WHEN YOUR FRIEND BECOMES YOUR BOSS

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OBJECTIVES

• Identify two strategies to help the transition of the friend becoming the boss
• Identify two strategies to ease the transition for the staff
• Discuss two problems that may occur when the boss and friend relationship continues

DO YOU WANT TO BE THE BOSS

• Is the friendship more important
• When did friendship start
• Protect the friendship by rules that keep roles separate
• Protect the friendship by being a good boss
• Work will become terrain of your friendship
• Peer support group will change
• “I can do the job, it will be different for us”

SKILLS NEEDED TO BE A BOSS

• Manage a team
• Decision making
• Politics
• Leadership
• Part of your undergraduate curriculum?
• Part of your graduate curriculum?

WALT DISNEY COMPANY

• Michael Eisner CEO
• Michael Ovitz 25 yr friend hired as President

YOU DIDN’T GET THE JOB
• Why not me
• Don’t pout
• Expand your own opportunities
• Sincerely congratulate your new boss-friend
• Allow ample time for both of you to adjust
• Show support

HOW DO YOU
• Maintain the friendship without undermining the working relationship
• Help establish a working relationship without compromising your friendship
• Dual relationship

FRIENDS
• Friendship exists for itself
• Friends are equal
• Friends accept each other as they are
• Friends don’t check up on each other all the time

FRIEND TO BOSS
• What new boss needs to discover
  – Cannot be everyone’s friend
  – Cannot do all the work yourself
  – Cannot act like an employee

FRIEND AND BOSS
• Relationship has changed
  – Professional
  – Personal
• “Friend” with boundaries
• These boundaries would never exist between true friends
• Where do you draw the boundaries?

RELATIONSHIP HAS CHANGED
• What was before will not be the same
• New set of responsibilities
• Boss needs to develop new peer support group
RELATIONSHIP HAS CHANGED

- Boss - subordinate
- New Power
  - Assign work
  - Conferences
  - Salary
  - Vacation
  - Promotion
  - Evaluation

NEW ROLE FOR BOSS

- Judge how friend is doing
- Confidentiality
- Need to provide feedback-impact the dynamic
- Boss knows past behaviors-calling in sick
- May have to give improvement needed, fire

SAFEGUARD RELATIONSHIP

- In the workplace, business comes first
- Employee has a job to do
- Boss has a job to do

HOW TO START NEW RELATIONSHIP

- New boss calls team meeting
  - Shares goals for team
  - Will meet with each individually
- No individual meeting then friend MUST meet with boss

AREAS OF ADJUSTMENT

- Lunches and breaks
- Topics of conversation
- Old secrets
- Transition to new work arrangement
- More responsibilities less time to socialize
- Boss additional loyalties to the organization

SHOULD YOU BE FRIENDS WITH YOUR BOSS

- Do you think it is irresponsible to be friends with your boss?

— Liberty Mutual Responsibility Project 2010
SHOULD YOU BE FRIENDS WITH YOUR BOSS

- What percent say it is irresponsible to be friends with your boss?
- 56%

— Liberty Mutual Responsibility Project February 2010

REASONS WHY BOSS SHOULDN’T BE FRIEND

- It will create a perception of favoritism
- Other employees letting “friend” get away with more
- Will influence decisions around work issues
- Part of job is to judge your employees
- Complain about boss take it personally
- Boss is a role model

FRIEND A BOSS ON FACEBOOK

- How to say no
- Be up front and honest
- Don’t want to mix work and social life
- Communicate in person rather than internet

DON’T PLAY TELEPHONE

- Be careful of special relationship
- Coworkers may attempt to make friend the voice piece for the group
- Friend not the channel of communication from the group to the boss
- Look for ways to support coworkers communication directly with the boss

WORK AND PLAY WITH BOSS

- Keep separate
- Don’t talk work outside of work environment
- Don’t talk about your play time with boss to other staff
- Be careful sharing pictures of your play time with boss

WHEN TO MOVE ON

- When working relationship is strained
- Conflict/tension
  - Shifting power balance
  - Lack of established boundaries
  - Respect not reciprocated
- Start discussing work problems at home and play
WALT DISNEY COMPANY

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- Michael Ovitz - President - 25 year friend

REFERENCES

- Neff, Thomas, Citrin, James M., You're in Charge Now What, Three Rivers Press, 2005