

Be a better boss

Managers need to reassess their roles when it comes to retaining their staff.

WHENEVER an employee leaves a company, it is estimated to cost his employer about two years of his salary. This cost comprises rehiring, training, loss of contacts he may have, employee benefits and so on.

During the exit interview, the employee may not be honest about the real reason he is leaving — he might give a general answer about taking up an offer he could not refuse.

However, after talking to professionals, including human resource practitioners, I concluded that in many instances, people actually leave their bosses, and not their jobs. While there may be other push or pull factors in a person's decision to quit, I will focus on the reasons why people leave their bosses or managers.

1 Poor leadership skills

Employees say it is hard to work for a boss who gives unclear instructions, demands they work hard without proper recognition or rest, are picky about small issues or have poor people skills.

Making staff work hard is not unreasonable, but not giving them respect and acknowledgement is extremely frustrating and demoralising.

There are some bosses who are insecure in their role and compensate by putting their staff down. They blame staff for mistakes and take the credit for any successes.

2 Micro-management

The micro-managing boss constantly checks on his



The micro-managing boss constantly checks on her staff's work, intervening in the way they do things, and frustrating them in the process. — EPA

staff's work, intervening in the way they do things, and frustrating them in the process. Bosses micro-manage mainly because they don't trust their staff to deliver the quality they want.

Their staff lose their confidence and productivity is affected.

3 Hidden agendas

A lack of trust between staff and their supervisor tends to produce conversations with hidden meanings. When trust is low, people may start to question what their boss actually means when he says something. Even if he does something positive, they doubt his sincerity.

The only way to combat such feelings of distrust is for managers to be forthcoming, truthful

and transparent in the way they relate to their staff.

4 Not delivering on promises

Is the following scenario familiar? Your boss says: "I have plans to promote you in the next few months" or "If you achieve these targets, you can expect a good bonus".

Time goes by and you are not promoted even though you met your targets. And you realise you received the same bonus amount as everyone else.

Even if your boss changed his mind about your suitability for promotion or economic conditions were such that made a big payout impossible, he should explain the situation to you.

Sometimes managers don't deliver on what they say. It only needs to happen a few times before people start to doubt their boss's integrity. The only way to address this issue is for bosses to consistently say what they mean and mean what they say.

If people are leaving regularly, take a good look at their leaders. They may need some coaching on how to lead their people more effectively. It may be difficult to retain your good performers if they do not feel engaged or valued. — Singapore Straits Times/Asia News Network

■ **ARTICLE** by Kenneth Kwan, an international motivational speaker and trainer.