

ABHIJEET LELE



The end of autocratic bossing

Team dynamics change when the team manager is under pressure. And instead of autocratic bossing, a collaborative effort to bring cohesion and synergy with team members is the need of the hour!

“**P**eople don’t leave companies, they leave bad bosses” remains a quote which is well read but never understood in its totality by organizations. With our blind race for increasing productivity, stress has surely gone up for every job role. Expectations from a human by a human have also gone up not just in organizations but also in our personal lives. It is amazing to see how the dynamics of a team changes when the team manager is under pressure. In such a situation, the manager reveals his true nature subconsciously by becoming either an autocratic boss or a transformational leader depending upon his emotional capabilities. Under pressure, it takes a single negative interaction among a manager and his team members which can push the team’s performance southwards. Most of the managers do not understand the fact that they are dealing with humans who possess a dynamic emotional background. Instead, they maneuver team members on a whim. This egoistic dimension of manager leads to autocratic bossing and it is this propensity, which digs the grave of an organization.

Role of skills in globalized world

Globalization has instilled a faith in workforce that jobs are not harder to get if one is equipped with the relevant skills. This belief has strengthened the emotional power of employees and is the core reason why skilled people have stopped obeying an autocratic boss. They simply leave the organization because they always get the opportunities in the global market. Skilled people do not fear corporate monsters anymore. Imagine yourself in 1980’s working at Apple under the direct bossing of Steve Jobs. At that time, if you tried to contradict the ideas of Steve Jobs, you would not only miss your promotion but also lose your job. Though, Steve was a successful product thinker he left no stone unturned to boss on his subordinates. Those were the times when an employee had to accept whatever task was given to him irrespective of his contradictory views. But the times have changed now and “skilled employees” have stopped pleasing managers and bosses for appraisals and promotions. If you are still required to please the boss, then you are working in medieval organization which still considers employee as a laborer. It is no more the need of an employee to work rather it is equally the need of organization to get the work done.

Autocratic bossing rises where employees are not capable enough to find a job outside. Hence, the rise of autocratic bossing hints us towards the preliminary sign of dropping skill levels in an organization. At the end, managers must learn the fact that his team members are as much a human

It is no more the need of an employee to work rather it is equally the need of organization to get the work done



being as he is. An employee can leave his boss any time to find a job in this knowledge economy till he is skilled with contemporary requirements of industry.

Bossing on millennials will never work

If a manager thinks that he should exercise bossing on subordinates because he was trained same way in his career, then the manager is hugely mistaken. Generation gap has played a vital role in deciding how a team member should be treated. Threatening, bullying and harassing subordinates to get the work done do not work anymore. Substantial chunk of modern day workforce comprises millennials who are raised in better environments, are more susceptible to working in adverse environment and do not hesitate to oppose such environments. Moreover, it is a fact that millennials need to know the value associated with their work. Scientifically, it is proven fact that intelligent quotient (IQ) of people is improving generation by generation. This means that millennials have got higher command on intellect rather than their managers. Hence, the traditional way of doing things can be opposed anytime by younger people. At such instance, if autocratic boss emerges within a manager, then conflict is bound to happen among team which will directly influence quality and success of a project. Hence, manager should be humble enough to understand the emotions of an employee. They must work to bring coherence among organizational requirements and aspirations of employee.

Rise of team synergy

Over time, ideology of following leaders has gone down. Though people may follow many leaders on social networking platforms, they do not become their blind followers in real life. This change in society has increased the number of people who may draw insights from various leaders but develop individual capabilities to discern. Therefore, in a team with diversified culture, team members have got individual perspectives to identify and tackle problems. In such situation, if managers try to become autocratic by dictating the terms on how things should be done, then all team members suddenly integrate to oppose the bossing in every possible manner. Team synergy has risen to a new level where members come together in a jiffy to protest against bosses. Take the case of Ford Motor Company which was founded by Henry Ford in year 1903. In those times, contradictions to the thoughts or procedures designed by Henry Ford were considered as disloyalty to the firm. Still, Ford Motor Company flourished because laborers worked as machines with no intention for showing their intellectual capabilities. Imagine what will happen to modern day behemoth, Alphabet Inc. (earlier Google) if Larry Page starts dictating his own terms on employees. Instead, what we observe in Google is just opposite. Here, the leader provides a platform where individuals can share their intellectual thoughts and collaborate with people having similar thoughts to build world class products.



Substantial chunk of modern day workforce comprises millennials who are raised in better environment, are more susceptible to working in adverse environment and do not hesitate to oppose such environment

Collaborative nurturing as a better option

Managers can get things done only if their subordinates believe in doing those things. This demands giving equal footing to team members in decision making. No capable employee will give his best on a task which he never believed in. Even illusive pressure generated by autocratic bossing will not change the dynamics. Instead, what is required is collaborative nurturing of employees by their managers. Managers should understand that their own careers are shaped by success of the team which they lead and their responsibility is to ensure that aspirations of the team members are fulfilled along with the capability development of team members. A good organization will never promote a manager just on the basis of his capabilities to get things done. It will promote a manager to next position only if manager enables a person to fill his own post. That demands continuous caring and nurturing of each and every team member. It is like a job of venture capitalist, who believes investing in diverse projects with complete dedication, sharp focus and a belief that at least one project will taste success. ☺

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ABHIJEET LELE is Research Fellow in the area of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida.