



## THE BOSS EDITION

# Be careful what you wish for

There are many pitfalls on the climb to the top and the perils don't stop once you get there, writes **John Caldwell**.

**T**he idea of being the boss is ingrained from a young age and reinforced when you enter the workforce – if you work hard and do a good job, you might be the boss one day.

While this may be a dream for many, there is a dark side that's seldom talked about.

There are many challenges awaiting you when you finally nab the top job. While most are just cosmetic – with broad shoulders and some gumption, you can easily move past them and become a very successful leader – it's those that take you all the way to the edge, close enough you have to remind yourself to breathe, that have the greatest impact.

In the era of gen Y and the technological churn, the pace of the workplace is quickening and it can be a serious mistake to move your career forward too quickly. While we all look forward to the pay increase and the ever-important title, perhaps a company car or a corner office, being overpromoted too soon is a dangerous area.

Often we see people accept a role without really being ready for it and without considering the pros and cons of promotion.

A common problem is you may not make it in your new role without the right skills.

You will be viewed as overqualified for the level you once held but not qualified enough for the level you just failed at. This will leave you with reduced employment options and make job hunting difficult.

It's important to remember it's not just about acquiring the right

skills to do the job but about the experience you acquire that can't be taught in a textbook – the experience that time and variation brings in your career. If you ask anyone who is there already, they'll encourage you to take your time and do it right.

What is critical when seeking a promotion or scouting for new opportunities to further your career is that you understand the requirements of the role, read the employment agreement and insist on seeing a position description

## As the boss, you're accountable for everyone's results.

highlighting the skills required and what you must achieve in the role. It's a serious mistake to accept a role and think you can bluff your way through the key criteria.

There is also a downside to a promotion in that people rarely get the perks without the side-effects. Once you were only accountable for your own results but as the boss, you're accountable for everyone's results. The buck stops with you.

There is also a much darker side – the one of personal and public liability. You may be liable for all and anything that takes place in that company, even if it is not directly by your hand.

Responsibility doesn't just stop at safety and is not just limited to managers. In one recent case, a worker was fined for bullying staff – the first time an employee had been

convicted without physically harming anyone. The company directors, unaware of the events, were also fined for providing the forum for the bullying to occur.

Managers are responsible for the safety of their workforce and can be held liable for workplace injuries. With an average of 26 workplace deaths and 32,000 injuries a year in Australia, the Government has implemented tough new laws holding directors accountable.

The laws can impose jail time of up to five years and fines ranging from \$250,000 to \$900,000 for individuals, not from the company itself.

Many industries nurture and promote from within and it's an admirable quality to find in an organisation. Setting a career goal and working towards it with a measured approach is certainly something to be applauded.

It's important not to move too fast and to make sure the move you make is at the right time for you and your development.

Once in the role, always take your responsibility seriously and make sure you understand your accountabilities in full.

John Caldwell is the managing director of Retailworld Resourcing – Australasia's largest recruitment provider to the retail industry – and has 15 years' retail and recruitment experience.  
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Don't jump too soon ... make sure you're well prepared for a role in management.  
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For further information contact Ian Moore, Manager Service Operations on **9864 9521**. Email applications to [ian.moore@visionaustralia.org](mailto:ian.moore@visionaustralia.org) by **COB** Monday 21 September.

Vision Australia welcomes applications from candidates who are blind or have low vision.