



Timely Information for Personal Success

Managing Up isn't a Good Idea

By Mike Myatt

The term “*managing up*” is a great catch phrase and an interesting concept. It’s also a practice that can quickly land you in deep trouble if it’s misunderstood or misapplied. Many people would say the purpose of managing up is to have the fruits of your labor also enhance the work of your superiors. But when managing up gets confused with promoting self-interest, brown-nosing, manipulation, or other mind games, a good theory rapidly becomes twisted, which results in a false and dangerous reality.

Premise versus Reality

While the premise of “managing up” is sound, the reality of how it is often implemented is representative of everything that’s wrong with business today. It’s human nature to try to control circumstances where possible. It’s also quite normal to want to position yourself well with someone you report to. That said, it’s important to understand the realities, rules, and boundaries associated with organizational structure. As much as you don’t want to hear this, there is a good reason why you’re reporting to someone else – you’re probably not ready to be the boss yet.

The best way to be looked upon favorably by those you report to is not through various charades and other forms of skullduggery, but by simply doing your job and serving them well. When the emphasis of your efforts shifts away from others and to yourself you have placed yourself on a very

slippery slope. If you want to move up in the organization let it be the quality of your work that catapults you upward, not your skill in manipulation. If your timetable for career acceleration isn’t matching up with that of your employer, bring up your concerns in a straight-forward fashion. Don’t revert to amateurish corporate hijinks.

It’s Not Your Job to Manage Your Boss

If I might be so bold, it’s not your job to manage your boss. Most good leaders love to be challenged, but I don’t know too many who like to think they are being managed by subordinates – there’s a subtle but distinct difference. Your responsibility is to do the job the way *those above you* want it done,

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Healthy Recipe: Chipotle & Orange Chicken

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsps orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 tbsp finely chopped chipotle peppers
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons unsulfured molasses
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 150
- Carbohydrates: 7 g.
- Protein: 23 g.
- Sodium: 227 mg.
- Fat: 3 g.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Preheat grill or broiler.
- ➋ Whisk together orange juice concentrate, chipotle pepper, vinegar, molasses, and mustard in a small bowl.
- ➌ Lightly oil grill or broiler rack. Season chicken with salt and grill or broil for 2 minutes. Turn, brush with the glaze and cook for 4 minutes, brushing occasionally with glaze.
- ➍ Turn again, brush with glaze, and cook until center is no longer pink, 1 to 2 minutes longer.

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Questions and Answers

When You're SUDDENLY a Caregiver

Q: In terms of elder care, it often seems as though the affected employee has plenty of time to think about, and act upon, caregiving-related decisions. This wasn't the case for me AT ALL! We weren't planning on mom going anywhere, but she fell and we have no clue how long rehab will take, if she gets to go back home at all. Any suggestions?

A: First, set back, take a deep breath, grab a legal pad, and take good, detailed notes about what healthcare professionals tell you. You are NOT going to remember what everyone tells you, so getting organized is absolutely crucial. Do you have siblings who live in the area? Who is doing what? How will expenses be paid for? What are short-term options? Long term? That said, don't overdo organizing, you can always "tweak" your system later, the main thing for now is to have solid notes, and date them as well so you know not only *who* said something, but *when*.

Second, too many people take on too much themselves. As mentioned, do you have siblings where you live who can help with the myriad of tasks that likely need to be done? If not, what about neighbors? Friends? Finally, get a good book on the topic, like "Cruising through Caregiving" by Jennifer FitzPatrick. I wish you luck. ■

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not how *you* want to do it. Granted, in a perfect world there would be alignment between the two, but alas, the world is not perfect. When it comes to enhancing the efforts of those above you, I would encourage you to think about it like this:

- Engage – Yes
- Collaborate – Yes
- Challenge – When needed
- Advise – Where appropriate and value is added
- Object – When it's the right thing to do
- Loyalty – Until it's no longer earned (if you can't be loyal, work for someone else)
- Manage – NEVER

Summary

There is little debate that some subordinates are more intelligent and gifted than their superiors. In fact, if you're lucky enough to be considered a rising star in your organization, you might want to give your boss some credit as the best leaders make every attempt at building their organizations with people who are brighter and more talented than they are. This is a laudable practice that should be admired by workers, not resented. If your work doesn't speak for itself, or if it does and isn't being recognized, rather than play silly games, move on honorably and look for a better fit. ■

Mike Myatt is a leadership advisor to Fortune 500 CEOs and Boards, author of "Hacking Leadership" and "Leadership Matters," and recognized by Thinkers50 as one of the top leadership thinkers globally. Follow him on Twitter @mikemyatt.