

Having your Supervisor Work with You

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Managing Your Boss

Write this down: Your boss isn't your best friend, a babysitter or an ogre.

Managing Your Boss Means:

- Knowing her work habits and how they affect you.
- Communicating in ways he's most likely to hear.
- Recognizing her values and looking for alignment.
- Representing your staff's wins, concerns or needs effectively.
- Building trust that makes successes more enjoyable and failures less than fatal.
- Anticipating his needs, so you can plan your work/manage your time accordingly.
- Knowing how to disagree constructively; as the loyal opposition, not just the opposition.
- Ensuring "a place at the table" for your team, when many others in the organization are requesting resources.
- Helping one another through knowledge of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Bosses Appreciate Openness and Honesty

They depend on you to tell them what they need to know, and the smart boss wants the details straight up.

Learn Your Boss's Concerns and Goals

Understand the problems and pressures your boss confronts daily. Listen carefully to what your boss says--and doesn't say.

Understand How Your Boss Likes to Receive Information

Face-to-face, memo, e-mail or weekly staff meeting--and manage the flow of details accordingly. If something important breaks, take it directly to your boss, but don't always demand face time.

Stay Focused on Your Job

The best way to advance is to do well in your current assignment. The worst thing you can do is ignore the details of your present job while looking forward to the next rung on the corporate ladder.

Your Relationship With Your Supervisor is Probably the Most Important One You Have at Work.

Having a healthy relationship with your supervisor usually means you're more satisfied with the work you do and have less stress.

Your boss can be a key supporter in helping you achieve your long-term goals. He or she knows your school's goals and knows what the university looks for in future managers and leaders.

Show Respect

Even if your boss hasn't yet won your loyalty, he or she is still entitled to your respect.

Don't Be Afraid of Your Boss

Some supervisors can be intimidating, but remember, your boss needs you. Your performance is often key to the success of your boss.

Do Your Best

Try to live up to the performance expectations set for your job. In doing your best, you'll gain greater satisfaction from your work, earn your supervisor's trust and help the organization achieve its goals.

Give Honest Feedback

Supervisor needs you to tell
the truth, even if it's
unpleasant.

Don't Try to Hide Problems

First, try to solve the problem. If you can't and the problem becomes serious, let your supervisor know as soon as possible. Offer solutions and ask for additional recommendations. Don't let your boss find out about the problem from someone else.

Break Important News Fast

If you get pregnant, become seriously ill, need to have surgery or need time off for a family crisis, inform your boss as soon as possible. This gives him or her time to cover your absence.

Maintain Your Boundaries

Remember to keep your business relationships about business. However close you may be with your supervisor, he or she is still the boss, and at times that means making unpopular or difficult decisions.

Be Positive

When things go wrong, a positive attitude means a lot to people who work with you, including your boss.

Communicate with questions or suggestions, rather than complaints.

Manage Your Anger

Blowing up in front of your manager solves nothing, but demonstrates clearly that you can't control your emotions.

Embrace Your Strengths

If your boss tells you that you're good at something or have done an excellent job on a project, thank him or her and take it to heart. Recognize your own talents and nurture them.

Face Your Shortcomings

You can't be skilled in everything you do. Ask your supervisor for advice to help you grow in areas where you're weak.

How Promoting Your Boss Promotes You

To underscore the quality of its kosher hotdogs, Hebrew National famously advertises that it "answers to a higher authority."

Beware of Backbiting

There is nothing a manager disdains more than the subordinate who goes behind his back. Never make yourself look good at the boss's expense. Since the rules of the game in organizational life are governed by hierarchy, if you circumvent your boss you'll be seen as breaking the chain of command or, worse, betraying him or her.

Striking the Right Balance

All intelligent bosses instinctively separate the people they manage into three distinct categories: the sycophants, the contrarians, and the small percentage of their employees who are the balanced players. You definitely want to be seen as a member of the third group.

The Benefits of Letting Go

Since your boss cares as much about his or her career as you do about yours, what managers really want is for you to make them look smart and successful. Understand that it's your job to polish the boss's reputation

Factors to consider

- The role of your supervisor within the larger institution
- Organizational structure, including attitudes toward change and approaches to power and hierarchy
- Learning and supervisory styles
- Attitudes towards diversity
- Demographic composition of your work group

How is leadership defined at your institution?

Seattle University defines a leader as:

A person at the forefront of a major corporation who uses ethical leadership in decision making, or the head of a non-profit who motivates and influences change. It is the student whose altruistic actions benefit the good of many. An academic institution demonstrates leadership with its mission and in ways that inspire and serve as an example to others.

Leadership at Seattle University encompasses:

- Enterprise
- Influence
- Innovation
- Vision
- Gratitude

Understand power

- Expert power - the capacity to influence because of the knowledge or skills a person has or is presumed to have
- Referent power - based on being liked, admired, and identified with
- Associate power - based on who one knows

Understand change

- Changes in knowledge are the easiest to make since they can occur as a result of reading, hearing a new idea from a respected person or other learning experience
- Changes in attitude are more difficult because of the positive or negative emotion invested in a point of view
- Changes in individual behavior are significantly more difficult and time consuming
- Changes within groups or organizations are the most difficult to implement, especially if they affect customs, norms, and traditions established over time.

Understand your supervisor's learning style

- Is he or she more interested in detail or a big picture thinker?
- A concrete thinker or an abstract thinker?
- An intuitive thinker or a reflective thinker?
- Does she or he prefer discussion or prefers written information?
- Like to talk through a topic or prefer to reflect on a topic alone ?

Understand your supervisor's leadership style

Good leaders integrate all four styles according to the situation.

- Authoritarian – believes staff members need constant attention
- Laissez Faire – allows staff members freedom in accomplishing responsibilities
- Companionable – fosters a friendship-like relationship
- Synergistic – allows joint effects to exceed the combination of individual efforts (best suited for student affairs)

Does your organization practice diversity management?

- Values and uses each employee's contribution to achieve your organization's goals.
- Exhibits an awareness of characteristics common to a culture, race, gender, age, or sexual preference while recognizing and embracing the individual characteristics each employee possesses.

- Approaches every employee as an individual although members may be diverse in appearance, speech, values, beliefs and behaviors.
- Understands that cultural tendencies such as language, mannerisms, and communication patterns are not necessary indicators of a worker's performance and capabilities.
- Recognizes and confronts the issue of discomfort when dealing with a diverse workforce.

Demographics - people of today's workplace possess characteristics that derive, in large part, from the political, social and economic climate of their youth.

Which generation do you and your supervisor belong to?

- Traditionalists — Born 1900 to 1945
- Baby boomers — Born 1946 to 1964
- Generation Xers — Born 1965 to 1980
- Millennials — Born 1981 to 1999

QUIZ

Are you ready for a quiz that could markedly improve your management effectiveness?

Twenty Questions about Your Boss

1. Preferred method of giving info to me:
2. Preferred method of getting info from me:
3. Biggest current pressure:
4. Stands for these values, first and foremost:
5. Biggest "hot button":
6. Passion outside of work:
7. Has expertise in:
8. Lacks expertise in:
9. Vision for our organization:
10. Would be really hurt if someone:

Quiz Continued

11. Best boss my boss ever worked for:
12. Expects this from me when there's a small problem:
13. Expects this from me then there's a big problem:
14. Will not compromise when it comes to:
15. Considers a great day at work to be:
16. Handles pressure by:
17. Is respected by her/his bosses for:
18. Respects others for:
19. Has a blind spot about:
20. Thinks I'm great at:

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