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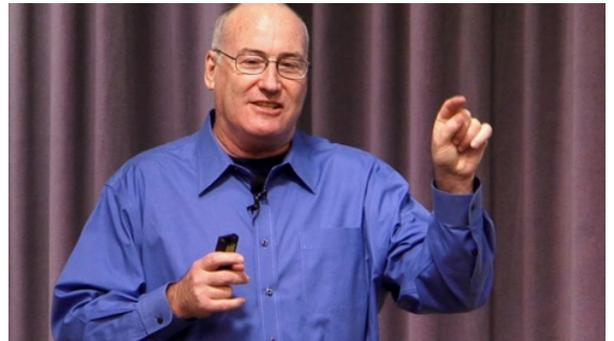
## Fighting a Bad Boss

Bob Sutton, *Stanford University*

November 10, 2010

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2573/Fighting-a-Bad-Boss>

Does it ever pay to tell your manager what you *really* think? Strength in numbers is the only way to wage war with an ineffective manager, says Stanford Professor and *Good Boss, Bad Boss* author Bob Sutton. Banding together with like-minded co-workers offers better documentation and carries more of a punch than an individual approach.



### Transcript

So when your boss sucks, how do you have them--well, the first thing you've got to do if you've got a boss who sucks is, you've kind of got to do the interpersonal and political calculation, which is that, can I tell the boss they suck? No, I'm not kidding, because it depends on what job security you have. If you have job offers, you're probably OK. If you're doing interaction design for small devices right now, you can tell your boss whatever you want. They're not going to fire you. They need you that desperately. It depends on the area you're in. If you're in manufacturing engineering, maybe not. But the fact is you've got to do the calculation whether or not you can say something to the boss and sort of confront them. The second thing is, if the answer to that is no, well, in addition to sort of lying in wait and sort of not giving a shit until you can find a new job, which is always my advice to do, if you want to fight back against your boss, there's a lot of evidence that the most effective strategy is not to do it yourself but to sort of bring together a bunch of your coworkers and to kind of have a group against the boss. Because that way you're not alone, and that way you have better documentation.

And so one of the cases, and I think this is a no asshole that I can't remember, was a case of a woman. She was a civil servant, and she had an asshole boss. And she complained to the boss' boss, and they didn't do anything until what they did was her coworkers and her, it was about eight of them, they kept what they called 'asshole diaries'. And so they just kind of recorded the asshole boss' behavior for a while, and then they all went to the boss' boss with the documentation, and the asshole boss was gone pretty quickly. And so that's the case where you probably are most secure. But even then, there's some companies that are so draconian, they have such nasty bosses you would be in trouble. Just for example, if you work for Oracle I would not advise doing this with Larry Ellison. I don't think it any... So you've kind of got to do the power calculation and how much risk you're willing to take, and also how much power you have in the situation. So my advice is don't go tell your boss that your boss is incompetent or a jerk right away.

Think about it a little bit first.