



## Insights from the Best Boss To Work With Challenge





## Abstract

The qualities of great managers have been in question since a long time. How can bosses, evolve to be best bosses? That's the question we started out with. In light of this **Pragati Leadership** decided to conduct a short online survey and a challenge to identify what qualities employees admire and appreciate in their boss. **1267 nominators** submitted their nominations for their best boss.

Given the data generated, it was clear that great bosses demonstrate all round excellence in multiple dimensions concerning employee development and engagement.

“

Overall, we conclude that **Team work, Confidence and Analytical Thinking** are the qualities that are most observed and admired in the best bosses.

”





## Introduction

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*It is a known fact that more than 50% of the employees quit their boss, not their job.*

”

**P**ragati Leadership and National Human Resource Development (NHRD) Pune chapter believe that people are at the heart of every organization. It is they who drive the business forward by building the organization's strategy and driving operational efficiencies.

We aim to enable the creation of work environments within organisations where individuals can draw upon their passion and creativity to contribute their best which in turns boosts engagement and productivity. The organization culture is driven by the managers. Best bosses provide the impetus to create the right climate.

The Gallup study, 2015, states that **“It is a known fact that more than 50% of the employees quit their boss, not their job”**. It is vital that the managers who help create the right atmosphere are recognized.

The **#BestBossToWorkWith** challenge was envisaged to celebrate great bosses, identify what they are made of and to help create a culture of feed forward!

# Objectives

The **Goals / Objectives** of the survey were to bring out:

- The qualities employees admire and appreciate in their business leaders
- To what extent current leaders are cherished on different parameters; and
- Who are the most amazing best bosses in organizations

“

*There are several frameworks for engagement by managers. Our framework defined **5 dimensions (qualities and capabilities)** outlined below:*

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## Personal Development

Encourages their team to develop themselves on a continuous basis.



## Career Development

Supports their team members to further their careers.



## On The Job Support

Provides on the job guidance to their team.



## Reward and Recognition

Appreciates their team and recognises their contribution.



## Diversity and Inclusion

Has an open mind and is inclusive of varied differences.

# Methodology

The initiative was executed through an online poll with **1267 people** participating in nominating their choice of best boss. They could rate them for their capabilities and identify the key qualities they observe in them. The entire process was anonymous for the person nominated. **407 bosses** were nominated from over **90 organisations**.

There were **2 sections to the survey**. **Section 1** was to gather the rating of managers on these 5

clusters - **Personal Development, Career Development, On the Job Support, Reward and Recognition** and **Diversity and Inclusion**. **Section 2** was to rate the top **5 qualities** from a comprehensive list of aspects that they look for in a best boss.

Participants took part in this survey voluntarily and signed up for it online through the publicity within the organisation.

# Findings



With any such exercise, a significant volume of data points is generated. This leads to insights, some surprising and some expected.

Looking at the data that was generated, we sifted for any patterns and trends. Our aim here is to highlight some significant observations and inferences.

## Understanding the Nominators

### Section 1A

“

*It was important to also **understand the differences** which might arise from the **tenure of the employee nominators**.*

”

When we designed the evaluation framework for best boss, we included the longevity of the employee in the organization as a critical parameter. This was because historically, engagement and the stay in the organization have often shown a high correlation. It was important to also understand the differences which might arise from the tenure of the employee nominators. We were also curious to find out if there were any gender specific differences in how employees evaluate their best managers.

The focus in this section is on the overall nominators, their expectations from a great manager (best boss) and dimensions of the nominator profiles.

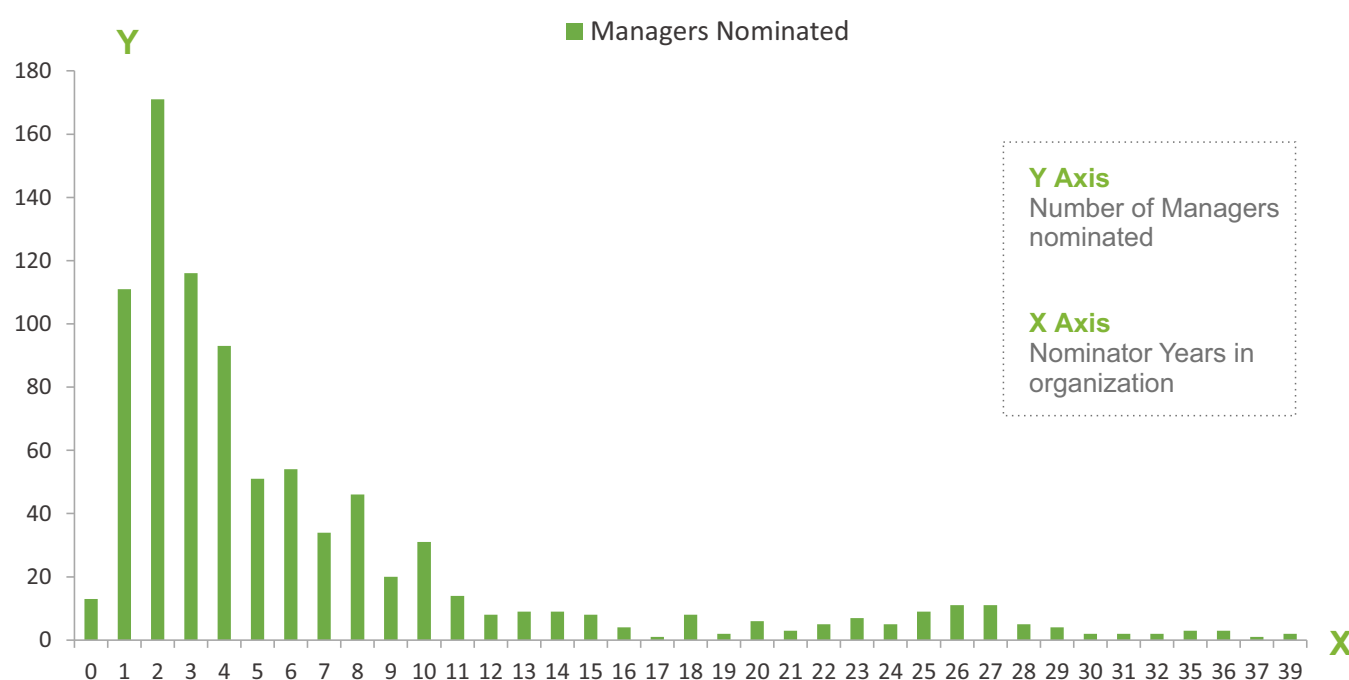


## Nominator tenure in the organization

## Section 1A

**Chart 1.1**

Distribution of nominators as per the tenure in the organisation



One of the interesting aspects during this initiative was to understand who a **great manager (best boss)** was according to the **tenure (time in the organization)** of employees. Details are listed below in **data point 1 and 2**.

1

### Data Point

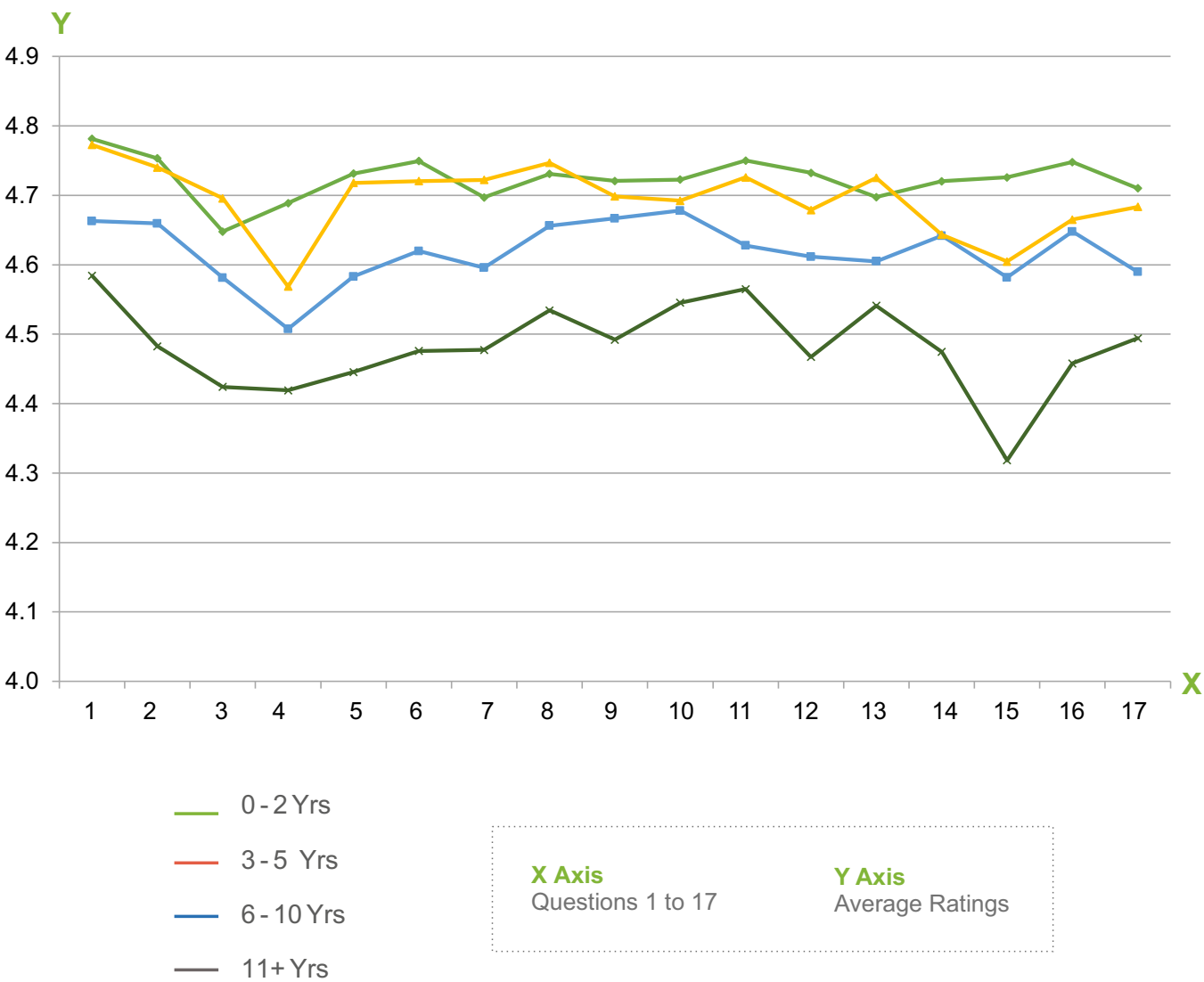
The data suggests that nominators who have spent less time in the organization have taken more keen interest to nominate their boss as best boss as compared to employees who have been with the organization longer.  
(Refer Chart 1.1)

### Data Inference

The low participation from high tenure employees could be due to fatigue or déjà vu . It could also be that they are too pre occupied with their work. During the early years in the organization, employees might have a more favourable view which slowly degrades into a balanced or a negative view. Hence, Organizations could make more efforts to connect with employees who have been around for a long period of time and not take them for granted.



**Chart 1.2** Distribution of ratings across statements for the tenure of nominators in the organisation



*Across the spectrum of capabilities demonstrated by their manager, variations were minimum.*

## 2

### Data Point

The data highlights that **question 1** “**My Manager inspires and energizes me.**” was rated the highest with an average of **4.7** amongst all ages and categories. (Refer Chart 1.2)

### Data Inference

With our prior experience in the learning industry, we had expected that nominators would find a great manager (best boss) as one who inspires and energises them.

3

### Data Point

Further nominators who have spent 0 to 2 years have rated low for **question 3 “My Manager challenges me and takes me outside my comfort zone.”** (Refer Chart 1.2)

### Data Inference

This maybe an indication that the new joinees have an energy and excitement to work on newer tasks and thus expect their bosses to provide the same scope.

4

### Data Point

Nominators who have spent more than 3 years in the organization have rated low for **question 4 “My Manager fairly rewards and recognises performance with no biases.”** (Refer Chart 1.2)

### Data Inference

With higher longevity in the organization, employees are more aware of the Rewards & Recognition (R&R) processes in the organization they work for. Consequently, managers have to demonstrate fairness and transparency in the entire R&R process. The expectations from people with longer tenure seems to be higher in areas of R&R.

5

### Data Point

Lastly, nominators who have spent more than 11 years in the organization have rated low for all the questions.

### Data Inference

This was an exception that was not envisaged. The reasons for such low rating could be that being in a company for a long time may cause employees to be dissatisfied overall. Further working in the same role and having the same bosses may bring about a feeling of monotony.



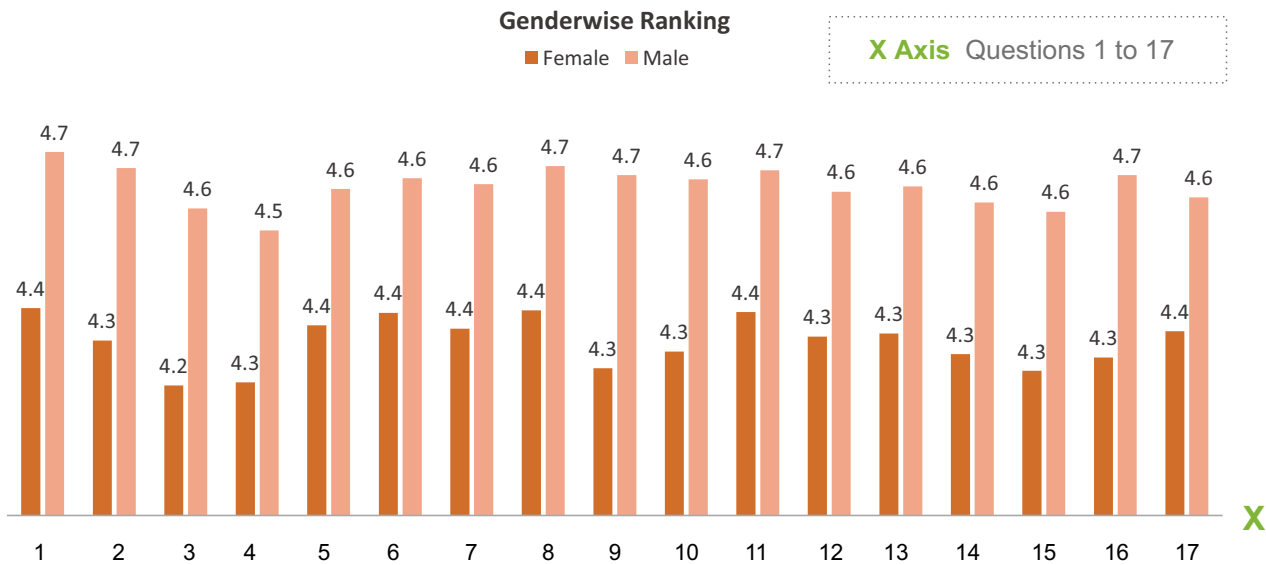


Nominations according to Gender

Section 1B

Chart 2.1

Distribution of ratings across questions and gender.



The **percentage of women employees** participating in the survey was **13%**. The low percentage is not an encouraging data. We don't have data for the gender diversity of the organizations which participated, but from statistics available generally, the 13% participation rate appears lower than the industry average of women employed. This number could also be particularly lower because of the higher participation in the survey of organizations in the manufacturing sector where the gender ratio is highly skewed towards a male workforce.

However the data still points to a lower number of women employees who nominated their managers as Best Bosses. We reckon that unless women employees feel completely safe and respected, this number will remain low. Organizations with low participation score from women employees need to rethink on their engagement strategies for their women employees.

The encouraging news is that the scores for the nominated managers did not vary significantly (Refer Chart 2.1) between their male and female nominators. That means that best bosses are not viewed as gender specific but more on the qualities they bring.

Manager Gender	Total	Percent
Female	168	13.26
Male	1098	86.66
Null	1	0.08
Grand Total	1267	100

## Organization Wide Analysis/ Ratios

## Section 1C

“

The overall analysis of all the nominators highlighted aspects such as ratio of nominations and who received maximum votes. It's interesting to see the average of such nominations too.

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### Data 1

Across **90** organisations

**1267** people participated  
in the best boss initiative

From the data it was seen that  
**407** unique nominations were received

The average of these nominations was  
**3.11**

### Data 2

In the survey,

**86** people voted for someone as the best  
boss which was the highest nominations  
received by a great manager.

The second highest nominations were  
**72** for another great manager.



## Qualities

## Section 2

The **BestBoss** Survey also had one more objective; to know if there are any specific qualities which the sub-ordinates observed and admired about their managers. This could help identify what qualities we could enhance in the overall Managerial pool.

We provided a list of **25 qualities** which were observable in nature by their employees and spread across cognitive, emotional and social dimensions.

We were surprised to find that across tenure and gender, the top qualities as identified by the raters remained largely similar.

In this section we will discuss the findings from the ratings given by nominators on the top 5 qualities that they look for in a best boss.

The overall top rated qualities are listed below. (Refer Table 1.1)

**Table 1.1**

**Top five qualities with highest rating and percentage of nominator selection**

Quality	No. of Managers	Percent
Team Work	462	7.69
Confidence	460	7.66
Analytical Thinking	440	7.33
Leading	427	7.11
Positivity	427	7.11

“

**Teamwork** being the highest goes to show that over generations and across industries, expectations of employees are similar, to bond and work as a cohesive team which is led by their manager.

”



## The most commonly found qualities in Best Boss

Chart 3.1

Distribution all 24 qualities according to tenure in the organisation

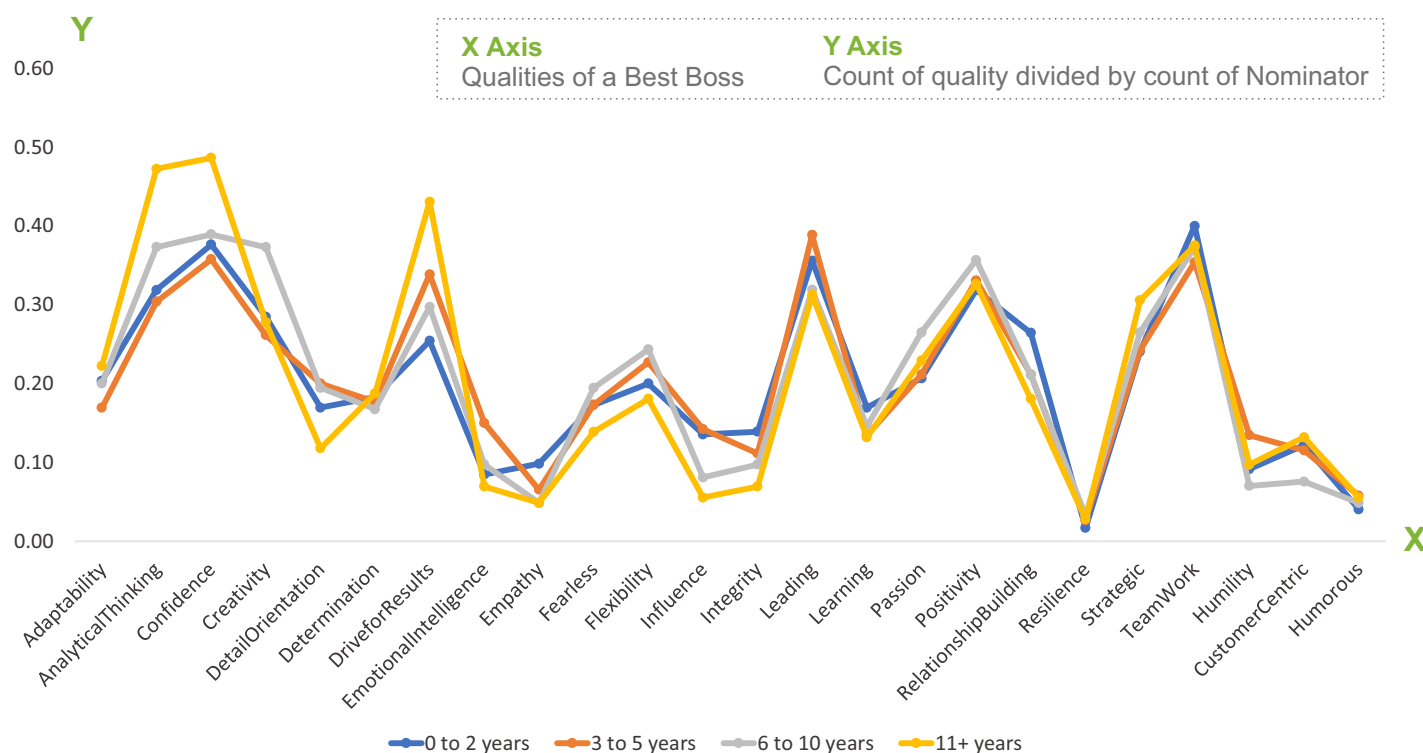


Table 2.1

Top five qualities with highest rating and percentage of nominator selection

Years in Organisation	Top Qualities						
0 - 2	Analytical Thinking	Confidence	Leading	Positivity	Team Work		
3 - 5		Confidence	Leading	Positivity	Team Work	Drive for results	
6 - 10	Analytical Thinking	Confidence		Positivity	Team Work		Creativity
11+	Analytical Thinking	Confidence	Leading		Team Work	Drive for results	



1

### Data Point

The data highlighted that nominators have chosen 3 very similar qualities they look for in their best boss, irrespective of their tenure (years spent in the organization) on as average.  
(Refer Table 2.1 & Chart 3.1)

### Data Inference

One can observe that confidence and team work are qualities that all 4 groups of nominators have chosen. Next are analytical thinking, positivity and leading that 3 groups have rated as the top.

Given the challenging work environment and multiple stake holders to engage with, team members are looking for leaders to display confidence and promote team work.

Leaders may want to look at focussing on these qualities going ahead.

2

### Data Point

Further, nominators who have spent more than 11 years in the organization have chosen Analytical Thinking, Confidence, and Team Work, Drive for Results & Leading and as compared to nominators who have spent 6 to 10 years who have chosen Analytical Thinking, Confidence, Team work, Creativity & Positivity and as top qualities of their managers. (Refer Table 2.1 & Chart 3.1)

### Data Inference

It's interesting to note the difference between these two groups. The longer tenure group prefers qualities such as drive for results and leading, whereas the group that is just slightly younger prefers creativity and positivity as qualities for their best boss.

This possibly could be due to that with longer tenure, an expected outcome from manager is to drive results rather than be a problem solver.

# Low Rated Qualities of Manager

Table 3.1

Lowest five qualities with lowest rating and percentage of nominator selection

Quality	No. of Managers	Percent
Emotional Intelligence	127	2.11
Customer Centric	126	2.10
Empathy	87	1.45
Humorous	62	1.03
Resilience	30	0.50

**Data Point**

It was surprising to see that emotional intelligence and empathy were rated lower than the remaining qualities; they featured in the bottom few. (Refer Table 3.1)

**Data Inference**

We infer that while these are wonderful qualities in a leader, there might not be sufficient visibility as an empowered team is less likely to need empathy. Other reasons could be that great leaders regularly display other qualities like analytical thinking, other qualities such as EI are not coming to the forefront. However, it does not imply that employees don't value or admire these qualities.

“ Also Sense of Humour isn't considered to be a commonly recognized quality in great bosses. We think that being humorous may be linked to being frivolous and casual so great managers might be using this sparingly and selectively. Consequently this may not show up as a very visible quality. ”

**Table 4.1**

All qualities and ratings given by Female and Male Nominators

Quality / Manager	Female Managers	Male Managers
Adaptability	32	210
Analytical Thinking	42	397
Confidence	70	389
Creativity	33	291
Detail Orientation	44	188
Determination	35	174
Drive for Results	53	337
EI	17	110
Empathy	17	70
Fearless	42	165
Flexibility	38	216
Influence	19	120
Integrity	18	141
Leading	58	368
Learning	14	169
Passion	32	256
Positivity	52	375
Relationship Building	33	248
Resilience	3	27
Strategic	39	277
Team Work	64	398
Humility	24	107
Customer Centric	10	116
Humorous	6	56

### Data Point

The data showed the top qualities chosen by women and men separately. Teamwork was the highest rated for men whereas confidence was a quality that was rated by maximum women. (Refer Table 4.1)

### Data Inference

This maybe since females are expected to display more confidence and assertiveness at the workplace as compared to their male counterparts.



## Conclusion

**U**nderstanding Managers' role in creating engagement and the right climate is challenging. Expectations of employees can also vary widely and especially in the motivation frameworks, many of these may be what are termed as “**Hygiene Factors**”.

Once the organization starts looking beyond the basics and the hygiene factors, the ability of the managers to be great bosses and get the best out of their teams becomes the crucial factor in the morale and productivity of the employees.

**BestBosses** survey attempted to dig into what these managers do right and what qualities do they demonstrate for organizations to embed within the larger managerial pool.

Given the data, it is clear that great managers have an all-round excellence in all areas concerning the employee development. They work with confidence, rally the teams, and also demonstrate a lot of positivity. Leading with leadership skills and analytical thinking are also highly respected.

Organizations should look at these inputs to design their talent development strategies and provide enough learning impetus for managers to engage their teams.



# Appendix

Ratings were provided accordingly to the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

S.No	Statements
<b>Personal Development</b>	
1	My manager inspires me and energizes me.
2	My Manager lets me speak about my problems.
13	My Manager shows a genuine interest in my well being as a person.
<b>Career Development</b>	
3	My Manager challenges me and takes me outside my comfort zone.
5	My Manager encourages me to set my developmental goals.
6	My Manager supports me towards achieving my developmental goals.
11	My Manager delegates work to develop my skills and knowledge.
12	My Manager gives me developmental and constructive feedback.
<b>Reward and Recognition</b>	
4	My Manager fairly rewards and recognises performance with no biases.
14	My Manager encourages and rewards me for trying new things and learnings.
<b>On the Job Support</b>	
7	My Manager proactively shares knowledge / information with me.
10	My Manager empowers me to take decisions independently.
17	My Manager is open and transparent in all his / her communication.
<b>Diversity and Inclusion</b>	
8	My Manager respects and asks for my opinions.
9	My Manager is open to my ideas and willing to consider my point of view.
15	My Manager is open to diverse views.
16	My Manager is inclusive of people from different cultures and background.

## Qualities

**Identify the top 5 qualities of your boss (Select only 5)**

If you have already selected 5 and want to change your choice then unselect a previously selected quality

Adaptability	Drive for Results	Integrity	Resilience
Analytical Thinking	Emotional Intelligence	Leading	Strategic Thinking
Self-Confidence	Empathy	Continuous Learning	Teamwork
Creativity	Fearless	Passion	Humility
Attention to Details	Flexibility	Positivity	Customer Centric
Determination	Influencer	Relationship Building	Humorous

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