

The background of the cover is a light yellow-green color with a subtle vertical gradient. Scattered across the cover are several stylized, light-colored leaf motifs, each consisting of a stem with two leaves pointing upwards and to the right. These motifs are positioned at various heights and horizontal locations, creating a sense of movement and growth.

DEFINING THE REALLY GREAT BOSS

M. David Dealy, Andrew R. Thomas

The logo features a stylized green leaf with a stem and two smaller leaves, positioned to the left of the text.

Greenwood
PUBLISHING GROUP

Defining the Really Great Boss

This page intentionally left blank

Defining the Really Great Boss

M. David Dealy with Andrew R. Thomas

Foreword by Bill Lindig

PRAEGER

Westport, Connecticut
London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dealy, M. David.

Defining the really great boss / M. David Dealy with Andrew R. Thomas ;
foreword by Bill Lindig.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-275-98037-5 (alk. paper)

1. Supervision of employees. 2. Supervisors. 3. Personnel management.
4. Leadership. I. Thomas, Andrew R. II. Title.

HF5549.12.D43 2004

658.3'02—dc22 2003062432

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 2004 by M. David Dealy and Andrew R. Thomas

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be
reproduced, by any process or technique, without the
express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2003062432

ISBN 0-275-98037-5

First published in 2004

Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.praeger.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the
Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National
Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To my father, who, as many of his employees said,
was a really great boss.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Foreword <i>by Bill Lindig</i>	ix
1 What This Book Is About	1
2 The Importance of Great Bosses in Today's World	9
3 It All Stems from Vision	21
4 Do the Right Thing for the Right Reasons	33
5 Set Your Expectations Higher Than Your Boss's Expectations for You	47
6 Never Ever Make the Same Mistake Twice	55
7 Go to Your Boss with Your Action Plan, Not Your Problem	65
8 Follow-Up	75
9 The Great Boss as Team Builder	81
10 The Great Boss as Change Agent	89
11 Putting It All Together	99
Appendix: Internet Resource Guide	105
Bibliography	109
Index	111

This page intentionally left blank

Foreword

The world is full of organizations that operate successfully from a business or financial perspective. Many fail, however, as employers. For much of the last hundred years, being a successful business was good enough. The organization survives, makes money, and grows enough to stay around. Today, however, factors are converging to directly challenge this paradigm. The inevitable forces of globalization, information technology, and “free agent” employees are compelling organizations of all sizes to continually evaluate what they are doing and how.

When it comes to leadership, far too many American organizations follow the same “cookie cutter” formulas for bringing them closer to working successfully with their people. The latest management recipes, human resources strategies, or conflict-resolution formulas are all standard, acceptable ways of conducting oneself in today’s marketplace. In each of these cases, however, great effort is put forth but the results come up short.

The quest for greatness for those charged with leading America’s businesses, nonprofits, and public institutions is seemingly an elusive one. Still, it doesn’t have to be that way. It is possible to be a great boss in today’s world. It isn’t easy, but it can be done.

This book is a big step forward in helping bosses from every kind of organization move beyond mediocrity and toward great-

ness. The principles set forth are applicable to almost every environment a boss will confront during his or her career. These are simple, yet powerful guidelines that bosses can use to set themselves apart and make the kind of impact today's organizations sorely need.

Bill Lindig
CEO, SYSCO

What This Book Is About

The leaders I met, whatever walk of life they were from, whatever institutions they were presiding over, always referred back to a something that happened to them that was personally difficult, even traumatic, something that made them feel that desperate sense of hitting bottom—as something they thought was almost a necessity. It's as if at that moment the iron entered their soul; that moment created the resilience that leaders need.

—Warren G. Bennis

Dr. Phil calls them “defining moments.” I had one on the morning of February 1, 1996. That day and the following year after will remain permanently seared into my mind, heart, and soul. I was in Springfield, Missouri, to perform a typical field operations audit. My pager went off just about the time I was walking into our office building. I called our operations center in the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg and spoke with Danny Reynolds, our general superintendent. The conversation started out bad and got worse.

“Dave, I hate to be the one to have to tell you this, but one of our trains just made an emergency call from Cajon Pass. They said the train was out of control going down a steep grade and they were going to jump. That's all we know. We have alerted the police and ambulance teams and they are responding. All we can do now is wait.”

This was unbelievable. How could this be happening? We had just had a runaway train accident at this same location a year earlier. One of our trains had lost its air brakes and had collided with a loaded coal train that was stopped ahead. The engineer and conductor had jumped seconds prior to impact at a speed we estimated was in excess of 35 miles per hour. The collision was horrific. The locomotives were engulfed in flames.

About 15 minutes had passed since I had first spoken with Danny. I called him back on the hot line, and I could sense a great degree of gravity in his voice. "We lost contact with the crew. We have received reports from the sheriff that there was a large explosion with a big fireball. It looks like the entire train left the track and is in a pile. Our crew members are missing."

I quickly chartered a jet and flew the three hours to Ontario Airport in Southern California. When I finally arrived at the scene, I learned that the engineer had been rescued from the burning locomotive by nearby ranchers. The bodies of the other two crew members had been discovered near the wreckage.

The entire site was closed to all but emergency response personnel. Just like the previous year, we had the interstate closed. The tracks run parallel to Interstate 15, which is the main route between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Interstate 40 breaks off east of there at Barstow. This forms one of the major connections between the huge population mass of the Southwest and the Midwest. Our accident had it shut down. We were on national news, and things were getting real tough. Moreover, I seemed to have all of state and federal agencies—including the National Transportation Safety Board, the Department of Transportation, and the California Public Utilities Commission—coming down on me trying to conclude what had happened.

Our engineer had been badly injured. We all wanted to talk to him, including the news media. To make matters worse, immediately after a closed-to-the-public NTSB briefing, a local politician, looking only to get his mug in front of the cameras, announced to the press that the engineer was at fault. His comments, although great fodder for the cameras, were disingenuous and simply not true.

The media feeding frenzy was insatiable. We had to move the engineer to three different hospitals and finally checked him in at a fourth under a false name. We were able to speak to him long