



The Well-Practiced Manager

Professional Development
Resource for
Boston College Managers
and Supervisors

Spring 2018



From the Director:

Dear Manager,

When we talk about being a better manager, we're generally thinking about our work with subordinates and people on our teams. But as much as we need to manage those below, we should consider how we interact with those above. In this article, we explore the concept of "managing up." It is not about trying to undermine or undercut our supervisors but rather taking charge of our roles and creating situations in which we can do our best work. While we are building relationships and trust with our teams we need to do the same for our leaders. It requires developing the very skills needed to succeed in any role and to be productive.

You can explore this topic at a "Managing and Influencing Up" workshop on March 20th. You will discover strategies, resources and methods to build a more effective relationship with a supervisor and accelerate professional growth.

This is one of a series of workshops we offer staff for career enhancement and advancement.

Wishing you all the best as we head into spring,

Bernie O'Kane

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Director, Office of
Employee Development

Managing Up with Leadership Skills

Jack's new manager was busy overseeing several projects. He found it difficult to get time with her and was concerned that his work would go unnoticed. Rather than getting lost in the shuffle, Jack decided to step up and be proactive. He spent time figuring out her priorities and how best to communicate so he could support her efforts while making progress on his own projects. He set up a reporting system that made it easier to let her know what was happening without taking up a lot of her time. Quite simply, Jack decided to "manage up."



"At its core, managing up is really all about developing effective partnerships with our supervisors to get the best results for you, the supervisor and your organization," said Joe Du Pont, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Career Services, who will be presenting a workshop on the topic. "These goals are not mutually exclusive although we sometimes think they are."

First and foremost, it's about changing our mindsets regarding our relationship with supervisors, Joe said.

"If you can adopt a partnership mindset, you will each make better decisions, generate more ideas and implement more together," he explained. "Take the time to truly understand what matters to your boss. It is important to ensure that you both agree on that."



Gain Perspective

The key to knowing the best approach for working with your manager, is to be mindful of what he is facing. Who is her supervisor? What are the demands on his time? What are her priorities? What are his challenges and concerns? Being aware of these things can help you understand how your work fits into the bigger picture and lets you anticipate what might be needed.

As you use this information to determine how best to support your manager, you can also use it to more clearly define and shape your own role. Think about your career aspirations and how they might fit with the current needs of your manager. Talk with your supervisor about how to integrate your objectives and goals with his.

continued

Know Your Manager's Style

Pay attention to the way your manager approaches work and colleagues. It is useful to understand how he or she handles situations. Does he prefer long, in depth gatherings or is she more inclined to have short meetings or none at all? Is your manager a quick decision maker or someone who deliberates? Is your manager someone who prefers having information to read prior to a discussion or would he rather talk first and be provided with a follow up report? Knowing these things will give you a sense about the best way to approach your manager.

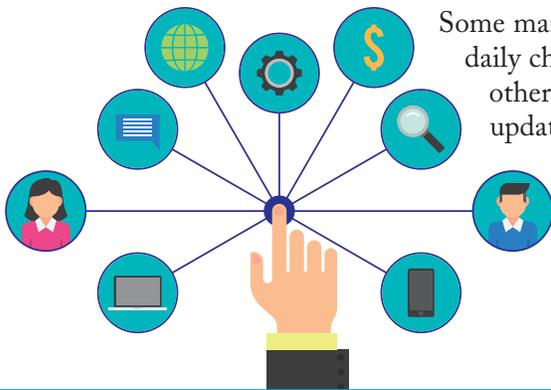
At the same time, think about your own style. How do you approach problem solving and decision making? You don't have to be exactly like your supervisor but understanding your similarities and differences can help connect better.

Strengthen Communications

The cornerstone of a good relationship is communication. The better we communicate, the better we can work together. Consistent communication helps avoid misunderstandings and builds trust.

What does your manager want to know and when? Establish how often you should give a report and what it should include.

Some managers value a daily check in while others prefer a weekly update. Set up a plan so you both know what to expect.



Find out what method of communication your manager prefers – email, text, phone or other – and why. Also, ask whether it changes based on the type of information being conveyed. For instance, maybe email is generally preferred but a text or call is better for urgent matters.

Keep in mind that your manager can't be everywhere at once and relies on you to make sure she knows what she needs to know. Don't let your manager get blindsided. Managers rely on the people around them to tell them what is really going on. Avoiding bad news or hiding unpleasant situations will ultimately make things worse.



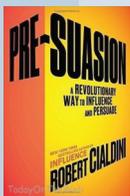
Set Expectations

Make sure your role and responsibilities are clearly defined. This is especially important when you have a new manager or your position has changed. It can help avoid misunderstandings and help you establish what you need to do to work effectively with your manager. At the same time, you want to learn about how your manager sees his role as a leader.

If you find that you are struggling because of the work load or other circumstances, speak up. If you're not sure how your manager would want something handled, ask. If you are feeling overwhelmed, talk to your manager about prioritizing the work load. Explain things within the context of your managers' priorities and goals.

Resources:

Explore more ideas about how to build trust and be a leader at any stage of your career.



Pre-Suasion: A Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade

Paperback by Robert Cialdini Ph.D.

With rigorous scientific research and accessibility, Robert Cialdini explains how to prepare people to be receptive to a message before they experience it. Optimal persuasion is achieved only through optimal pre-suasion.

https://www.amazon.com/Pre-Suasion-Revolutionary-Way-Influence-Persuade/dp/1501109804/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=



Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success

by Adam Grant

Success is increasingly dependent on how we interact with others. It turns out that at work, most people operate as either takers, matchers, or givers. Using his own pioneering research, Adam Grant shows how these styles have a surprising impact on success

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