

In the past, the word **BOSS** was used to describe those in positions of power. Superior and subordinate, boss and worker, exempt and non-exempt, obedience and control were all involved. Today we are politically-correct, person-sensitive – **BOSS** sounds old-fashioned, autocratic, anti-democratic, and politically insensitive. Therefore a new language to describe bossing!

Our new language now describes the same function – **BOSS** becomes leader, coach, mentor, team-leader, project manager, supervisor, **SUBORDINATE** become team member, direct report, knowledge worker. However what is the underlying reality:

- A boss decides your pay
- A boss decides your promotion
- A boss decides your hours of work
- A boss decides who you work with
- A boss decides what you do
- A boss decides your vacation
- A boss decides your bonus, stock options, etc.

So, put simply, **BOSS** describes a relationship of un-equals, a relationship of power – one who has power over your work life. A boss may choose to exercise that power in an authoritarian way, in a democratic way, in a friendly way – but however it is exercised; one person influences your work life. He or she is **superior**; you are **subordinate**.

Today’s management literature is uncomfortable with the harshness of these words and prefers softer terms -- “*team based managing, servant leadership, transformation leader, holocracy*”. Gary Hamel says that managing [bossing] is outdated and offers as an alternative the Morningstar Company [no bosses, manage to a contract]. Tony Hsiao at Zappo’s turned his company into a holocracy with no managers. Management becomes a series of circles:

