

How To Deal With A Boss Who Wants To Hold You Down

Author: Lindah Mavengere . January 2020

So here you are in your dream job, something you have always wanted to do. Maybe it's not exactly your dream job but it is still ok, it is putting food on your table and you are content, what could go wrong? A difficult boss maybe! Yes, your boss is very difficult, you wish you lived in a perfect world and did not have to work a day in your life. Your boss does not provide you with opportunities for advancement, instead, keeps you in the same place. You get a jolt of reality and find that your solution of never having to work is unrealistic, and you have to come back to the real world with real life solutions. Now that you have snapped back to reality, how really do you deal with a boss who doesn't allow any options for progression? Below are some different real life scenarios which you could find yourself in, and how best to deal with them.

Entry level scenario

You are a recent graduate, you have just found a job. You are excited because not only have you escaped the unemployment pool which lies in wait for university graduates, but you have finally been accorded an opportunity in the real world, where you get to put most of what you have learnt into practice. At an entry level, it is common to do a lot of work that you're not sure of. Most of the early days you get the tasks that everyone else is too busy to do, filing and data entries etc. For a while you compliantly do this work, until a while becomes several months and you are left wondering why exactly you were hired, and why your boss is not giving you more challenging work that will help in enhancing your portfolio. You are left depressed because you feel as though you are not benefitting much from your job, and when the time for a promotion comes you are going to be left behind because you have not gained much work related experience to competently do the job. It does not matter that you feel depressed because in the real world, no one is going to care, you need to become proactive, and come up with solutions on how you can deal with the predicament.

Solution: Establish a support system for your cause

Now that you have realised the magnitude of your problem, it is time to find a solution and a way out of your problem. The next step would be to establish strategic relationships within your office. The emphasis here is on strategic, that is, relationships with people who can do the most for you. These are people who may have the ear of your supervisor's boss. It is therefore important to be aware of all the shadow organisations within your organisation, you may be surprised to find out who would be able to pull you out from under the rock that will be your extinction. This newly found network may help your case when you finally find your voice and do raise your concerns. This network will not be established overnight however, you need to give your workmates a reason to actually vouch for you when the time comes. To be in good graces with your fellow workmates, show them how useful you are, by volunteering to assist in projects and showing yourself to be an asset. This way when they do speak to your work ethic, they will be speaking from an informed point of view.

When your boss holds you down because you are too good

Superior performance can be both good and bad in an organisation. On the bright, it may be the ladder that propels you upwards in your career path. Unfortunately for others, being good at their job is the reason why they still find themselves in the same places. An efficiently performing employee may be a source of jealousy from the immediate supervisor, as they may be afraid of their shortcomings being exposed. In some cases, some supervisors may find it more convenient to keep you in the same place, as you have shown yourself capable of handling the workload, in other words, making life a lot more easier for them considering they do not have to hire or train new people. For this reason, you may find yourself being passed up when it comes to promotions because your supervisor may never recommend you, in order to keep you in the same place.

Solution: Be in control of your own career

The problem with a boss holding back an employee because they are too good is that once the employee realises the reason why they are not progressing, they may end up adopting a negative attitude towards their job, and underperforming so that they do not seem as superior. However this is not the best solution, as you may still find yourself in the same place, worse still, people may think you are not actually good at your job, which will be a misconception. So how do you handle this situation? Confront your boss. The normal connotations of a confrontation would be, a serious emotional conversation. However this does not have to be the case. Have a normal civilised conversation with your supervisor and ask why you have not been promoted to the position you think you deserve. This is helpful because instead of seeing things only from your perspective, you get the perspective of your boss. You get to learn of your shortcomings and ways in which you can work to improve them. This may be frustrating as you may think you are at a point in your career where everything about you is perfect however it may also be to your advantage because once you your boss will be left with no more excuses to keep you in the same place.

When you find yourself in the same position for a long time

So you have been with the organisation for the longest time, you could consecutively win the long service award uncontested each year. However you have also been in the same position for years, you're not following a clearly defined career progression path. This can be frustrating as you may feel as though you are not being appreciated much in the organisation, especially if you have worked hard, fulfilled your responsibilities and met all your departmental targets. So how then do you go about getting that promotion you have worked so hard for?

Solution: Ask for that promotion!

According to an Accenture survey of 3 400 executives in 2011, the best way is to ask for it. In the survey they found that only 37% had asked for a raise, promotion, or job change, but of those who asked, 65% said it helped. In fact, 59% of people who asked for a promotion got one. So if you feel your boss has not shown an appreciation of your contributions, show them how much you have contributed, with evidence based, factual information. If your boss still fails to see your worth and offer you a promotion,

it may well be time to leave the organisation.

Move up or move out

The harsh reality is, not everyone may see things from your point of view. Not everyone may see how much of a valuable asset you are to the organisation. The decision may be hard to make, but the best thing may be to move out of the organisation. If the job is not according you the opportunity to further your career development, then look for one that will. The best way to help your career would be to be honest with yourself and accept that your career is not where it is supposed to be.

References

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Lindah Mavengere is a Business Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a business management and human resources consulting firm.

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindah-mavengere-552b32b2/>

Phone: +263 242 481946-48/481950

Mobile: +263 717 988 319

Email: lindah@ipccconsultants.com

Main Website: www.ipccconsultants.com

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