



Timely Information for Personal Success

Seven Ways to ‘Manage Up’

By Beverly Flaxington

A recent Gallup poll concluded that 75% of all job turnovers are influenced by managers – that is, a bad manager is often the tipping point in an employee’s decision to leave.

In my consulting and coaching work with employees, I’ve found we spend far too much of our time working on “managing up” – helping employees deal with a difficult or incompetent boss. Often times the boss is a bully or a poor communicator. Sometimes the boss is disorganized and blames employees for ensuing problems.

Unfortunately most of us will have a difficult boss at some point. Instead of leaping to another job hoping that the next one will be better, it’s important to develop managing-up skills. The more you learn to manage up, the more successful you will be wherever you are and whatever you’re doing for a living. Here are seven tips for managing your boss, without the boss even knowing you’re doing it!



1. **Match your behavioral style.** Observe your boss’s behavioral and communication style. Is he/she she fast-paced and quick to make decisions? Does he/she consider decisions slowly and deliberately? The more you can match your style to your boss’s style, the more he/she will really hear what you’re saying.

2. **Be a proactive communicator.** Find out your boss’s preferred method – email, in person drop-ins, or lengthy memos – and be sure to pass along information regularly. Most bosses don’t like to be caught off guard. Even if your boss doesn’t require it, keep him/her updated.

3. **Accommodate weaknesses.** If you know you have a boss who’s disorganized, instead of grouching about it, help him/her to stay on top of things. If your boss is often late to meetings, offer to start the next meeting for him/her. If your boss is slow to respond to requests, continue to work on a project while you wait to hear back. Will you be hiding your boss and enabling bad behavior? Maybe, but you’re offering

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Healthy Recipe: Harvest Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 packages mixed salad greens (about 8 cups)
- 2 cups cut-up fresh vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, onions)
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) tomato soup
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey or sugar
- 1 package (0.7 ounces) Italian salad dressing mix
- 2 cups croutons

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 188
- Carbohydrates: 21 g.
- Protein: 4 g.
- Sodium: 595 mg.
- Fat: 10 g. (1 g. saturated)
- Fiber: 2 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Place salad greens and vegetables into large bowl.
- 2 Beat the soup, oil, vinegar, honey (or sugar), and salad dressing mix in a bowl with a fork or whisk. Pour mixture over the salad mixture and toss to coat.
- 3 Arrange salad on a serving platter. Top with croutons. Serve salad with the remaining soup mixture.



LifestyleTIPS[®]
 2013[©] Impact Publications, Inc.
 PO Box 322, Waupaca, WI 54981
 Phone: 715-258-2448
 Fax: 715-258-9048
 Website: www.impact-publications.com
 Email: info@impacttrainingcenter.net

Publisher: Scott Kolpien
 Health Consultant: Tim Lencki
 Managing Editor: Mike Jacquart

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Questions and Answers

Working Sometimes = 'Suffering'

Q: *Why is it that when I have to do something I don't want to do, any other task seems so enticing? I get other things done, but that report I have to write still isn't finished! What can I do?*

A: Recognize the *busy-work-as-procrastination* excuse. Unfocused reading on the Internet *isn't* research, states Gretchen Rubin, author and blogger at www.happiness-project.com.

Even when a task is daunting, you *can* tackle it by making a resolution to "suffer" first. If it's a grant proposal, instead of looking at the entire process ... tackle *one* step... perhaps the project narrative. Focus on that part. Stay committed to working on it *each day* – you decide how much time – and stay "zeroed in" until that part is done. Then, move on to step #2. The project will be well underway before you know it! Setting small, daily goals and sticking to them wards off procrastination. You can always revise goals later, but get going *first*. ■

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much-needed support to succeed. Most bosses will appreciate it.

4. **Do the best job you can do.** Too many times people will start to slack off or stop performing well because they feel entitled with a bad boss. Don't do it. Keep your mind focused on top performance.

5. **Likewise, keep a good attitude.** Go home and complain to your spouse or friends all you want, but when in the office or workplace, stay upbeat and engaged. You never know who is watching or listening.

6. **Don't react to a bully.** Remember that bullies get their power from people who are afraid. If your boss is a yeller, criticizer, or judge – stand firm. If you're doing the best job you can do, keep your head held high and don't give in to bullying. Ask questions, try to understand, and work to diffuse a difficult situation instead of cowering or responding in anger. It takes practice, but the results are worth it.

7. **Know the boss's place in the organization's "pecking order."** If your boss is well-regarded and well-liked, he/she probably does a very good job of managing up, too. As a result, *you* will be considered the "problem" if you complain about this person to his/her superiors. Weigh your options *carefully* before taking any action. ■

Beverly Flaxington is a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst (CPBA), hypnotherapist, and career and business adviser. Learn more at www.thehumanbehaviorcoach.com.