

Secrets of the Superbosses

by Sydney Finkelstein

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Executive Summary

When you look at the top people in a given industry, you often find that many of them once worked for the same well-known leader. In the NFL, 20 of 32 head coaches trained under Bill Walsh or someone in his coaching tree. Dozens of top hedge fund managers got their start under Julian Robertson of Tiger Management. Nine of Larry Ellison’s top execs became CEOs, COOs, or chairs of other companies. The list goes on: Jay Chiat, Alice Waters, Bob Noyce, Lorne Michaels, and Mary Kay Ash are all known for grooming extraordinary people who became leaders in their fields.

After conducting deep research into the practices of these superbosses, Tuck professor Finkelstein found similarities in their “people strategies.” In hiring, they focus on intelligence, creativity, and flexibility; look for unconventional talent; and adapt roles and even organizations to suit people. In development, they set high expectations, build master-apprentice relationships, and encourage fast, step-change growth. All of us can borrow from their playbook to improve our own ability to identify and hone talent.

Sydney Finkelstein is the Steven Roth Professor of Management in Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business and the author of *Superbosses: How Exceptional Leaders Manage the Flow of Talent* (Portfolio/Penguin, February 2016) from which this article was adapted.

This article is about TALENT MANAGEMENT

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Emmanuel Matuco a day ago

Respectfully great article. Clearly decodes the secrets of superbosses. Thank you so much. I took the liberty of printing it, so I could revisit its gems again.

"Great" is a title, we confer on a person or persons who made a significant impact on our life. Outside of Sensei Daisaku Ikeda and my parents, I too was mentored well by others. One of them, whom I will confer that title "great" was the late Mrs. Fukue (for personal reasons, I do not wish to share her full name).

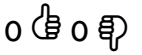
She was my elder religious leader. Life didn't gave her and her husband sons. Only daughters. In the twilight of her life; in my last meeting with her, she proudly called me one of her sons in front of other leaders. For such an honor, tears rolled down my cheeks. Still does, out of remembrance and pride. Her memory is worth a cry.

We, me and my other friends who are now leaders of our own groups, we met her when I was a college student. I was a cocky, arrogant, impertinent pup. when she took us under her compassionate tutelage. She taught us many things. Foremost of which is her leading us to earnestly to walk the path my Sensei in life paved.

As I wrote here long ago, there comes a time in one's life, when power goes to one's head and makes one giddy, makes one drunk with it. When it came to me, I almost paid it with my job. I in fact threw the towel

already. Went looking for another job in another place. But she metaphorically "picked" it up, and gathered all the shards of pride it contained or what's left of it. Then through words of encouragement that pierced my heart, she propped me up. "Stand for your honor" Take it back! Take it! Not exactly those words, but exactly how it came across to me at that time. I represent a Noble Purpose. I must fight for that purpose!

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