

Here are 11 things that the best bosses believe

What makes a boss great? I've been thinking about that issue for a while and talking with teams and their leaders to gain more understanding. Then I read an article by Dr. Robert I. Sutton, professor of management science and engineering at Stanford University and the author of *The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't*.

I've combined the best of Sutton's ideas with my observations into a list of 11 key beliefs that the best bosses hold and the worst bosses reject, or more often, never consider.

The bottom line? All the technique and behavioral coaching in the world won't make a boss great if that boss doesn't also possess a certain mind-set.

Here's the list.

1. I have a flawed and incomplete understanding of what it feels like to work for me.
2. How I do things is as important as what I do.
3. My success — and that of my people — depends largely on being the master of obvious and mundane processes, not of magical, obscure or breakthrough ideas or methods.
4. Setting ambitious and well-defined goals for my people is important, but I need to focus on the small wins they achieve every day to assess their progress.
5. One of the most important and most difficult parts of my job is to strike the delicate balance between being too assertive and not being assertive enough.
6. My job is to serve as a human shield, to protect my people from external intrusions, distractions and idiocy of every stripe. That

idiocy also includes my own.

7. I strive to be confident enough to convince people that I am in charge, but humble enough to realize that I am often wrong.

8. One of the best tests of my leadership — and my organization — is the answer to, "What happens after people make a mistake?"

9. Innovation is crucial to every team and organization. My job is to encourage my people to generate and test all kinds of new ideas. But it is also my job to help them kill off the bad ideas — and many of the good ones too. Sometimes good objectives aren't aligned well with what we're trying to do. And sometimes there are just too many good ideas to be able to implement them well.

10. Because I wield power over others, I am at great risk of acting like an insensitive jerk and not realizing when I cross the line.

11. My job is to pay attention to, and continuously elevate, the culture of my team. I need to keep asking questions such as: Is our culture all about "me" or "we?" Do team members have each others' backs? Do my team members work collaboratively or as lone rangers? I regularly take time with my team to figure out what's working, what's not working and how to fix any problems.

If you're like most people I meet, you've had your share of bad bosses — and probably at least one good one. What were the attitudes the good ones held? And what workplace-transforming beliefs could your worst boss never embrace? Email me your thoughts at nicki@saleswise.ca.

If you want more information about each of the 11 key beliefs of great bosses, stay tuned. Over the coming months, I'll be writing about each one in more depth.



by **Nicki Weiss**
Certified Professional Sales Management Coach and Master Trainer

Nicki Weiss is an internationally recognized Certified Professional Sales and Leadership Coach, Master Trainer, thought leader, speaker and facilitator. Since 1992, she has trained and coached more than 20,000 business leaders, sales teams and reps. Nicki has a particular passion for working with manufacturers, distributors and rep firms in the electronics industry.

Nicki is ERA's sales consultant, the brainchild and facilitator of ERA's free teleforum programs and the founder of the SalesWise Academy. Every day, leaders wake up knowing they, their technical reps and field sales engineers need to sharpen their focus and their skills. But they don't have the tools, resources or patience to continually help enhance their strategy, communication and relationship building skills. The SalesWise Academy fills that void and delivers those skill-building lessons. To learn more, go to saleswise.ca or call 416-778-4145