

The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations

Behaviors of Smart Supervisors:

Thoughts, Reflections, Insights, and Recommendations
for Those in Supervisory, Managerial, and Executive Roles



Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz

The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations

Praise for *The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations*

“For leaders grappling with the tangible realities of integrating Artificial Intelligence and the principles of NeuroLeadership into their human resource strategies, this book offers a refreshingly practical roadmap. Drawing upon an impressive 40 years of hands-on experience, Dr. Mouriño bypasses abstract theoretical discussions to deliver concrete, actionable insights directly applicable to today’s dynamic organizational and workforce challenges. You’ll gain a clear and implementable understanding of crucial trends, the evolving expectations of your workforce, and proven strategies for fostering a synergistic relationship between AI-driven tools and indispensable human capabilities. Furthermore, the exploration of NeuroLeadership demystifies the science behind effective management, offering practical techniques to enhance team engagement, communication, and overall performance. This isn’t just about understanding the future; it’s about actively shaping it with practical, experience-backed guidance.

What truly sets this book apart is its commitment to immediate application and tangible growth. Beyond insightful analysis, it provides valuable, ready-to-use tools, most notably the included questionnaires designed for both individual and organizational assessment. These resources empower you to objectively evaluate your current leadership effectiveness and the “human intelligence” quotient of your workplace, pinpointing specific areas for development and improvement. If you’re a forward-thinking leader determined to navigate the complexities of the AI-driven future with a grounded, human-centered approach and are seeking practical, experience-based solutions rather than just theoretical frameworks, this book will be an invaluable and immediately useful addition to your leadership toolkit.”

—David L. Gonzales, President and CEO of David L. Gonzales & Associates. and Board of Advisors and Senior Fellow of the Human Capital Center

“Leaders must lead from a humanistic approach in today’s world of constant chaos and disruption. Previous leadership books no longer address the challenges of today’s business environment. Leaders must learn to be agile, deal with uncertainty, and encourage innovation while successfully creating an engaged workforce. This book provides valuable insight for leaders at all levels to develop a human-centric approach to leadership.”

—Dr. Nancy Zentis, CEO and Founder of the Institute of Organization Development

“Aspiring, upcoming, and seasoned leaders will find in Dr. Mouriño’s B.o.S.S. an evidence-filled rationale for leading today’s and tomorrow’s workforce. This book provides helpful guidance, tips, and resources for molding influential approaches to nurturing a high-performance environment. B.o.S.S. reveals a practical guide to avoid dysfunctional behaviors while delineating attitudes and actions to maximize human intelligence and potential.”

—*Luis A. Marrero, MA, RODP, MMPP,*
Boston Institute for Meaningful Purpose, USA

“This book is more than just a guide—it’s a mirror for anyone in a leadership role or aspiring to be one. It invites deep reflection on not just how you lead but why. What sets this book apart is its blunt honesty, practical wisdom, and clear insights. It does not romanticize leadership but shows it is earned, not granted. The author challenges the idea that a title alone makes someone competent.

The unique blend of personal stories, empirical research, and real-world observations makes the book relatable and credible. It also addresses why many young professionals shy away from managerial roles today. In a world increasingly dominated by Artificial Intelligence, it is easy to be seduced by efficiency and output. However, as the author rightly reminds us, AI cannot replace the human competencies that the workforce craves: empathy, vulnerability, presence, and authenticity.

As an academic leader, I find this book valuable for leadership development programs, executive education, and graduate-level management courses. I commend the author for offering such an insightful and challenging resource, urging us to rethink leadership as a position of power and a responsibility to guide, inspire, and impact other human beings.”

—*Nubia Granja, PhD, Dean of Academic Affairs,*
Keiser University, Latin America Campus, USA

“In *The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations*, Edwin Mouriño provides concrete, powerful, and effective solutions to build people, teams, and relationships as never before. Every business, no matter the industry is ultimately the people business. It is how you grow and help others grow that will determine how far you will go! This is a MUST read for anyone in a supervisory, managerial, and leadership position. The number one reason why individuals leave organizations is unhappiness with their boss. Edwin Mouriño tackles that challenge by providing a clear game plan to put the human back in business leadership!”

—*Brian Biro—America’s Breakthrough Speaker,*
husband, father, grandfather and author

“The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations is one of the best guides I’ve seen for anyone with human beings under their leadership. With his decades of experience as a coach, educator, and even an Air Force veteran, Dr. Mouriño-Ruiz really nails this one right on the head! Basically, he’s saying it’s time to move beyond just being a “boss” and really step into being a “LEADER.” He emphasizes that in today’s world, especially with all this AI around, human skills like empathy and good listening are more crucial than ever.

What you will find in this book

- i. What’s happening in organizations now and how the workforce is changing – people want more than just a paycheck these days.
- ii. Why being human is so important even with all the cool AI tech.
- iii. How understanding our brains (NeuroLeadership) can make us better leaders by creating safe and clear environments.
- iv. Giving you practical things to think about to become a more effective leader and create a better workplace for your team.

He even throws in real-life “Reflections” from the workplace and some questionnaires to help you see how you and your organization are doing. At the end of the day this book is all about helping you on your own “reflective journey” to become a leader who really understands and connects with their team, making for a more human and successful workplace - The way it should be!”

—*Efrain “Ricky” Baez Jr., MHR, SPHR, Chief HR Consultant*

“Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz, Ph.D., has written a book created by what I have personally seen him excel at doing as a colleague. That is to collect, assimilate, and align multiple sources of information and research, and apply it to management and leadership development. The result is an exceptional description of the emerging and continuing trends in the workplace. He covers topics ranging from artificial intelligence to neuroscience, with a specific focus on their application and integration with interpersonal skills development—what he has appropriately coined as “Human Intelligence”. He shows new, as well as experienced leaders, what they need to know to create a healthy work environment in today’s organizations. His focus on the need for leaders to know how to effectively build relationships is particularly important, and he sounds the alarm for those organizations that shortchange, or worse, ignore, this growing leadership imperative. A must read for every leader wanting to stay on the cutting edge of leadership and management in a fast-paced world that continues to accelerate.”

—*Steve Swavely, PhD, CCP, Leadership Neuropsychologist and Author, Evolution Leadership Coaching, LLC*

“Congratulations to Dr. Mouriño-Ruiz, on his timely and in-depth book. He has done a masterful job of addressing a very serious economic/human matter now into Pandemic+6 years. COVID+ 6 years is the evolution a new world order, which requires engagement and transparency between governments, organizations and people worldwide. We have learned that isolation from other nations and cultures, reduces our own worth as individuals and communities.”

—**Luis G. Lobo, Executive Vice President, Retired,
Truist Financial Corporation, USA**

“In *The BOSS for 21st Century Organizations* Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz, Ph.D., presents a reflective and practical exploration of leadership in the contemporary workplace. Drawing from decades of experience as a leadership educator and practitioner, Dr. Mouriño discusses critical themes such as leadership development, the evolving nature of organizations, workforce psychology, human-centered management, and the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Human Intelligence (HI). His purpose is clear: to offer supervisors, managers, and executives actionable insights and tools for becoming more effective, compassionate, and adaptive leaders. This commentary analyzes the book’s contribution to leadership studies and examines its practical relevance for today’s organizations.

At the core of Dr. Mouriño’s book is the concept of the “Smart Supervisor,” a leader who balances technical competence with human-centered behaviors. He critiques the widespread practice of promoting high-performing individuals into management without adequate leadership training, arguing that technical excellence does not automatically translate into leadership effectiveness. Instead, Dr. Mouriño proposes a holistic leadership framework that emphasizes emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and human intelligence as essential to managing today’s diverse and dynamic workforce. Key leadership frameworks explored include Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, emphasizing trust and relationship quality between leaders and subordinates; Servant Leadership, prioritizing empathy, humility, and service to employees; Neuro-Leadership, applying neuroscience insights to leadership practices, especially around empathy, stress management, and emotional contagion; and Human-Centered Organizations, which focus on dignity, respect, belonging, and engagement rather than mere productivity. A unique perspective Dr. Mouriño introduces is the urgent blending of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Human Intelligence (HI). He warns that while AI will reshape workplaces, human empathy, compassion, and ethical decision-making will remain irreplaceable core competencies. Practically, these concepts are intended to be implemented through self-assessments,

reflection questions, leadership behavior evaluations, and creating psychologically safe work environments. He also urges leaders to move beyond technical execution toward fostering meaning, autonomy, mastery, and purpose among their teams.

One of the book's strongest aspects is its deep practical relevance. Dr. Mouriño expertly bridges academic theories with real-world leadership challenges through case studies, reflections from the workplace, and practical tools like the Human Intelligent (HI) Workplace Questionnaire. His personal anecdotes and professional experience give the text authenticity and relatability. The integration of neuroscience, generational workforce trends, and diversity considerations makes the book forward-looking, addressing the challenges of 21st-century leadership head-on. The author's writing is accessible without oversimplifying complex ideas, making it valuable both for seasoned executives and first-time supervisors. Furthermore, the call for introspection, asking leaders to constantly reflect on how they are perceived and how they impact their teams, offers a powerful tool for continuous leadership growth.

Overall, "*The BOSS for 21st Century Organization*" is a vital, thoughtful contribution to leadership studies. It successfully addresses contemporary leadership gaps and offers actionable guidance. This book is highly recommended for organizational leaders, HR professionals, leadership development practitioners, and students in business and leadership programs seeking to build more human-centered, future-ready organizations."

—**Vitus Dono, LMS & Digital Systems Integrations and
Principal at St Vitus Technical Institute, Ghana.**

"This book challenged me to examine my current leadership habits and consider what's truly effective versus what's just familiar. I want to revisit this idea regularly to assess how I'm growing and where I need to stretch further. What specific actions or changes could I implement in my daily practice to embody this principle more fully?"

—**Gabriel Davila Angel, Vice President and Head of Regional
Unit LATAM at HOERBIGER**

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Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz
Human Intelligent Workplace, LLC, USA



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The most successful organizations in the 21st century will be those that recognize the human element in their enterprise, and the new sources of competitive advantage this can create. (Hamel, as cited in Westover, 2025)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz is a human capital practitioner, educator, and Air Force veteran. He has been in the business of helping leaders and teams help themselves for over 30 years.

He began college wanting to be a doctor to help others. This would eventually change when he received his BA in Psychology while in the Air Force. With his degree he changed his career field and entered what is now known as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). He is a graduate of one of the most extensive DEI schools in the country, the DOD Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) where he became a Social Actions professional.

Since leaving the Air Force he has worked in a variety of organizations, industries, and roles, including management positions. His primary role has been as a leadership development professional where he has trained thousands of leaders at all levels, from executives to front line managers. He has also served as an Executive Coach and human capital consultant. He has also been a college professor for both graduate and undergraduate business students.

His philosophy has been one of helping leaders and their teams help themselves. He has also practiced this philosophy as a college professor. As a former student once wrote, “Dr. Mouriño is one of the most compassionate, knowledgeable and motivated servant-leaders I have ever come across — not to mention the best professor I’ve had the pleasure of working with.”

He is founder and president of Human Intelligent (HI) Workplace where his vision is one of helping organizations become more human centered by creating an HI workplace especially in the era of AI. He has a PhD in Human Resources Development where his dissertation was on leader-member exchange (LMX) or leader-employee relationships in a virtual and co-located environment, something very relevant during and after the pandemic.

xiv *About the Author*

He is also an author of several books including: *The Perfect Human Capital Storm* and *Gringo-Latino*, and co-editor of *Leading Diversity in the 21st Century*. He has written numerous articles in a variety of sources and spoken at a variety of conferences and forums on topics related to the changing trends, DEI, and leadership.

He enjoys reading, music, biking, exercising, traveling, football, and watching good movies. He lives with his wife Sira and their poodle Mateo in Orlando, FL.

FOREWORD

I absolutely loved this book. From the very first chapter, I found myself nodding, smiling, and pausing to reflect—all signs (for me) of a book that truly matters. Edwin Mouriño-Ruiz has written exactly the kind of book today’s leaders need—thoughtful, practical, deeply human, and refreshingly real.

In a world where organizations are navigating unprecedented change, shifting employee expectations, and the complexities of remote and hybrid work, this book could not be more timely. Edwin brings wisdom born from decades of experience—along with a heart for people—to every page. This is a guidebook for any leader who wants to lead with both their head and their heart.

Practical Wisdom for Any Leader

One of the things I appreciate most about this book is Edwin’s ability to bridge timeless leadership truths—empathy, trust, listening, and self-awareness—with the pressing demands of today’s workplace. He names the hard things leaders face: managing uncertainty, leading diverse teams, and fostering human connection in a digital world. But he doesn’t leave readers stuck there. This is not a book of quick fixes—it’s a book of transformation. With reflective questions, actionable ideas, and practical tools, Edwin invites leaders to grow without guilt. His voice is that of a wise mentor—credible, compassionate, and committed to helping others lead with courage and authenticity.

For Any Leader Who Wants to Have a Legacy Impact

Whether you’re a brand-new supervisor or a seasoned executive, this book offers a roadmap for your leadership journey. New leaders will find

guidance to avoid common pitfalls and start strong. Experienced leaders will find a challenge to stay humble, curious, and people-centered. And for all of us somewhere in between, this book offers wisdom, encouragement, and practical next steps.

In a world hungry for more human-centered workplaces, Edwin has given us a true gift. This book calls us to reflect not just on what we do as leaders—but on how we show up, how we engage with our people, and ultimately, what kind of leadership legacy we want to leave. I'm grateful for Edwin's voice and know readers everywhere will be better leaders—and better humans—because of the specific ideas recommended in this book."

Dr. Beverly Kaye, Thought Leader, Speaker, Co-Author of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em: Getting Good People to Stay, Help Them Grow or Watch Them Go: Career Conversations Organizations Need and Employees Want, Up is Not the Only Way: Rethinking Career Mobility, and Hello Stay Interviews, Goodbye Talent Loss.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the Lord, for helping me along this journey. I want to share my appreciation for the love and support of my life, my wife. For her patience and as the key person who serves as a mirror for me. As I've said behind every good man is a greater woman. Recently I was corrected, instead of "behind every good man" I should use "next to every good man" and I agree. To my grandparents, mother, and uncles, The Ruiz family who put their thumbprint in my life and provided me the opportunity to achieve what I have. May they rest in peace and look down upon me with a smile.

Last, to those few I've worked for that I consider where a good model of a boss for me. I've had many bosses over my work career, but few that I truly believed were effective bosses. To Shirley Jones, who made my time at Lockheed Martin a positive experience. To the Lt. Colonel (sorry forgot his name) who gave me a second chance when I needed it as a young, enlisted airman. To Larry Hogue, who told me once, we won't work together forever, but let's make it the best time we can while we do. And last, to Dr. Stephen Swavely, who listened, coached, demonstrated empathy, and became a friend over time. Thank you all, wherever you may be for being a great BoSS to me and a better human being, each of you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In my time in the corporate setting, I've noticed the promotions of great individual contributors to management without the proper training. —Edwin Mourino

Tomorrow's Companies will need to have the brains of a Business School Graduate and the heart of a Social Worker. —Friedman (2005)

Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore. —Fleming (1939)

These above quotes capture the essence of the state of organizations and its leadership in more cases than not. Over the years too many organizations have promoted great and high productive individual contributors to the positions of management. The thinking has and unfortunately continues today, that if they are one of best workers, then it only makes sense that they'll be a great boss. This is further highlighted in a Fast Company article titled "85% of new people managers receive no formal training" (Chamorro & Carucci, 2024), imagine almost 9 out of 10 of those in a leadership position with no formal training taking responsibility for the most valuable resource of an organization, its workforce.

And while this is as of this year, I noticed this trend many years ago (last century to be exact) when I transitioned from the Air Force to the civilian sector and noticed that there were more than should have been put into a supervisory capacity without some form of development. In the Air Force, you did not step into a supervisory position without attending some form of military leadership development.

We have also found when people are not skilled, trained, or competent in a particular aspect of their job, they get anxious which obviously raises stress.

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Something that we will address later in this book but might also add as to why some of the younger segment of the workforce are not necessarily interested in stepping into a management role or why some already in it, would step down if they could.

While some might consider this more relevant to newly promoted first line supervisors, I'd recommend a reconsideration on this thought. I have unfortunately seen more than I care to consider, of ineffective mid-level managers and executives in leadership roles. They have obviously been successful in delivering on the results and objectives in front of them and in turn been promoted to higher level management and executive roles. But as I have heard and observed over the years, at what costs or "how many bodies have they left in the path" as they progress up the management chain? This might be one of the reasons that in their book, *The Mind of the Leader*, Hougaard and Carter found that 35% of workers would give up a pay raise to see their boss fired.

In addition to this, while I've been in the area of leadership development for almost four decades, I am still today hearing of, seeing, reading, and finding research that highlights the need for better leaders. And anyone reading this book that is in a leadership role, will attest as to how difficult the job can be sometimes. A recent article highlighted the three toxic habits by bosses that include public scoldings, perfectionism, and unnecessary arguments (Jackson, 2024). The author highlight findings by almost 50% of Human Resources that have experienced workplace violence, including harassment as recent as 2019.

The fact that we're still speaking, writing, and educating on ensuring that leaders don't do this, especially with the amount invested on leadership development, by some estimates over \$60 billion, says a lot about the importance of this topic. It also begs the question, why? Why are we still here with so much invested on leadership development? What is missing? It is not just that new and younger individuals step into the roles. Because some of the issues I've highlighted so far and more to come later have been done by those that have been in management for some time.

When it comes to those in executive positions, it reminds me of a time when I was part of a team responsible for creating a mentoring program for high potentials. We went around the room and discussed which executives should be mentors. Those not selected were mainly because they were considered ineffective leaders and role models and as an executive would not be considered good mentors. Yet here they were, in an executive role with influence over so many. This says a lot about what was really important for some organizations.

The second quote is particularly important for present and future leaders. As Marshal Goldsmith titles one of his books, "What got you here, won't get you there." This holds true for those promoted to a supervisory capacity

at any level where the skills necessary for success are not technical, but human or interpersonal skills. As I've always asked participants in my sessions or in my coaching engagements, how do you believe you're doing as a leader? And I add to this question, what would others say that work with you or for you? This usually gives them pause unless they are completely oblivious to their behaviors and how others may be perceiving their actions.

The third quote gets to the point that times and expectations have changed from the workforce. The psychology of the workers with their expectations of today are different from the past or perhaps just more prominent. The pandemic I believe has created a global tipping point for what the workforce is expecting. Many are craving meaning and purpose in life, but few people are finding such fulfillment at work. Today's worker's expectations are rapidly changing. Unfortunately, most companies have not evolved to keep pace with all of these changes.

Numerous articles and books are continuing to be written about people looking for purpose, meaning, happiness, and a positive workplace experience. In a Ted Talk by Dan Pink, he goes on to point out with research that what motivates most of us at work is purpose—doing or being part of something bigger than us, mastery—ongoing development, irrespective of age or career stage, and autonomy—having our will over control and choice about how to do something, in other words, not being micromanaged.

“You are how you lead.” We used this phrase when we educated leaders in a leadership development organization I worked for. By this we meant, and got further into that their journey, that early imprints in life by others and circumstances, could have an impact on their present leadership behaviors. An example that comes to mind is the perfectionistic leader. Where did they pick up this mindset and in turn make it part of their leadership philosophy and behaviors? How is it being perfectionistic impact the individual leader behavior and their workforce? It might be something else for you or something you've noticed in others in a leadership role. This is something worth reflecting on as you read this book.

And I know being in a leadership role is not easy. I've been there. I am always amused by how many in my undergraduate or in some graduate classes that are not in a management position have that as a goal. And as I've always mentioned, be careful what you wish for. Looking at the position from the outside might seem appealing due to role, salary, privileges, etc. But those that are reading this and have been or are in a leadership role know both the pros and cons of the position. Which is probably why there is an increase in the younger generation seeming to not want this role as much and more managers wishing they could get out of it.

A few questions to consider are, when you perform in your role of boss is how do you engage with your team? How do you treat them? How do you treat each of your team members? Will or do you have favorites and

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gain the resentment from some or will you be fair with everyone? Are you aware of any of your blind spots or biases? This is why I have written this book. This book is for experienced managers and executives, and for newly minted supervisors, managers, filled with insights of both good and not so good practices and behaviors by those in a managerial capacity. The book also includes tools, techniques, and approaches for those in a managerial capacity to consider. But more importantly, I've written this book to help you reflect along the way about how you might be performing in a leadership role?

I want to sincerely thank you for selecting this book. Since as of last check, there is an estimated 15,000 books and over 11 million hits on Google for the topic of leadership. My hope is that as you read through it, you reflect and consider what can I learn from this that I had not thought of before or truly, deeply considered and should consider going forward? Because information is not transformation. I do hope you find something new in reading this book, or at least to something to think of differently that will help you reflect on how to be a more effective leader or boss. As you read through this book, I hope you truly reflect and ask yourself how do you believe you are doing and more importantly how might others believe you are doing?

As you read this book, I will first outline who this book is for and why I've written it, especially with so many books written on the topic. Following this, I will highlight what trends are taking place and what the implications for organizations, their leadership team, and the workforce. Next, I will take you into the psychology of the 21st century workforce and what they are expecting into today's workplace from their organizations and leaders.

Next, I will highlight some additional issues impacting the workforce and their leaders. I will also address how technology, in particular Artificial Intelligence (AI) is and will impact organizations going forward and the implications for leaders and its workforce. I will also highlight how neuroscience and neuroleadership, a growing and important aspect of today's leadership information have implications for leaders. Last, I will take you into what you as the boss can do by reframing your approach more so from a leader's perspective.

Throughout this book I've included some quotes of former colleagues and students (some cited and some not-as they preferred) who have had good and bad experiences with effective and ineffective superiors titled "Reflections from the workplace." This is intended to provide some context and insights of experiences workers can have in their workplace depending on the behaviors of their superiors. There might be one good or bad one or more that seems familiar. As you read them, consider, have you experienced or observed something similar—especially if it is a potential negative experience? If it is positive, consider the same. But most importantly, honestly reflect on if anyone may have experienced any of these while working for you. Sort of a conscious gut check.

You will also have access to two questionnaires. The first one will help you assess and/or evaluate how human-centered and in particular human intelligent your workplace is. Second, you will also have a leadership questionnaire that you can use to evaluate your leadership behaviors and practices and also allow you to get 360 feedback from your staff, colleagues, and management if you so choose to use this way (which I recommend).

Both of these questionnaires are intended for reflection and other's perspective on how you see your organization based on being a human intelligent workplace, your leadership effectiveness, and organizational readiness for change. They are also intended for you to gain a wholistic picture, by having others in your organizations to complete them also. This way you can compare your perceptions with those that your leadership behaviors will have an impact on during their tenure with you. They are created to serve as a practical and personal (your point of view) as you perceive your organization when it comes to human intelligence (HI) (as I've defined it), your organization's readiness for change, and your leadership effectiveness. I hope and believe you will find them helpful as you reflect on your organization and yourself as a leader.

In summary, you will have an opportunity to learn, relearn, reflect, think through, and consider how can I implement what I might need to in order to continue to grow and increase in my effectiveness as a leader. You will gain insights from others on their experiences with effective and noneffective leaders. You will get an opportunity to see visuals that will hopefully provide you insights on what is needed going forward. Last, you will have three evaluation questionnaires to use either by yourself and/or with other's perspective (my recommendation to gain a better comprehensive view). I truly hope this books helps you help yourself as you reflect on being an effective leader.

Reflections from the workplace...

"I worked for someone who had the habit of 'passing the buck'. In other words, he blamed his subordinates for failing to achieve their targets, but never thought he was partly responsible for the problem."

Who Is This Book for?

This book is intended for those with extensive experience in a managerial or executive role, for those that have recently been tapped to step into this new role, and/or for anyone considering a supervisory role. Before we begin it is important to at least layout some basic definitions on the key terms used in this book. While there are hundreds of definitions for the following terms. Webster defines *boss* as one who directs or supervises workers.

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Cambridge dictionary defines *management* as the activity or job of being in charge of a company, organization, or team of employees. And Mckinsey defines *leadership* as a set of behaviors used to help people align their collective direction, to execute strategic plans, and to continually renew an organization. Drucker, considered by some as the father of management has been credited with differentiating management and leadership in the following manner, “Management is doing things right; **leadership** is doing the right things.” Add to this that it has been noted in different venues that you as someone in a managerial/executive role, you lead people and manage things.

Irrespective of your preferred definition, the important piece to take away from the above is that someone in a managerial capacity is responsible for directing and influencing others to accomplish organizational objectives and deliverables. That it is the yin and yang of those in a supervisory capacity. And that balancing these two is an imperative for your success and those working with you.

The other takeaway and consideration is that it is important to put the human back in managerial behaviors and practices and in organizations as those of you in leadership roles and your teams work to deliver on the strategic and organizational objectives. It is for this reason, that I will be focusing on in this book on the leadership side of the equation. Because I have noticed more than my share of those in leadership capacity trying to manage their workforce. I hope as you read through this book, you’ll come to the conclusion (or maybe already realized it but had not thought about as much), that creating a human-centered organization is going to take more of a human touch and for you to tap into your HI. Because AI will not solve all of the people and workforce issues.

Over time many have been educated and/or informed to believe in charismatic individuals. Because we know and see them when they walk into a room. They stand out and call attention to themselves. But the research highlights that the better leaders are those that are humble versus charismatic (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020). This sort of supports the servant-leadership model and theory. And while there are many models and theories on leadership, my goal with this book is that irrespective of the models or theories, you consider what are the proper leadership behaviors you need to demonstrate for today and tomorrow’s workforce?

It has been noted that employees now expect their manager to care about them personally, but many leaders still don’t know how to do it. And what it will take going forward is “empathy, curiosity, compassion, attention, and acceptance, which cannot be replaced by technology” (Posner & Whitehouse, 2023). Real estate, technology, and humans are an organization’s most expensive resources. How you use them going forward will impact you and your organizational success. The focus for this book is on your human workforce and your interactions with them as a leader (for those in a present leadership role).

For those not in one, consider how you're being treated by your manager and what do you hope to do once you step into the role?

Something else to consider is the following. If you google "descriptions of my boss," you come across many hits one of them that highlights 10 must traits of great bosses. Some of them include trust, mentor, motivator, honesty, high emotional intelligence, willingness to learn, and compassion among others (Insperity Staff, 2023). The question you should consider asking yourself, would those that work for me or with me use these words to describe me? That is part of what I hope you'll reflect on as you read this book.

To the point of putting human back in organizations, a fairly new term that has begun to be written about is the human centered organization. In a paper by IBM (IBM Human Centered) human centered organizations have been described as **companies whose company culture puts the person at the center of their activity**, rather than focusing only on sales and productivity. They tend to focus on creating better human experiences and care about its diverse teams among others. In order for this to happen, those in managerial roles, or the bosses, will play a crucial role in creating great workplace environments by ensuring their workforce is supported and engaged.

All of these factors are important to consider with others to follow. But another key point to consider is that there is an increasing number of those in a leadership role that would welcome the opportunity to become an individual contributor again, if their pay was not affected. Because the stress that comes with being in a managerial role has been and continues to increase.

In addition to the above, there is a growing challenge for organizations. Increasingly, young workers are resisting the opportunity to become a manager. Some of the reasons highlighted by Mr. Wong in his article, "Young workers don't want to become managers" are due to low trust in their managers, he found a mere 21% strongly agreed that they trust their managers. The second reason is the pressures that come with being in a managerial role and a decrease in maintaining some semblance of work-life balance (Wong, 2023).

Reflections from the workplace...

"I had a boss who was not a boss, but a leader. They valued and had empathy for the team while driving us toward success."

Executives

For those in Executive roles, VP and above this is for you as part of your continual learning, reflections, and development. Most effective executives I have worked over my career are in a constant learning mode. They bring their experiences to bear, but also realize the workplace is constantly changing, and if they want to remain relevant, they need to continue to learn, adapt, and evolve. On occasion I have run into some executives that seem

to come across as they think they know it all, don't have much to learn and sometimes even somewhat arrogant. I'm sure as you read this, you think of someone that fits this category or might not believe or think this is you. More importantly is to assess, what do your direct reports think? Are you humble and vulnerable enough to check into this? Where are you and what would others say?

There has been quite a bit of research from a variety of perspectives as to what those in executive positions need to do to be better bosses. In her article, "3 soft skills separate highly successful CEOs from most people—here's how to master them" (Jackson, 2023). The author points out that many CEOs are losing their sense of humanity. Which aligns with some of the research that highlights that as one gains power, they lose empathy, a critical skill and competency for today's leaders. She goes on to point out that the three skills are visibility—ensuring you're being seen by your workforce, particularly during organizational changes, vulnerability, which means highlighting your humanity, and last verbal which is about communicating and more importantly listening.

On a positive note, the fact that you're reading this book is a good sign that you want to continue learn, reflect, and improve. This is important, because as an executive, you have influence over many in your organization, on the overall direction of the organizational strategy, and an impact on the overall climate and culture of the organization.

Mid-Level Managers and Directors

For those at these levels of the organization, this book is for you as you continue to grow, develop, and learn while trying to manage both upward with your respective executives (and boss), and lead those in the organization below you, including your management team and their staffs. You're in the mid-level role trying to drive organizational strategy directed from the executive teams with the leaders reporting to you and their employees. You're responsible for trying to begin the process of making organizational strategy real through your functional areas of responsibility.

You're in the unique position of managing upward while managing your team, without making the mistake of being seen as someone that just manages upward and forgets his/her team that are helping you on the department, function deliverables. As you read this book consider an interesting article that made the point that the philosophy going forward should be that middle managers are the core of organization (Field et al., 2023). This book provides you an opportunity to reflect and consider where do you have to continue to improve. Where you can continue to grow as the boss and perhaps and hopefully continue to grow within the organization whether that be where you are or your next level.