

How Bosses See Their Behavior toward Their Subordinates

<i>With “Weaker Performers” Bosses Tend to....</i>	<i>With “Stronger Performers” Bosses Tend To....</i>
Be more directive when discussing tasks and goals. Focus on <u>what</u> needs to be done, as well as <u>how</u> it should get done.	Discuss project objectives with limited focus on project implementation. Focus on <u>what and why</u> , with limited focus on how.
Set more targets, more <u>deadlines</u> . Establish clear action plans and check-points. Give limited decision-making autonomy overall.	Give subordinates more <u>freedom</u> to choose own course of action. Set check-points farther apart and invite them to “get in touch” if need be.
<u>Follow up</u> regularly to ensure things are on track. Pay close attention to unfavorable variances and get more systematically involved when subordinates run into difficulties.	Perform less obtrusive follow-up; make themselves available, as in “ <u>let me know if I can help.</u> ” Treat unfavorable variances, mistakes, or incorrect judgments as learning opportunities.
Focus discussions on operational issues; ask <u>precise questions</u> .	Engage in more <u>casual</u> and freewheeling conversations.
Limit open-ended contact and focus on tasks at hand. <u>Tell</u> more than ask.	Use subordinates as “sparring partners”. <u>Solicit their views</u> on strategy, execution, policy, and procedures. Follow up on their suggestions.
Impose their own views in case of disagreements. Make “ <u>strong suggestions</u> ” that more closely resemble recommendations.	Often <u>defer to their opinions</u> . Emphasize that suggestions are only that, meant to encourage them to try things their way.
Give them more <u>routine assignments</u> and projects.	Offer more <u>interesting or challenging</u> stretch assignments.
Be more <u>distant</u> physically and emotionally.	Be more comfortable with subordinates, resulting in <u>warmer</u> relationships.

Same Behavior, Different Tasks

<i>Observed behavior</i>	<i>“Underperformer”</i>	<i>“Model Employee”</i>
Seeking feedback	Sign of <u>weakness</u> , insecurity, or trying to prime boss’s memory	Sign of <u>learning</u> orientation (desire to improve)
Complimenting the boss	Flattery, <u>brownnosing</u>	Useful upward <u>feedback</u>
Helping a colleague/ listening to problems	<u>Manipulation</u> , coalition building	<u>Altruism</u>
Not complaining	<u>Conformity tactic</u>	Sense of <u>self-sacrifice</u> , understanding of the greater good
Working long hours	Value of input over output, inability to prioritize, <u>slow employee</u> , slow mind, trying to make others look bad	<u>Dedication</u> , owning the issue, taking responsibility
Volunteering for a difficult assignment	<u>Seeking visibility</u> , unaware of own limitations	Sense of <u>responsibility</u> , sense of obligation
Running errands for the boss	Sycophancy, <u>bootlicking</u>	<u>Respect</u> for boss’s time
Publicly thanking colleagues	False humility, <u>hypocrisy</u>	Selflessness, <u>team spirit</u>
Agreeing with the boss	<u>Weak</u> , useless, ineffectual	<u>Good judgment</u> , respect, effective follower