

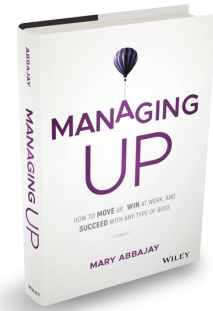


Managing Up: Essential Skills for Success

The Art of Managing Up: “Managing Up” means working with your boss to obtain the best possible results for you, your boss and your organization. This is not political maneuvering or kissing up. Rather, it is a deliberate effort to bring understanding and cooperation to a relationship between individuals who often have different perspectives and power.

The Art of Followership: Developing an effective relationship is as much **your** responsibility as theirs. Do not fall into the trap of “my boss should be...” or “my boss ought to...” A bad or difficult boss is not an excuse for lack of effort. It is **your** career that will suffer if you and your boss have a bad relationship. Your role in the relationship is to provide your boss with results and performance. You must learn the essence of good “Followership.”

- Learn to be productive and effective in working with your manager
- Recognize different leadership styles and utilize strategies for communicating and collaborating with each style
- Learn the goals/objectives of your organization and your manager
- Align your actions, behaviors, and attitudes with accomplishing those goals



5 Essential Steps to Managing Up

- 1. Learn your boss' work style & preferences**
 - How does your boss like to work?
 - How much does he/she delegate? How much do they want to micromanage?
 - How do they like to communicate? Detail oriented or big picture?
 - Fast paced or moderate paced?
- 2. Know what really matters to your boss and give it to him/her:**
 - What are your boss's priorities? Concerns? Challenges?
 - What is your boss's agenda? What are his/her goals, wants, needs, and expectations?
 - What is expected from your boss by his or her boss? What are his/her pressures from above?
- 3. Understand your own preferences, strengths, and weaknesses**
 - How do you like to work?
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - How do you like to communicate?
- 4. Assess the gap and adapt:**
 - How are you the same as your boss? How are you different?
 - What can you do more of, less of, or differently to work well with your boss?
 - How can you help your boss/department be more efficient and productive?
- 5. Know when to go:**
 - Try multiple strategies to manage up--but if nothing works, then consider moving on
 - Recognize when the relationship is just not a good fit--some relationships just don't work!
 - Find an opportunity where you can thrive--either in a different department or organization

Managing Up Reflection Worksheet

Please use this worksheet to reflect on ways you can improve collaboration with your supervisor.

1. Workplace Styles and Preferences	
My workplace style and preferences:	
My boss' workplace style and preferences:	
Ways in which we are the same:	
Ways in which we are different:	
2. Strategies to Manage Up More Effectively	
Things I need to keep doing:	
Things I could do more of:	
Things I could do less of:	

Personality & Work Style Matters!

Understanding your and your manager's work style and work personality can help you successfully manage up!

Extroverts and Introverts: Energy Source and Communication Preferences

Characteristics of Introverts	Strategies to Manage Up
Introverts direct and receive energy from their own inner world of ideas and experiences. They direct energy/attention inward and receive energy from inner thoughts, memories and feelings.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawn to inner world • Prefer written communication • Work out ideas by reflecting and thinking • Learn best by reflection, "mental practice" • Guard thoughts until (almost) perfect • Private and contained • Defend against external demands • Enjoy working alone or with only a few people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive with engaging them • Schedule meetings • Tell topic ahead of time--introverts prefer to think before speaking • Ask them their thoughts • Give them time to respond • Use email or text • Don't make up stories about their silence • WAIT!!!! ("Why am I talking?")

Characteristics of Extroverts	Strategies to Manage Up
Extroverts direct and receive energy from the outside world. They direct their energy and attention outward and receive energy from interacting with people and taking action.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attuned to external environment • Prefer to communicate by talking • Prefer action over reflection • Work out ideas by talking them through • Learn best through doing or discussing • Share thoughts freely • Extend self into the environment • Sociable and expressive • Enjoy working in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to engage and get to know them • Speak up • Readily share information • Hear them out • Welcome brainstorming • Be prepared for fast action • Recap to make sure you are on the same page • Meet face to face or by phone



Important Reminder!

There is nothing singularly good or bad about either preference. Our goal is to find ways to compliment, harmonize, and adapt to each preference—not to compete or clash against it.

Navigating Difficult Behaviors



Who do you find challenging to work with? Why? What are the specific behaviors you find difficult to navigate?



How do you feel when working with this person?



What is your story about “why” this person behaves/interacts in the way he/she does?



What strategies could you employ to improve your ability to work with this person?



Remember! When dealing with difficult “boss behaviors” It’s important to manage your emotions and your stories. Learning to navigate difficult behaviors is a skill that you will use throughout your entire career. Don’t let a difficult boss derail your career!

More Tips to Manage Up

1. **Solutions not problems.** Always hand your boss proposed solutions instead of only problems. Show your boss that you are a self-sufficient problem solver.
2. **No surprises.** Never give your boss surprises. Make him/her aware of everything that is important to his/her job, so she can provide solutions to her boss.
3. **Be humble.** Don't approach your boss with a sense of entitlement. Be willing to learn and take on menial tasks to prove you are a team player.
4. **Cut some slack.** Remember that your boss is only human. He/she is not necessarily trying to make your life difficult.
5. **Be honest.** Most bosses are willing to tolerate mistakes as part of the learning process. Own up to them with grace and commitment to do better.
6. **Respect your boss's time.** When you walk into her/his office—be clear and prepared. Know what you need and get out.
7. **Accept and adapt.** Don't try to change your boss. Study his/her preferences and conform to them whenever possible.
8. **Build and compensate.** Recognize your boss's strengths and build on them. Recognize weaknesses and compensate for them.
9. **Align priorities.** Make sure your priorities are aligned with your boss's. Failure to adjust to shifting priorities is a success derailer. Never make assumptions about your boss's goals. Be very clear about how you can help your boss achieve objectives.
10. **Take feedback well.** Learn skills for taking criticism. Adopt a learning attitude and request more specific information when feedback is vague. And the proper response to feedback—even critical—is “thank you.”
11. **Talk to the boss every day you can.** Say hello. Don't wear him/her out. Just build the relationship.
12. **The right perspective.** Understand the world from your boss's point of view. Put yourself in their shoes. They may not always be right—but they do set the agenda.
13. **Make the boss' life easy.** Look for opportunities to make your manager's life easier. I can't tell you what that is, but there usually are such chances. Seize them when they come.
14. **Request don't complain.** Inside every complaint is a request. Find it and make it. Effective requests include what it is; why you need it; and how it will benefit you, your boss, and the organization.
15. **Be a “can-do” employee.** Take on challenges. Deliver on projects with a positive attitude. If your boss asks for help in a group setting—be the first to volunteer.
16. **Show appreciation.** Remember that everyone appreciates professional, moderate, responsible, dignified appreciation—give a kind word or compliment now and then!
17. **Tell the whole truth.** If you have information that might interest the boss, bring it to him even if it might be slightly upsetting to him/her.
18. **Acknowledge the good bits.** When you're negative about your boss, the tendency is to focus on his/her worst traits and failings. This is neither positive for your work happiness nor your prospects for success in your organization.

Managing Up Conversation Template

Exploring Preferences, Priorities, & Pet Peeves

Be sure to tailor these questions for the virtual environment!

Workplace/Workstyle Preferences:

- What is your preferred mode of communication?
- How do you like to be approached regarding an issue or challenge?
- How often do you want to meet as a team and on a one-to-one basis?
- What does success look like to you?
- What is your definition of a top performer?
- How often do you like to be kept updated on projects? How do you like your updates?
- What level of detail do you like to have?
- What other preferences do you have about specific projects or work style?
- What kind of people do you find easy to work with?
- If you had a perfect employee/team member, what would that look like? How would that person show up, behave, and interact with you and others?

Priorities:

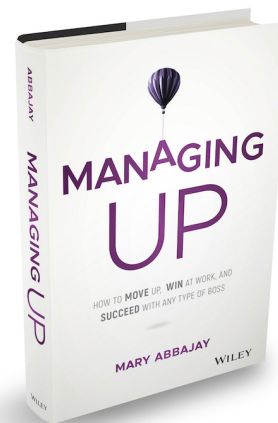
- What are your top priorities? What is highest priority to you?
- What are your goals for the team? The organization? For you?
- What does your boss care about? What does your boss' boss care about?
- What are the biggest pressures on this team/you/department?
- What are lower priority items?
- What can I help with? How can I be of the most service to you?
- What are you struggling with?
- How can I support you with your own boss?

Pet Peeves:

- What drives you crazy?
- What stresses you out?
- What do you find annoying about working with others—colleagues or staff?

Putting It All Together:

- What can I do more of? Less of? Or differently to work well with you?
- What else do I need to know about working well with you?



Remember! We can't change or control other people. We only have power/control over how we choose to act, react, and interact. Creating a positive and productive relationship with your boss (and your colleagues) matters!