

## Bosses and fatherhood Worksheet

### A Before you read

Discuss the questions below.

1. In your workplace, are there more women than men, or more men than women?
2. Is your boss a woman or a man?
3. Is your boss a parent? If so, does your boss have sons, daughters or both?
4. In your workplace, do parents work as hard as people who are not parents?

### B Comprehension

1) Read the headline of the article and the subheading. Answer the questions.

- a) What sort of people usually has corner offices? Why?
- b) What do you keep in your wallet? Why should you watch it?
- c) What are cribs? Who usually use them?

2) Read the first two paragraphs. Answer the questions.

- a) What do new parents often talk about?
- b) Is a sprog, male, female or either male or female?
- c) Do you think sprog is a formal or colloquial word?
- d) Where is the Danish study going to be published?
- e) Why does the study only concern male bosses?

3) Read the third paragraph. Answer the questions.

- a) What do male bosses do when they become parents?
- b) Do boss/fathers of sons increase their salaries more or less than boss/fathers of daughters?
- c) Why do they raise their own wages?
- d) Are the implications for other employees good or bad?

4) Read the fourth paragraph. Answer the questions.

- a) What comes out of the workers' pockets?
- b) Who get 0.5% less after the boss father's his first son?
- c) According to David Ross, why can female employees expect to be paid a bit more?
- d) What happens after the boss fathers a second child?

### C Discussion

Discuss the questions below.

- 1) The results of business studies are frequently published in magazines. Some provide useful accurate information, others do not. From your experience, do you think the results of this study are accurate? If the study was done in your country, what would the results show?
- 2) In your country, do both male and female employees at the same grade receive the same salaries? Is this fair?
- 3) In some countries, female employees talk about 'the glass ceiling'. Female employees can be promoted up to a certain level, but the glass ceiling prevents them from reaching senior positions. Does the glass ceiling exist in your country? Is it fair?

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## D Vocabulary

Choose the correct option to complete the sentences. Look at the words in *italics* carefully.

- 1) A *gurgle* is ...
  - a) a special strap for carrying a baby.
  - b) a formula for baby food.
  - c) a noise made by a baby.
- 2) A *sprog* is ...
  - a) a pocket watch.
  - b) an old word for a baby frog.
  - c) an informal word for a baby.
- 3) *Length of tenure* refers to ...
  - a) the level of a job in a hierarchy.
  - b) the number of steps from starting to the current position.
  - c) the number of years the individual has held a position.
- 4) A *hefty* increase is ...
  - a) a large increase.
  - b) an increase related to promotion.
  - c) a reward for good performance.
- 5) '*grunts*' in paragraph 3 are ...
  - a) manual workers.
  - b) non-executive employees.
  - c) complaints.
- 6) '*underlings*' in paragraph 4 are ...
  - a) major shareholders.
  - b) ordinary workers.
  - c) trade union members.
- 7) If you *bear the brunt* of a change, you ...
  - a) suffer more than others.
  - b) gain more than others.
  - c) are unaffected by the change.
- 8) *Alas* is an exclamation used after ...
  - a) a shock.
  - b) a piece of bad news.
  - c) a good performance.

## E Discussion

"The Peter Principle", proposed by Laurence J Peter, stated that in any organisation in which employees are promoted for competent performance, employees will be promoted to the level at which they are incompetent. Laurence Peter suggested that businesses fail because all the managers and bosses have reached their level of incompetence.

What do you think of this idea? Do you think it is true? Discuss.

## Bosses and fatherhood

Of corner offices and cribs

# When your boss has a baby, watch your wallet

Nov 24th 2012 | from the print edition

NEW parents are annoying. They think you want to hear about every gurgle and baby-step. But it could be worse. When your boss has a sprog, watch your wallet.

A study to be published next month in *Administrative Science Quarterly* looks at what happens to workers' pay when a male boss has a child. Researchers tracked salaries at every firm in Denmark with more than ten employees between 1996 and 2006. (They confined themselves to male bosses partly because the sample of female bosses was too small.)

Male bosses, it turns out, pay themselves significantly more once they become fathers. Even after controlling for factors such as age, length of tenure and the performance of the firm, the study found that bosses with daughters pay themselves 3.5% more than childless ones. If they have a son, that increases to a hefty 6.4%. David Ross of Columbia Business School, one of the authors, says all fathers feel a duty to support their families. For grunts this means working harder. Bosses have the more agreeable option of raising their own wages.

This is bad news for underlings. That extra money comes out of workers' pockets, the study finds. Staff employed by a father are typically paid less. The amount depends on such things as the sex of the baby and whether it is his first child. Male employees bear the brunt: if the boss's child is a son, for example, they can expect 0.5% less salary than if he hadn't reproduced.

Female staff fare better. After their boss's first child, they can expect to be paid a little more. Mr Ross speculates that this might be because, having seen their wives go through childbirth, they start to respect women more. Alas, such goodwill doesn't last. Once the boss has a second child, female workers' wages are likely to fall, just like men's.

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## Teachers' notes and key

- A Open answers
- B Comprehension
- 1)
- a) Bosses, because corner offices are light and have a nice view.
  - b) You should watch your wallet because your money may disappear.
  - c) Cribs are small beds for babies.
- 2)
- a) They talk endlessly about their babies and the progress they are making.
  - b) A sprog is a very informal, slightly joking, reference to a child.
  - c) In Administrative Science Quarterly.
  - d) Because the researchers could not find enough female bosses.
- 3)
- a) They frequently increase their own pay.
  - b) Father/bosses of sons increase their pay more.
  - c) They feel they must look after their new family.
  - d) The implications are bad.
- 4)
- a) Money: the cost of the boss's increased pay.
  - b) Male underlings.
  - c) Because bosses start to have a greater respect for women.
  - d) Both male and female employees suffer equally.
- C Open answers
- D 1c, 2c, 3c, 4a, 5b, 6b, 7a, 8b
- E Open answers