



## Extremely Ambitious Manager Deceives Overachieving Employee

By Nancy Capistran, PCC, CPC

A few years ago, a top performer that worked at a manufacturing company hired me to support her with a difficult situation at her office. The company she was working for was struggling financially. It was clear to her that the lack of growth in the business was because of the consistently low customer satisfaction scores. In the three years that she had worked there, the process flow had become overly cumbersome. As new products and services were added to the company's platform, it only exacerbated the problems. No one had ever taken a thorough and measured approach as to what it would take to enhance the process flow. Management's tunnel vision had created a tangled web of challenges.

My client would regularly update her manager on the obstacles that the company as a whole was facing, but he said that it wasn't his problem, and that he couldn't be bothered due to his overflowing workload. My client was very frustrated with her manager's response because her past experiences had provided her with a keen eye for uncovering and cleaning up areas of inefficiency. After many conversations that we had together, and with her not being able to sit on the sidelines, she again went to her manager with an idea to activate a major process improvement initiative that would significantly reduce the root cause of their customers' complaints. Her manager reluctantly agreed to her undertaking of this enterprise if she stayed on top of all of her regular responsibilities. She agreed, and for the next twelve months she did both. It was exhausting, but she felt that it was well worth the effort. She could visualize the value that this would have for the company and its customers. Several of her colleagues were also passionate about the many streamlining efficiencies and total cycle time reduction.

Since this was an over-and-above effort for everyone on the team, as they too had their regular work to do, the changes took much longer than they would have liked. They discovered that there were outsourced delays, inventory control inefficiencies, lack of consistency in quality, process flow challenges, and point of contact issues. In addition, there were major obstacles with prioritizing dealer orders over consumer orders, which caused huge shipping delays for the end consumer. Manufacturing was rewarded by the volume of production each day versus ensuring that the correct manufacturing workflow was followed. Out of respect, even though her manager was lukewarm at best with this effort, she provided him with updates on a regular basis. Finally, the process improvement team was at a point where they had identified and resolved all of the issues. They were ready to go live with all the enhancements. It was a thrilling time for the entire team.

What she didn't know was that her boss had been, behind the scenes, sharing with the executives "his ideas" and "his efforts" to lead this process improvement. While my client was out of the office on an approved day off, he had scheduled a meeting with the executives to officially launch the new process. He took full credit for the extensive work that my client had put in without even mentioning that she had

played an integral part in identifying the issues, and in leading, and then launching, this overhaul to completion. The news of his deception caught her completely off guard. She was speechless as she had no inkling of his sabotaging activities. While his lack of character angered her greatly, his actions paralyzed her. In an instant, he had stripped her of all trust, loyalty, and commitment, all of which she had firmly possessed just moments before the shock.

Initially, she had been unable to rally as she had immersed herself in an emotionally toxic space. Once we talked through the situation and she had mustered up the courage, she decided she was ready to speak up. His lack of integrity, dishonesty, and immoral behavior was well beyond anything that she had ever experienced. She felt that it was important to directly convey to her boss the disappointment, hurt, and anger that she was experiencing due to his pathological web of deceit. It was important to my client to be able to articulate her view, yet not compromise her character, so she calmly asked her manager why he had taken credit for her work and launched the new process without her. He shot back at her that her work was his work because she worked for him. He said that he had every right to have the meeting and share the new process with the executives without her being there. Despite her being a seasoned professional, having the rug pulled out from underneath her like that, left her feeling insecure, untrusting, and immediately disengaged from her job, her boss, and the company as a whole. She and her colleagues had worked diligently, and collectively they were thrilled to see this major process improvement launch. Her boss had taken advantage of their efforts and leveraged it for his own advancement. She had lost all respect for her manager.

My client was no longer going to let him take credit for any of her work. She was done. In a little over a week's time, not only had I supported her in giving her notice, but she had quickly secured an excellent career change that she was very excited about. When she walked out of the company's doors for the last time, she told me she felt a rush of fresh air and sunshine. Leaving the company and her colleagues hadn't been easy, but she had done what she needed to do. She had been blindsided, but she hadn't turned a blind eye. Throughout the emotional betrayal of trust, she had stayed true to herself.

People's extreme ambition, greed, or desperation can dominate their conduct to such a degree that they don't do the right thing. Excessive ambition can inflict harm on careers, organizations, and colleagues. Overly ambitious individuals often overstep their bounds. Steamrolling over others is not a sustainable way to climb the ladder of success. When our ambition shows up as success-mania, it becomes counterproductive and self-destructive. It is not easy, but it is very valuable to treasure our hard-learned lessons in order to be able to move forward in a decisive direction.



**About the Author:** Nancy Capistran is a best-selling author, an award-winning, internationally certified executive coach, motivational speaker, and trusted advisor. She is Principal of [Capistran Leadership, LLC](#), and [Crisis Interception, LLC](#). Nancy's best-selling international leadership book: [Open Your Eyes and LEAD](#) shows readers how to become a positive force in the world and how to balance and manage omnipresent tensions while striving for leadership excellence. Capistran shares inspirational stories and advice from her 30+ year career to help both seasoned and emerging leaders develop intentionality while maintaining their core values and beliefs even when life's pressures dictate otherwise.