

# How to be a better boss

Tips from “Boss Class”, our new podcast



image: paul blow  
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Workplaces have changed dramatically over the past four years, let alone the past 40. Teams have become more dispersed, thanks to remote work, as well as more diverse. Technology has brought with it great benefits but also constant interruptions, from endless Zoom calls to the ping of another message on Slack. After globalisation spread customers and suppliers around the world, geopolitical tension has made distant relationships seem like a new source of risk.

在过去的四年中，工作场所发生了巨大的变化，更不用说过去的 40 年了。由于远程办公，团队变得更加分散，也更加多样化。科技带来了巨大的好处，但也带来了频繁的干扰，从

无休止的 Zoom 会议到 Slack 上另一个消息的提示声。在全球化将客户和供应商分散到世界各地之后，地缘政治紧张局势使得远距离关系似乎成为一种新的风险来源。

With each of these <sup>转移、改变</sup> shifts, the job of the manager—the person tasked with getting workers with <sup>迥然不同的，多元的</sup> disparate interests to achieve a common goal—has become harder still. There was a time when managers could <sup>对付、处理</sup> cope simply by being technical experts. Now they say they are <sup>juggle：尽力应付</sup> juggling more tasks and have more activities to <sup>使...协调</sup> co-ordinate. Many report feeling <sup>超负荷</sup> burnt-out, overloaded and confused.

随着这些变化的发生，负责让具有不同利益的工作者实现共同目标的管理者们的工作变得更加困难。以前管理者可以通过成为技术专家来应对工作。现在，他们表示他们需要同时处理更多任务，有更多活动需要去协调。许多人反馈称感到精疲力尽、超负荷工作和充满困惑。

Bosses are rarely the objects of sympathy. In <sup>小说，虚构的事</sup> fiction, they are <sup>描绘、描写</sup> portrayed as cold-hearted (think Ebenezer Scrooge) or <sup>狡猾的</sup> weaselly (“If at first you don’t succeed, remove all evidence you ever tried,” advises David Brent in “The Office”). Yet in real life everyone suffers when management is bad and benefits when it is good. Far more effort is needed to make it better.

老板们很少会成为人们同情的对象。在小说中，他们被描绘成冷酷无情的（想想埃比尼泽·斯克鲁奇）或者狡猾的（“如果一开始没有成功，那就把所有你尝试过的证据都删除掉”，大卫·布伦特在《办公室》中建议）。然而，在现实生活中，当管理不当时，每个人都会感到痛苦；而当管理良好时，每个人都会受益。要使管理变得更好需要付出更多的努力。

Start with how managers affect workers. Roughly a fifth of <sup>公司的、法人的</sup> corporate employees in America are managers, and almost everyone has one. In a survey in ten rich countries, 69% of workers said their boss influenced their <sup>心理健康</sup> mental health as much

as their <sup>配偶</sup> spouse did. Half of Americans who have left a job said they did so because of a bad manager, as did nearly a third of British job-leavers.

让我们从管理者如何影响员工开始。在美国的企业员工中，大约五分之一是管理者，几乎每个人都有一个上级。在一个包括十个富裕国家的调查中，69%的受访员工表示，他们的上司对他们的心理健康的影响有着与配偶相似的作用。一半的美国人离职时表示，他们之所以离职是因为有一个糟糕的上司，英国的离职者中也有将近三分之一是因为上司不好。

Better management does not just mean happier staff. It means better-performing companies, too. Research based on a long-running survey of management techniques across countries has found that well-managed firms tend to be more productive. They also export more and spend more on research and development. Such findings are not <sup>仅仅、只不过</sup> mere correlation: a <sup>/ˈrændəmaɪzd/ 随机化的</sup> randomised controlled trial in India, for instance, found that increases in management quality caused productivity to rise. And the effect is large. Research by Nicholas Bloom of Stanford University and others concluded that differences in management practices <sup>解释、说明</sup> account for a third of the gap in economy-wide productivity between America and the rest of the world.

更好的管理不仅意味着员工更快乐，也意味着企业绩效更好。基于对各国管理技术的长期调查的研究发现，管理良好的公司往往更具生产力。它们出口更多产品，并在研发上投入更多资金。这样的发现不仅仅是相关性：例如，在印度进行的一项随机对照试验发现，管理质量的提高导致生产力的增长。而且这种效果是显著的。斯坦福大学的尼古拉斯·布鲁姆等人的研究得出结论，管理实践差异解释了美国和世界其他地区的整体经济生产率上的三分之一差距。

The prize for better management, then, is big. But how to obtain it? Read enough management books and you might conclude that managers need <sup>全面的</sup> full-on

personality transplants, becoming either Machiavelli's prince or a Marvel superhero. Study successful managers, though, and the lessons are more **prosaic**. They are also far more useful—as “**Boss Class**”, our new **podcast**, discovers. Over seven episodes starting this week it will take a **wry** but practical look at problems facing the modern manager, from meeting **etiquette** to hiring strategy, while bringing together tips from experts and **practitioners** alike.

因此，更好的管理是非常有价值的。但是如何获得它呢？阅读足够多的管理书籍，你可能会得出结论，管理者需要进行全面的个性改造，要么成为马基雅维利的王子，要么成为漫威超级英雄。然而，研究成功的管理者，我们可以得出更为平凡的经验教训。这些惊讶教训也更加实用，正如我们的新播客《Boss Class》所发现的。从本周开始的七集节目中，它将幽默但务实地探讨现代管理者面临的问题，从会议礼仪到招聘策略，同时汇集了专家和实践者的建议。

This approach **yields** several lessons. One is to be explicit about a firm's processes. Managers should make clear the purpose of a team, what a meeting should achieve and who will take a decision. Meeting **agendas** at gsk, a British drugs firm, clearly say whether an item is for **awareness**, to gather participants' input or intended to **yield a decision**. Moderna, another drugmaker, lists 12 “mindsets” that define its corporate culture and seeks job applicants with at least some of them. Such clarity means that everyone knows what they are doing, and why.

这种方法能够提供几个启示。其中一个明确公司的流程。管理者应该明确团队的目标，会议应该实现什么，以及谁将做出决策。英国制药公司 GSK 的会议议程清楚地说明了每一项议题是用于了解、收集参与者的意见还是意在做出决策。另一家制药公司 Moderna 列出了 12 个定义其企业文化的“心态”，并寻找至少具备其中一些心态的求职者。这种明确意味着每个人都知道自己在做什么，以及为什么在做。

Yet management isn't all about <sup>积累</sup> accumulating tasks, meetings or processes. A second lesson is that managers can add value by <sup>删减</sup> subtracting. <sup>/ˈsperɪŋ/把...让给</sup> Sparing workers from <sup>无效会议</sup> pointless meetings, emails and projects frees them to concentrate on the work that <sup>养肥</sup> fattens the bottom line. At the start of the year Shopify, an e-commerce firm, deleted 12,000 recurring meetings from its employees' calendars. The useful ones were eventually added back. But the firm says that meetings are down by 14% since the mass deletion. Productivity has gone up by a similar amount.

然而，管理并不仅仅是堆积任务、会议或流程。第二个启示是，通过精简工作来增加效益。使员工不再参加无意义的会议、邮件和项目，使他们能够集中精力处理能够带来利润的工作。在年初，电子商务公司 Shopify 从员工的日历中删除了 12,000 个重复的会议。那些有用的会议最终会被添加回去。但该公司表示，自从进行了这次大规模删除，会议数量减少了 14%。生产力也得到了同样程度的提高。

Good management is a skill. There are too many <sup>偶然的</sup> accidental managers, promoted because they were good at what they did, rather than because they were <sup>适合</sup> suited to what lay ahead. Fully 82% of managers told a survey in Britain that they had no proper management skills or training. <sup>假如</sup> Providing that training is one way for companies to fill the gap.

良好的管理是一项技能。有太多的被偶然提升为管理者的人，他们因为在自己的工作中表现出色被提拔，而不是因为他们适合未来的工作。在英国的一项调查中，82%的管理者表示他们没有得到适当的管理技能或培训。为员工提供这样的培训是填补这一差距的一种方式。

Another is to establish two-track promotion systems that offer a way to rise through the ranks without going into management, as Google and Shopify do already. That gives people who either can't or don't want to manage a way to

通过...手段, 凭借...力量

progress. Management should not be something people fall into simply by dint of <sup>/ˌsɪnˈjɔːrəti/ 年长、职位高</sup> seniority. The stakes are too high.

另一种方法是建立双轨晋升系统, 提供一种不需要进入管理层就能晋升的途径, 就像谷歌和 Shopify 已经做的那样。这样可以给那些不能或不想从事管理的人提供一种进步的方式。管理岗位不应该仅仅因为资历而被人们随意担任。风险太高了。

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