

*Seventeen Gorman*

ADVISORS LLC

***"Innovation through Collaboration"***



Creating Individual and Organizational Excellence via Leadership Development, Management Development, Mentoring, Coaching, Team Building, Skill Building

***Achieving Excellence***

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**Welcome**

Welcome to the January issue of "Achieving Excellence" which is inspired by clients and friends of **Seventeen Gorman Advisors**. We enjoy new ways of thinking and new ways of helping you achieve your goals.

**Seventeen Gorman Advisors** is a consulting practice focused on improving individual and organizational performance through skill building programs and developmental services.

Our approach to problem solving and issue resolution involves client participation at

all points in the process. Above all, we listen to our clients to understand their needs and goals so that the solution we develop together - as true partners - provides a sustainable business advantage.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey C. Leventry  
Principal

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### In Your Quest for Excellence

"Excellence is never an accident; it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities." - Anonymous

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### My Favorite Superboss



A few weeks ago I came across a book that aroused my curiosity, especially since I have worked for many managers over the course of my business career. The book is entitled "Superbosses - How Exceptional Leaders Master the Flow of Talent" by Sydney Finkelstein. The author is a Dartmouth professor who performed 10 years of research and conducted over 200 interviews to uncover the existence of a unique category of supervisor called the Superboss.

#### **What is a Superboss?**

According to the Professor, a Superboss is different from regular bosses because she enables people to accomplish more than they ever thought possible. As a result, Superbosses accelerate the careers of those who work for them. They also possess a track record of spawning talent in their industry. In fact, he determined that if you look at the top executives in an industry you will discover that many of them have worked for the same person as they advanced in their careers.

#### **Who are considered examples of Superbosses?**

The concept of the Superboss exists in all areas of society, including business, entertainment, politics, and professional sports. In the business world most would agree that Jack Welch and Larry Ellison are Superbosses. In entertainment, Lorne Michaels has spawned a host of comedic talent thanks to the popular "Saturday Night Live" show. An example from the world of politics is Ronald Reagan, whose Vice President became President following the Reagan years. In professional sports

the concept is called a "Coaching Tree" and includes the likes of Bill Walsh (San Francisco 49ers), Mike Holmgren (Green Bay Packers) and George Karl (Denver Nuggets).

### **What qualities do they possess?**

Professor Finkelstein has determined that Superbosses share 5 characteristics. They are confident, competitive, imaginative, authentic, and they possess high levels of integrity. In addition, they are innovators and expect their employees to mirror this ability in their daily work lives. As you might expect, the Superboss also expects world class performance from employees and she does her part as a genuine leader to inspire performance and instill self-confidence on the part of team members.

### **How are they different than normal bosses?**

Superbosses are different from the average boss in the way they recruit, motivate, coach, and inspire employees in consistent but unconventional ways. When hiring, they look for people with unusual intelligence, creativity, and flexibility. Through nurturing and coaching, the Superboss then guides the recruit down a path that produces exceptional outcomes. They also tend to be opportunistic and continuously explore ways to transition employees into roles that maximize individual strengths while contributing to strategic goals. In summary, they make a deliberate effort to provide an environment where performance can flourish - ultimately resulting in highly successful careers for their staff.

### **My Favorite Superboss**

As I reflected on the concepts articulated in the book "Superbosses" I realized that I have had the privilege of working for several Superbosses over the course of my career. It also occurred to me that I have developed a close personal relationship with a woman who clearly meets the criteria set forth by Professor Finkelstein in his book. Based upon my personal experience and interactions with those who have worked for her, I know that she is admired and trusted by her direct reports. She is also viewed as a nurturer who guides her employees to reach their maximum potential.

Additionally, she is highly confident, imaginative, authentic and possesses a high level of integrity. She expects world class performance from employees and instills self-confidence in her team members. Finally, she has a track record of launching business professionals into highly successful careers in her industry.

I have discussed these traits and concepts with her on numerous occasions and I have reminded her that 20 plus years of mentoring and developing others is her legacy - and one that will pave the way for the next generation of leaders.

As you may have guessed, my favorite Superboss is none other than my wife of nearly 25 years. She is not only an inspiration to her employees and her children, but also to me as I coach business professionals who desire to achieve career success in their chosen profession.

If you would like to understand the "playbook" of best practices that you can use to enhance your managerial and leadership skills as you strive to become the next Superboss, please contact us.



Over the course of my business career, I have worked for over 30 bosses. While many of them were good bosses, only 5 rise to the level of Superboss, using the criteria established by Professor Finkelstein.

This article provides my "Top 5" List of Superbosses and describes what made these managers so exceptional as they enhanced my career and mastered the flow of talent over the course of many years.

### **Dick**

Dick was my first boss in the corporate world and arguably the best manager I ever worked for. In addition to being very knowledgeable and authentic, he was easy going and likeable. Perhaps his greatest trait was that he was an excellent teacher and good listener. He utilized the Socratic Method to stimulate critical thinking so that we discovered the answers to our questions with his guidance and support. He embraced the apprenticeship model of development and took his management responsibilities seriously. In addition to developing many young professionals over more than 30 years, he commanded everyone's loyalty and respect.

### **Dan**

Dan was a laid back manager who possessed an analytical mind and a great sense of humor. He was in tune with his staff and always wanted to know what they were thinking. He encouraged lively debate among his team members which sharpened our advocacy skills and made us assess the strength of our arguments and the commitment to our beliefs. He valued our opinions and normally followed a "majority rules" approach, with him always retaining the deciding and final vote. He was respected for his fundamental fairness and his judgment as he guided us along our career paths.

### **Connie**

Connie was very smart and amusingly clever in perception and expression. She was a fun-loving and an innovative manager who was always willing to try new ideas and approaches. She challenged us to think outside the box and pushed us to succeed. She gave us great latitude to manage and coach our teams and was always available to discuss issues - both large and small. Among other noteworthy traits, she valued our opinion and routinely asked for our input on important technical and people issues before making decisions that impacted the team. In short, she treated us as equals as we collaborated with one another to achieve our maximum potential.

### **Owen**

Owen was a super technician and a reluctant manager. In fact, he constantly

reminded us that he preferred to manage technical issues rather than people. However, our leadership team recognized his people skills and rewarded him accordingly. Owen expected world class performance from his team and ensured that we received the support and guidance that we needed so his expectations would be met. He respected us, trusted our judgment and was a skilled delegator. He gave us numerous opportunities to showcase our knowledge, skills and abilities and rewarded us when we achieved individual and team goals. We remain friends to this day!

## **Pam**

Pam is one of the most kind and well-liked people I have ever met. She was genuine, cordial, very intelligent and well versed on many topics. She respected my education, experience and expertise, and provided me with the flexibility to manage situations as I saw fit. Although her approach was "hands off", she was willing and able to provide expert guidance, insight and resources to make me successful. Her confidence and trust in me (and others) was her hallmark, and allowed us to excel in our roles. She was also forward thinking and made sure that issues were addressed in a timely fashion to pave the way for the future success of the organization. The reward for her success (and ours) was a leadership position in the department.

In closing, I am honored to say that much of my career success is directly attributable to the 5 Superbosses who guided and nurtured me along the way. It was a privilege to work for them and then take what I learned and apply it to my role as a manager and leader in my effort to develop others. In the final analysis, this is the essence of the concept of the Superboss.

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### **Our offerings include the following:**

#### **Developmental Services**

[Coaching](#)  
[Management / Leadership Development](#)  
[Meeting Facilitation](#)  
[Mentoring](#)  
[Team Building](#)

#### **Skill Building Programs**

[Influencing Skills](#)  
[Presentation Skills](#)  
[Project Management Skills](#)  
[Decision Making](#)

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**Seventeen Gorman Advisors** looks forward to collaborating with you.  
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