

Stephen C. Bushardt: The “Manipulator” in his own Words

Almost to a person, CoB faculty are familiar with the “old stories” about management professor Stephen C. Bushardt. In economics professor Franklin Mixon’s faculty grievance against EFIB Chair George Carter and others (available at USMPRIDE.COM), there is an account of a conversation Carter had with Mixon wherein Carter refers to Bushardt, Carter’s good friend, as a “manipulator” of people. Well, there is no position that Bushardt is better at manipulating than that of Dean of the business college at the University of Southern Mississippi. Whether that seat is filled by Tyrone Black, Rod Posey, William Gunther, or Harold Doty, Stephen C. Bushardt has been there like a puppeteer, doing whatever it takes to feather his nest and/or that of his “friends.”

“Hey ‘boss’,” was Bushardt’s familiar Greene Hall-greeting for Ty Black. This was said, whether Black was *in* or *out* of power. Bushardt’s first act under the deanship of Harold Doty, the current Dean, reportedly was pressure washing Doty’s new house in the cozy confines of Canebrake, an upscale neighborhood where Bushardt lives alongside current (Doty) and former (e.g., Black) business school deans.

Reporters at USMPRIDE.COM are happy to be able to bring you a real gem of a report, based on the words of the master “manipulator” himself – Stephen Bushardt – that spells out Bushardt’s keys to successfully manipulating your boss. In Bushardt’s world, the boss is his college dean, whether that was Black in the old days or Doty in the present. Below you will find a “how to” guide of sorts, written by Stephen Bushardt and the late Stanley A. Brooking, entitled *Managing the Boss*. This “how to” guide is available on the Internet, and is used by Bushardt in his courses at USM (e.g., MBA 645). The link to the original document is inserted below:

<http://www.timbersnursery.com/20.doc>

A copy of the original document is inserted below in this report below (black font), with commentary by USMPRIDE.COM (red font) interspersed throughout:

MANAGING THE BOSS

Stephen C. Bushardt and Stanley A. Brooking

Learning how to manage your superior can reap recognition and rewards

Are you a high performer, a sciolist like the first author, who does not receive the rewards from your boss that you deserve? Are other managers who don't perform as well as you receiving the recognition that you're entitled to? If so, then it's time for a lesson in managing your manager.

Rewards and recognition tend to go to those who know how to manage their superiors and not necessarily to those who perform at the highest level. "If you work hard enough, you'll work your way right to the top" is an axiom that is in reality a myth.

Bushardt the sciolist – superficial knowledge on many subjects, gained through years spent “hidden away” in his Greene Hall office (while Chair of Mgt) reading popular books and magazines, all the while attempting to avoid true academic pursuits. Bushardt a high performer? We think not. It’s hard to imagine any other “CoB manager” who worked less than Stephen Bushardt (outside of Rod Posey, of course) did as Chair of Management.

“Rewards and recognition tend to go to those who know how to manage their superiors . . .” Now there’s a Bushardt-ism that would make for a retirement party toast – one that wouldn’t leave a dry eye in the Carter household (assuming that’s where the retirement party will be). This Bushardt-ism is followed by a statement suggesting that the Christian work ethic is “in reality a myth.” Let’s move on to the lessons.

LESSON 1: *Rewards and recognition tend to go to the manager who can manage the boss, and not necessarily to the manager with the best performance.*

If you feel that this statement is false, then concentrate on learning to accept what your boss gives you, or rather does not give you. If, on the other hand, you feel Lesson 1 is true, read on.

You are always aware that the corporate "goodies" you receive, that is, promotions, pay raises, a secretary, expense accounts, and so forth, come from above and not from below. Since this is true, you should focus your attention on your superiors. Use your management skills to manage your boss. If you follow this strategy, you will eventually get most of what you have been "unjustly" denied. This, of course, is not to say that you should not do a good job managing your subordinates as well.

It must come as a huge surprise for CoB faculty to learn that Bushardt's oily behavior stems from his belief that he tried to do things the "right" way, but he was "unjustly" denied the fruits of his labor. This seems to be an indictment of former CBA Dean Ty Black, the man Bushardt "affectionately" refers to as "boss."

Check out that list of "goodies" – promotions, pay raises, a secretary, expense accounts (credenza?) – that weighs heavily on Bushardt's mind at all times. Isn't this statement a window into the mind of Bushardt, *and* the likes of Niroomand, Babin, Carter, Nissan, Henthorne, Sawyer, and on and on?

Dear CoB students: Do as I do, *or* as I say. They're both the same, so you can't go wrong either way. SCB

LESSON 2: *Corporate rewards and recognition come from above and not from below.*

An essential element in management is to tell people what you want from them. Likewise, you must tell your superiors what you want from them. Whether it is a promotion, a pay increase or administrative support that you want, tell the boss. If the boss does not know what you want, he or she may not give you anything, or, worse yet, may give you something you do not want.

Note to current management and marketing faculty: If you're telling Alvin Williams what you want, you're wasting your time. Alvin is not the chair anymore. Rewards come from the top. So, let Barry Babin, your chair, know what it is that you want. Otherwise, you may not get anything from Barry, or even worse, Barry may give you something you don't want.

LESSON 3: *Communicate to the boss what you want.*

If the boss knows that you want a promotion or a pay raise, but still does not give these things to you, it is time for a little homework. If your boss is bestowing the cherished corporate goodies on one of your peers, you are in luck. The boss is competent and knows how to give rewards. If, on the other hand, the boss does not bestow the goodies on anyone, he or she may be incompetent in giving credit and recognition.

It is rare to find a boss who does not know how to get and give rewards. After all, he or she knows what is to be rewarded. If you have an incompetent boss who believes that corporate policy will not allow you to have an expense account, for example, naively explain how you thought it was a good idea. After all, your peer, Mr. Smith, has an expense account

and is able to catch the difficult clients, even though expense accounts appear to violate corporate policy.

Where are you, George Carter? Stephen Bushardt is telling his students to squirrel around and get the boss to give you an expense account, even though doing so violates corporate policy. Oh, we know where you are. George. You are off teaching Ed Nissan's classes while he's in Nicosia, Cyprus, for three weeks, on MS taxpayers' dimes.

Check this out: "If you have an *incompetent boss* who believes that corporate policy will not allow you to have [something] . . . naively explain how you thought it was a good idea." Doesn't this sound familiar? Yes, it seems to describe all of the double-counting of journal articles that has gone on in the CoB over the years, particularly the egregious case in accounting that was uncovered by professor Marc DePree, the editor of USMPRIDE.COM, several years ago. USMPRIDE.COM is in possession of some years-old testimony from a former CoB faculty that indicates that the CoB playbook says to double count, and if caught, to naively explain that it was "all a mistake" and that "it won't happen again." Guess who the testimonial implicated in developing this plan? You got it!

Here's a new take on it: propose, in very simple terms (almost naively), that the current evaluation system is "bad" or "broken" and that a change would be "good."

LESSON 4: *Never ask the boss for something he or she cannot deliver. You are halfway home.*

Just as you want certain rewards, so does your boss. The problem is to ascertain what they are. Of course, your superior may be reluctant to tell you outright, so you may have to use other methods. But desire for recognition and promotion can usually be determined by observing behavior.

If your boss desires outcomes which are considered illegitimate by corporate standards, he or she may go to great lengths to disguise that wish. If the boss does not want greater responsibility or more challenge, he or she may go to great lengths to profess to everyone his or her desire for hard work. Likewise, the boss may spend hours complaining about apple polishers, when in reality that is just what is wanted. You must be astute and observant to penetrate the maze of false clues.

This one is classic Bushardt: if your boss wants to do something “illegitimate” (illegal?), be astute and observant and you’ll read his or her “code.” Once you figure it out, let him or her know you are “on the team” and are willing to help get this thing accomplished. Of course, favors related to *illegitimate* or illegal activity command a high price – maybe a promotion *and* an expense account, and not just an expense account. Remind your boss of this, *and* file this episode away so you can use this against him or her years later. Classic Bushardt. Classic CoB.

LESSON 5: *Convince the boss that he or she can provide what you want.*

A word of caution: Never ask the boss for something he or she cannot deliver. If your superior merely thinks he or she cannot get you the reward or promotion you want, try to convince the boss that he or she can. If the boss absolutely cannot get these things for you, do not ask. Does this mean that you cannot get what you want, but have been denied? No. It just means you have to help the boss to acquire the necessary power and influence so that he or she can provide them.

Bushardt, are you thinking about this stuff all the time? We started our review of this “playbook” with the phrase “Christian work ethic.” Readers should keep in mind that Bushardt’s ultimate choice of religious denomination reportedly came down to being able to consume libations on the premises.

LESSON 6: *Determine what the boss really wants from his or her job.*

Assuming that you have been successful in identifying what your boss really wants from you, the next step is to give it to him or her. You have to use your creative abilities here. If you have been giving the boss good performance in the past, but are not receiving what you want, then check your list of what the boss really wants. The boss may want flattery and praise. If the boss dislikes writing memos to you, make sure he or she can communicate verbally.

Convince the boss to move into Canebrake near you. Then let him know that your garage door is always open, even late and night, and that there’s always beer in the ‘frig. Finally, let him know you always have an ear to lend to his schemes, provided his is open to yours. Oh, and make sure to call him “boss,” even if in an academic setting, where the term is inappropriate. Everyone loves flattery, and the feeling of power. Give it to him, and realize how powerful that makes you.

LESSON 7: *Give the boss what he or she really wants from his or her job.*

The boss knows what you want, how to get it for you, and also has the power and influence to get it for you. The question still remains, "Will the boss provide you with the outcomes that you desire?"

If you give the boss what the boss really wants, he or she should in turn provide you with what you want. If you have followed all the lessons prescribed here, and the boss still refuses to give you the outcomes you seek, review the list to make sure you have not made any errors. If you find none, you are ready for Lesson 8.

Is this "program" of Bushardt's accredited? It looks tighter than the CoB's AACSB reports.

LESSON 8: *If the boss does not know how to give rewards, change bosses.*

You say, "All I wanted was a little praise and recognition, not a new job." But how worthwhile is it to work without rewards?

What Bushardt's students might not know is that, in terms of his own situation, "change bosses" does not mean leave USM for another academic post. It means, instead, get your boss fired and try again. Just look at the Horace Fleming (USM President) and William Gunther (former CBA Dean) episodes. Bushardt is doing much better under the Doty regime than he did in the Gunther regime. You think he had anything to do with the end of one regime and the beginning of the other? Don't brush that thought aside too quickly. If you feel the urge to, review the list above once again, then move to Lesson 8.