

Book Review for 03/09/03 by Hollye Moss

Title: "The Haves and the Have Nots: The Abuse of Power and Privilege in the Workplace...And How to Control It"

Author: Harvey A. Hornstein

Publisher: Financial Times Prentice Hall

Copyright: 2003

Length: 177 pages

Price: \$24.00

Reading time: 4 hours

Reading rating: 8 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 3 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Subject Areas: leadership, organizational behavior, supervision of employees

Have you ever wondered about the differences between them and us in the workplace? In his book "The Haves and the Have Nots," author Harvey Hornstein examines the dynamics within the boss-employee relationships, revealing the causes of bosses' alienation of employees, and suggesting remedies which can lead to an engaged workforce that provides a competitive advantage for their company.

Recently, some top executives of large companies have made headlines for their extravagant perks. What leads these executives to think they are worth so much? Are they so different from other people within their own organizations? Despite the often-cited steps taken toward teamwork and inclusiveness, traditional organizational arrangements still lend themselves to us-they relationships and to what Hornstein refers to as we-boosting by bosses. Bosses see themselves as special or deserving of the extras that go with their jobs, only giving lip service to the inclusion-inducing management practices.

The three R's of life at work are identified and used throughout the book: Rewards, Respect, and Recognition. It is the abuse of these three R's that has led to employees' perceptions of bosses as someone other than one of us. First, the rewards for bosses are often out of line with the rewards of the employees. In lean years, pay increases for employees may be low or nonexistent while bosses receive large increases. Bosses are given-by other bosses-lucrative stock options, golden parachutes, or huge pension fund contributions during their last year(s) with an organization. Frequently these benefits are not tied to company performance.

Bosses further isolate themselves from their employees by failing to show respect (the second R) for their employees. If the messages that employees receive from bosses contain exclusionary undertones, the employees do not identify with the bosses. Any emotional attachment the employees have for the organization is destroyed. Finally, bosses often fail to provide recognition (the third R) of the work done by employees. By discounting employee suggestions, bosses are failing to recognize the abilities and experiences of the workers.

Hornstein presents numerous examples and practical solutions. In order to bridge the gap between the haves and the have nots, between us and them, a change in the messages of bosses is required. Successful managers have addressed the three R's of an organization. Employees are rewarded for their work. Profit sharing or gain sharing is taken all the way down into an organization. The pay for all employees is directly linked to measurable company performance. Employees are shown respect as people, not just as workers. Employees are recognized for their contributions to the company; their opinions are sought and valued.

While the lessons presented in this book are not new, Dr. Hornstein provides a map for bosses seeking to change their behavior. He makes clear the relationship between the bosses' actions and the messages received by employees. Bosses can foster a sense of inclusiveness and community that leads to successful organizations by creating an environment where employees are treated with the fairness and civility they deserve, and with proper recognition of their contributions and abilities.

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