

How To Manage Your Boss

Many of us in the workplace today have become so accustomed to being “managed” in some way or another that we never think to turn the tables for our own benefit. We get caught up with deadlines and details and often lose sight of the fact that the employee/manager relationship can be a fruitful partnership. By simply recognizing that the boss holds the key to our success, we can begin to take those steps necessary to ensure success for both ourselves and our boss. To cultivate the most productive partnership, we need to continually assess and commit to the following with great precision and exceptional skill:

1. Understand self: what and who inspires you?
2. Understand your boss: both their needs and pet peeves!
3. Position yourself with the skills and qualities to win in any situation.

Understand Self

Ask yourself these questions. What makes you tick?

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Measure Your Activity

“When performance gets measured, performance improves”

This old adage remains true year after year. The question is will you do the measuring that can get you the improved performance that you desire this year? We see time and time again in the sports world how records are broken. They constantly measure past performance in order to set new levels of expectation.

During the year, if you want to achieve improved performance, set up a system to measure all your activities that will insure success for yourself and your organization. It is much like a dashboard on your car.

The dashboard measures the activity of the car to insure that it is performing at its expected levels. So if you want to perform at the levels that will achieve success, set up a dashboard that will measure how you are doing.

The first step in setting up your dashboard is to determine what is important to measure. What sort of activities should you be measuring? The answer is every significant activity that will help you achieve your goal. As an example, if you are in sales and you make cold calls to generate prospects, then you would want to track the number of phone calls made, the number of times contact was made and the number of appointments generated.

Once you have determined the activities to measure, set up your dashboard using a simple form to track your progress. You can use an electronic spreadsheet or simply make tic marks manually.

Don't get hung up on what type of method to use, just use a method that works for you.

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Why do you do the things you do? What motivates you and what derails your enthusiasm? The answer to these and others will help to define **who** you are and **why** you do what you do. In most employee/manager conflicts, it is differences in work styles and values that cause a relationship to derail. One individual may pay considerable attention to quality and detail while another focuses on the big picture or the bottom line. Fortunately, it is possible to learn how to observe and predict these differences and adapt one's style to complement that of the other person.

Understand Your Boss

Get to know your boss better. Pay careful attention to his/her needs as well as pet peeves. An employee can easily spoil a relationship with a boss by not paying attention to the

"intangibles." Intangibles are those hard to define, unspoken rules that your boss lives by. Without even knowing it, these unwritten rules can and do have an effect on how you are perceived in the *"eyes"* of your boss. Think for a moment, is your boss people oriented or task oriented? Is his/her management style *"by the book"* or is she *"accommodating"* to each employee's individual needs? Does she admire a *"take charge"* type of person or does that style intimate her? Does he tolerate complaining or will he perceive the employee as a *"high maintenance"* employee? By taking the time to get to know the boss better you can position yourself with the skills and qualities that are necessary to be successful in any situation.



Positioning

One of the most basic needs of any boss is the ability to rely on his/her employees. Whether they are expecting you to follow through with a given task or prove that you are committed to them and the job for the long-haul, a boss needs to know that you hold the same values and behaviors as they do. If your boss sees you as someone who behaves professionally (within their presence and more importantly when they are not around) you will gain respect and credibility that transcends job descriptions and performance appraisals.

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Understanding and positioning yourself with the key values and behaviors that are important to your boss will pay great dividends in the future. Look for unmet needs:

- If you have outstanding organizational skills that your boss admires, introduce a new system where you both have easy access to relevant information.
- Pay attention to his writing style and model it. If he writes in short, concise sentences, adapt your style to be clear and concise.
- If he or she is punctual to meetings; show up early.
- Identify solutions, rather than constantly complaining about problems to the boss that has a lot on his/her plate and a low tolerance for complainers.
- Pick appropriate times to discuss issues with the boss whose time is at a premium. Explain the problem concisely, list ideas for solutions and identify any areas you need help in.
- Don't underestimate the boss's emotional needs. Everyone needs to hear *"job well done"* – even bosses! Give positive feedback when he or she is going through a difficult time or completed a challenging project.
- Look for opportunities where you can use your strengths to make your boss' job less stressful. If you are a natural *"people person"* volunteer to host and plan the Holiday Party. If you enjoy research, volunteer to gather facts for an upcoming speech they are preparing for.

Knowing when and how to position yourself with the skills and qualities that the boss admires is probably one of the most important critical success factors in today's work environment.

Take time to discover what your boss needs, what their work style is and more importantly what they value as their pet peeves! You will then become the trusted *"insider."*

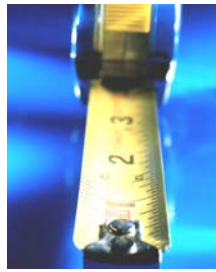


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Keep it simple and easy.

Remember, the purpose of maintaining the dashboard is to improve performance. So you'll need to set benchmarks to measure your actual activity. If you need to make four sales appointments a day, then measure it every day and keep track daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually. On a regular basis, review your results to determine if you are performing at the level necessary to achieve your goal.



So in summary, if you want to be your best, begin today by keeping track of those activities that will get you there.

"If at first you don't succeed, before you try again, stop to figure out what you did wrong."

— Leo Rosten

On The Lighter Side

Three members of an investment bank – a secretary, an associate and a manager – are walking through a park on their way to lunch when they discover an ancient old antique oil lamp.

They rub it and a genie comes out in a huge puff of grey-blue smoke.

The genie says, *"I usually grant only three wishes, so I'll give each of you just one."*

"Me first! Me first!" says the secretary. *"I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, without a care in the world!"*

Poof! She's gone.

In absolute astonishment the associate shouts, *"Me next! Me next! I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseur, an endless supply of pina colodas and the love of my life."*

Poof! He's gone.

"You're next," says the genie to the manager.

The Manager calmly says, *"I want those two back in the office after lunch."*



Business Employment Dynamics Data: Survival and Longevity

A study that extends previous research on the longevity of businesses shows that survival decreases at a decreasing rate; establishments that manage to survive the crucial 4-year period after their birth have a better chance of surviving longer and experiencing employment growth.

Read the full article and findings at:

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2007/09/art1full.pdf>



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ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Very few people really see things unless they've had someone in early life who made them look at things. And name them too. But the looking is primary, the focus.

— Denise Levertov

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Something Is Holding Me Back Professionally. How can a Coach Help?

The best coaching “*answer*” is a question. A good coach asks questions to help you do, be and give your best with the right intention. Consider the following “*self-coaching*” questions. Maybe it’s time to hire a coach.

How are you driven by what might be possible? What do you really want? What risks are you avoiding? How much of your life is compared to what others expect? What truth lies in others’ perceptions? How do you know? What are you willing to learn or unlearn? If money was not an issue, to what one thing would you dedicate yourself? How would your life be different if you pursued just one important “*dream deferred?*” What’s stopping you? What if you don’t pursue your dreams? What is important?



Four potential ‘*beings*’ exist in all of us. We can be **Explorers**, searching who we are for who we can become. We can be **Sophisticates**, fooling ourselves into believing we have all the answers. We can be **Prisoners**, living to the expectations of others and not our own. We can be **Vacationers** – anything we’re doing beats taking a risk. Listen to the questions you may be asking yourself. What could you explore today that might take you to the edge of your potential?

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A publication of Arlington Resources, Inc.

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