

# Researcher: Narcissistic bosses destroy morale, drive down bottom line

August 7 2009

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In recent years, the motivations of business leaders such as financier Bernard Madoff and former Enron CEO Ken Lay have come under increased scrutiny as a result of behavior that caused both their employees and the public considerable distress. Unquestionably, many of the documented lapses in judgment can be traced to selfishness and a failure to check one's ego.

To better establish the level of self-serving behavior, a recent study was conducted to examine the narcissistic tendencies of bosses in American organizations. Wayne Hochwarter, the Jim Moran Professor of Management in the Florida State University College of Business, asked more than 1,200 employees to provide opinions regarding the narcissistic tendencies of their immediate supervisor. Their responses:

- 31 percent reported that their boss is prone to exaggerate his or her accomplishments to look good in front of others;
- 27 percent reported that their boss brags to others to get praise;
- 25 percent reported that their boss had an inflated view of himself or herself;
- 24 percent reported that their boss was self-centered; and
- 20 percent reported that their boss will do a favor only if

guaranteed one in return.

"Having a narcissistic boss creates a toxic environment for virtually everyone who must come in contact with this individual," Hochwarter said. "The team perspective ceases to exist, and the work environment becomes increasingly stressful. Productivity typically plummets as well."

Research supports these adverse effects, Hochwarter said. For example, those who reported working for a narcissistic boss had lower levels of [job satisfaction](#), saw their [stress](#) levels increase over the previous year, were less appreciative of their work and organization, reported lower levels of effort and performance, and were more prone to sadness and frustration at work.

"Most organizations simply do not consider the adverse effects of narcissistic bosses on worker productivity and stress," Hochwarter said. "In fact, many companies encourage it since narcissists are often seen as outgoing and confident -- traits considered necessary for success in any managerial role. However, there is a fine line between self-confidence on the one hand and selfishness that negatively affects others on the other. Unfortunately, the needed adjustments simply do not take place in most organizations, for any number of reasons."

Source: Florida State University ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Researcher: Narcissistic bosses destroy morale, drive down bottom line (2009, August 7) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-08-narcissistic-bosses-morale-bottom-line.html>

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