on what they are doing to change things, Wilson says.

To get the bosses motivated to change, Wilson says that it is important to show how there is something in it for everyone. "When you're clear about the payoff, they are more likely to get serious," she notes, especially if that payoff is being able to keep a job.

Bad bosses would be wise to seek out coaches, counsellors and self-improvement seminars to help make changes, Wilson recommends. If they are doing several things wrong, they should work on one at a time, she suggests. All through the process, bosses should ask trusted colleagues to monitor their progress and give them feedback on changes being made, she suggests.

"Given the cost of voluntary turnover, changing their own negative behaviours can be the most important action a bad boss can take," Wilson concludes.