

Sponsors Talk about What it Takes to be the Ultimate Boss

Interviews with our Sponsors:

Ximble

Peter Swaniker, Founder & CEO

1. What kind of boss are you? Pick an emoji that best fits your style.

I'm a cool boss. Meaning, I remain calm under pressure. My role is to set the tone for my team so I make sure to remain cool and stay focused on solutions and the positive.

So, I guess the emoji that best describes me is the guy with the sunglasses.

2. What makes a great boss?

I think a great boss is like a great coach - someone who can take a group of talented individuals and guide them in operating together as a strong team to achieve their own goals as well as the organization's goals. Great bosses have to ensure that the right team is in place and that they are supported and empowered to do their jobs.

3. How important is it to be an awesome boss?

Very important. Awesome bosses keep their teams motivated and show leadership. They make sure employees know they are essential to the success of the organization and that their opinions matter, while empowering them to do their jobs.

4. What would your employees say about you?

I think my employees would agree that I'm a pretty cool boss and value their roles. I come to work excited about the possibilities of the day and I believe that enthusiasm is contagious.

5. What do Snacknation, Oakleaf Partner Holdings, and Ximble have in common?

We all keep customer service and appreciation for our employees at the center of how we operate. We all strive to create a positive culture within our organizations where each individual's accomplishments are appreciated as much as the accomplishments of the collective team.

SnackNation

Andy Mackensen, Co-Founder & CMO

1. What kind of boss are you? Pick an emoji that best fits your style.

Is it weird that I don't particularly like the word "boss?" I prefer "coach" or "leader." I think people in the office would describe me as a fun boss who expects a lot. I'm all about making sure we're enjoying each other and the work we're doing, but at the same time, I expect people to be focused, efficient, and at the end of the day, effective. So it's a fine balance of injecting fun into what we're doing, but also doing the hard work that needs to get done. My emoji is the smiley face with sunglasses because my team has the belief and confidence that our future is so bright, we need to wear shades.

2. What makes a great boss?

A great boss is extremely effective at removing obstacles for their teammates. A great boss has a phenomenal understanding of what each player is trying to accomplish and then has clear

communication with them about what is blocking their way. A great boss then helps remove those obstacles by pulling in company resources or by helping them think differently about the problem (and solving it a different way).

Furthermore, a great boss lives by the mantra, “you encourage what you allow.” If a boss sees something that is impeding the team from succeeding, it’s their job to bring it up and find a solution.

Example: A boss is big on punctuality to meetings. There’s a particular member of the team who shows up five minutes late to meetings. If the boss doesn’t say something and correct that action, then they are actually *encouraging* that action.

2. How important is it to be an awesome boss?

In short, really, really, ridiculously important. The boss is a big lever in the organization and big levers need to make big impact or else the organization will flounder. Why a big lever? Let’s take the average boss who manages six people. An awesome boss will have all six of those people at near highest efficiency and effectiveness. Having six high-performing people is a huge lever compared to the output the boss could produce just by him- or herself. So, awesome = big lever.

3. What would your employees say about you?

They would say he spreads joy and optimism around the office, has really bad (good) dad jokes, and expects a lot from his team. Additionally, they would say that he expects them to do what they say they’re going to do and communicate if they’re unable to make a deadline.

4. What do your fellow sponsors have in common with SnackNation?

We all value company culture as a driver of the business, not as an after-thought. We also really like puppies, which is pretty cool.

**Adam Tolk, Founder & Managing Partner
OakLeaf Partner Holdings**

1. What kind of boss are you? Pick an emoji that best fits your style.

Honestly, I don’t really consider myself a “typical” boss. In fact, the majority of my day is spent working alongside my team members, and making sure that they have the resources and support they need to succeed. There’s no shortcut to developing strong bonds with your people.

I think the “rainbow” emoji would best describe my leadership style. Embracing the diversity of our team is what allows us to succeed and continually grow. Plus, rainbows bring smiles to people’s faces. What more could you ask for?

2. What makes a great boss?

Succeeding as a boss boils down to your ability to understand and motivate each individual on your team. Not all leaders are beating their chest and giving motivational speeches and that’s okay. My advice: remember where you came from, be grateful for your team, and find ways to help each individual grow, prosper and be a contributing member of the team.

3. How important is it to be an awesome boss?

Extremely important. Company culture starts at the top and when you set the example as someone who is excited to come to work each day and passionate about making work fun, your employees will pick up on this and the positive energy will flow throughout your company.

4. What would your employees say about you?

He's full of energy and keeps us motivated to do what we do best.

5. What does OakLeaf Partner Holdings have in common with its fellow sponsors?

OakLeaf Partner Holdings, Ximble, and SnackNation all hold company culture to the highest standard. We understand that the strength of a company is dependent on the unity of its people and there's no better way to build that than to continually make our work environment enjoyable and engaging.