



Leadership Essentials

Managing upwards

Leaders demonstrate ownership by building trusting relationships with all colleagues



“Managing relationships up, down and across helps build productive relationships and credibility within the organisation.”

(Bartolomé & Laurent, 1986)

The term managing upwards means building a successful working relationship with your boss. This involves understanding the individual, their position, and needs, and exceeding their expectations even though they may be in a different building, city or even country. (Badowski, 2004)

Managing your Boss

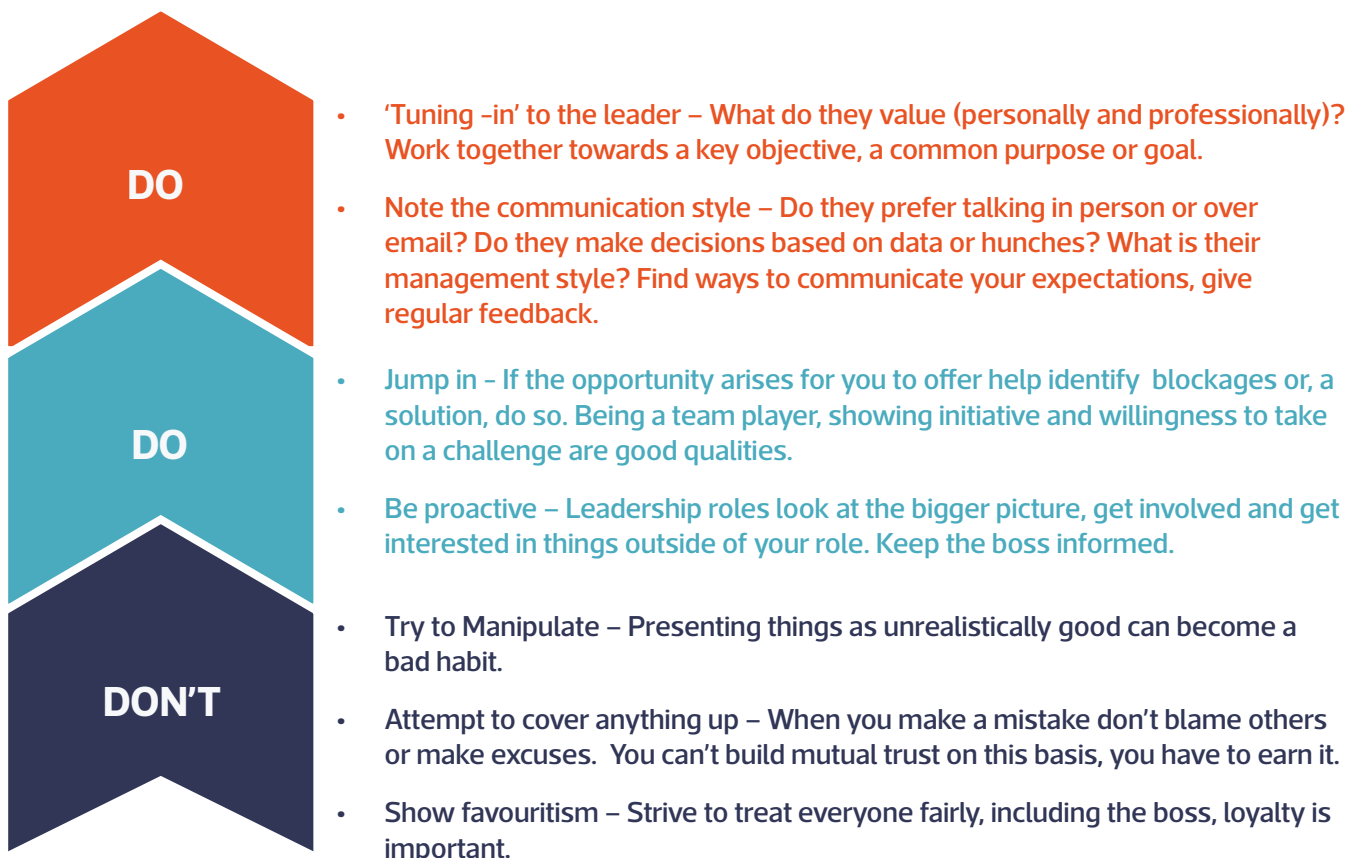
Everyone has a manager, and your relationship is crucial for the success of yourself and your organisation, it is one of mutual dependence. Managing your boss involves thoughtful and straightforward relationship building, open and honest communication and not devious manipulation or political manoeuvring. Once you are aware what impedes or facilitates communication with your boss, you can act to improve it. The key word is ‘manage’; implying an on-going process and not a one-off activity.

Some managers may resent that on top of all their other duties, they must also take responsibility for their relationships with the boss but successfully managing your relationship with your manager and other decision makers within your organisation can have major benefits including:

- Understanding a different perspective from their leadership role.
- Organisational success as a result of meeting their needs.
- More interesting work, more responsibility, or better work conditions when they recognise your interest, commitment, and results.

According to, Sutton (2010) a good working relationship between a manager and their boss should involve ‘fairness, mutual respect, trust and rapport’.

Fallon, (2016) advises the following tips for Managing Up:



Followership

The term followership refers to your ability to follow the guidance of your manager to achieve organisational goals. There are no leaders without followers and without good followers, it will be difficult for them to lead to success. In light of this, the challenge for the leader is identifying what specific steps he or she can take to inspire members of the organisation to be effective followers.

Yukl (2012) states that followers demonstrate a range of behaviours so, how can you be an effective follower? According to Challeff (2009), a good follower is able to 'stand up for and stand up to' the leader. That means supporting the leader when they are on the right path, and having the courage to let the leader know when they are making a mistake, doing something unethical, potentially harming the group or organisation or, heading in the wrong direction.

Most managers, yourself perhaps included, operate as both leader and follower. However, they often do not think about, or are unable, to put themselves in the other role's shoes. Miscommunication, misunderstanding and even severe conflict can result. This is magnified by the power differences between them. Your relationships and networks are very important when you need to persuade decision makers.

Nobody is perfect and, for example, some managers may micro-manage, others offer clear directives but have difficulty envisioning the future. To achieve your goals and get ahead, you need to inspire and motivate people behind you and use your ideas in circumstances where you lack formal authority. How can you do that if you have a boss who gets in your way?

Fortunately, there are things you can do to make the relationship more harmonious by collaborating and using your insights from working with your team members, your customers and perhaps those more senior than you.

Co-creation

Co-creation refers to a collaborative, peer-like process to jointly produce new value, both materially and symbolically, irrespective of people's seniority in the group. Organisations can no longer create new products, services and improvements unilaterally. Instead, they need to engage and empower stakeholders, customer, employees, suppliers and partners - in a process of co-creation to:

So that there is a greater chance of whatever is put into practice being:



- Fit for purpose
- Received positively by stakeholders
- Timely

Co-Creating Relationships

Everyone plays a part in leadership by helping others to co-create towards positive, mutually valued, outcomes. Relationship building is a skill that comes easy for some, and is challenging for others. This may be done through the use of coaching and is an ongoing process to create trust. You will need to support an organisational culture that fosters diversity, and encourages creative ideas. Co-creative interactions are about engaging the client and expanding collaborative research. You recognise that even seemingly crazy ideas can spark spectacular successes. You explain to your followers where the business is going, why, and how they will benefit by accomplishing key goals. This clarity helps people see how their jobs contribute to the overall success.

Focusing on relationships with your manager and co-creating relationships with other decision makers within or outside of your organisation can have major benefits including:

- Understanding a different perspective from your own leadership role.
- More interesting work, more responsibility, or better work conditions when your interest, commitment, and results are recognised.
- Organisational success as a result of meeting the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders.

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