



Shifting From Buddy to Boss

WHEN A PROMOTION KICKS YOU OUT OF THE COFFEE KLATCH, YOU'LL NEED TO KEEP YOUR FORMER PEERS FROM BECOMING YOUR FUTURE CRITICS. *by Daniel Bortz*

RIGHT AFTER you celebrate that well-earned promotion, reality hits: You're now the boss of people who had been your peers. "When you become a supervisor, the relationship structurally changes, whether you like it or not," says *Good Boss, Bad Boss* author Robert Sutton, a Stanford University professor who studies organizational behavior.

Going forward, your work will be judged on your ability to lead people with whom you used to consort and complain. If that's not enough pressure, you're now at risk of being the one complained *about*. Make the transition seamless with these steps.

MEET ONE-ON-ONE

Sit down with each person to discuss the change in leadership. "You're in learning mode," says Linda Hill, a Harvard Business School professor and co-author of *Being the Boss*. Ask staffers to share their short- and long-term goals, skills they're building, and

obstacles that get in the way of doing their jobs. You'll convey respect and gain valuable info that can help you achieve buy-in.

Also, if you were promoted over a colleague, "address the elephant in the room" and alleviate worries about your ability to work well together, advises Atlanta social media strategist and job coach Miriam Salpeter.

STEP BACK SOCIALLY

You can be a great manager *and* preserve friendships by slightly altering your behaviors. Continue attending happy hour, for example, but stay for only one drink, suggests Hill. Allow your staff space to vent. "We all need to blow off steam sometimes," says Katy Tynan, author of *Survive Your Promotion!* (Just make it clear to your people that if something is really bugging them, they can talk to you, she adds.)

Also, disconnect from your subordinates on all non-work-related social media. "Many times

you're doing people a favor, since it puts less pressure on what they can and can't share on their profiles," says Salpeter. Do let employees know before unfriending them, though, so that they don't take it personally.

PROVE YOU DON'T PLAY FAVORITES

Prepare to make—and to justify—difficult decisions, particularly regarding raises and promotions. To be seen as objective, try to grade everyone using the same metrics, and be sure people know what those metrics are, says Keith Murnighan, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

To show humility, solicit feedback from subordinates on your own performance, says Gentz Franz, a University of Illinois lecturer who studies job succession. "It's incumbent upon managers," he says, "to open the lines of communication if they want to create a collaborative work environment." 