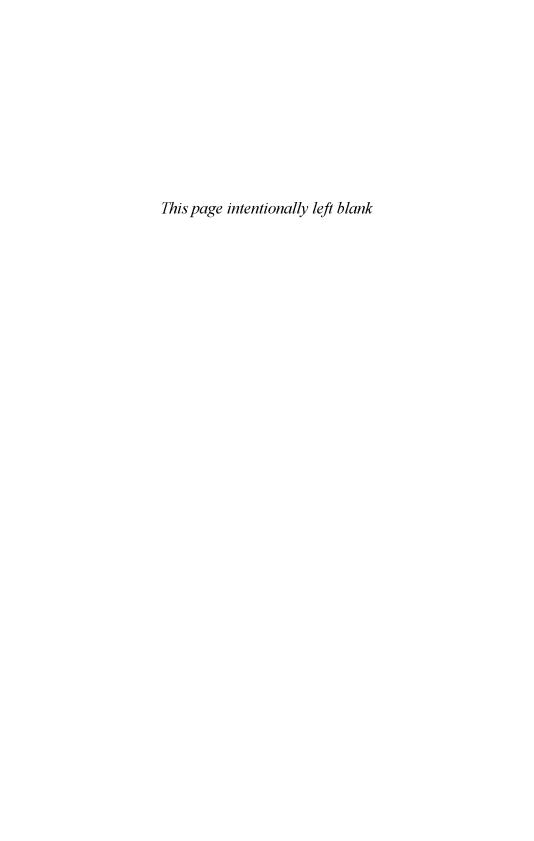
DEFINING THE REALLY GREAT BOSS

M. David Dealy, Andrew R. Thomas



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Foreword by Bill Lindig



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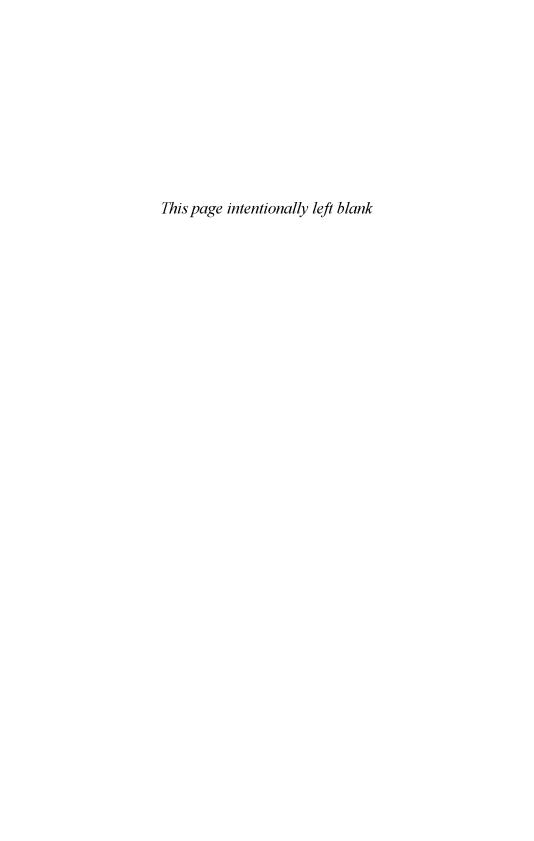
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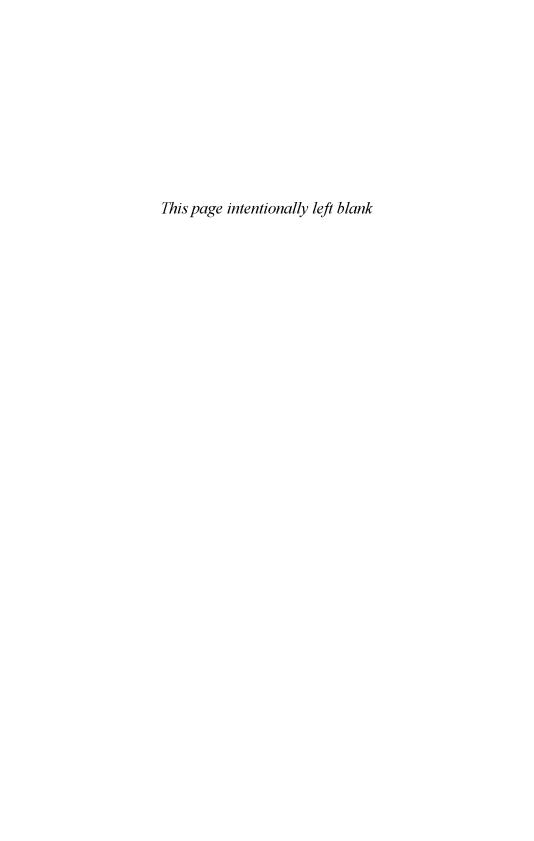
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To my father, who, as many of his employees said, was a really great boss.				
	To my father,	who, as many was a really gr	of his emplo eat boss.	yees said,



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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 greatx Foreword

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