

Managing upwards

Pain v Pleasure

Pleasure

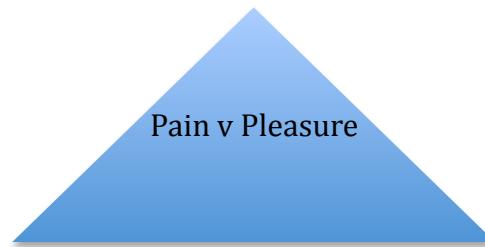
What are the benefits

- Career progression
- Happy working relationship
- Help in my development
- Mutual respect
- Trust/openness
- Support when required
- Income influence
- Self esteem

Pain

What are the downsides

- My boss annoys me why should I
- Why should I change
- It may mean I have to change
- I don't think they deserve my help
- It takes effort



When you consider all aspects, it seems sensible to have a conscious strategy on managing up. Why is it that most people in my experience when asked, "What is your strategy on managing your boss?" they reply...
.....Ooohh I do not have one.

To me it is the relationship between pain and pleasure in our decision making process.

Usually when we decide to do, or not do something, we weigh it up between the amount of pleasure we will get and the amount of pain it will cause.

If Pleasure outweighs pain, we will do it. If pain outweighs we will not

e.g.

Shall I eat that chocolate cake?

Pain – no it's against my diet

Pleasure – it looks sooooo good it would give me so much pleasure now.... I can restart the diet tomorrow.

In this case, Pleasure won.... The cake was eaten

When you look at the pleasure aspects in managing up they look very tempting (they outnumber pain), however they are not a certainty. If all goes well they might happen. What is a certainty is the pain – you will have to make a change to your behaviour, which is an immediate tangible pain.

This is the reason why most do not make the conscious change as the immediate pain outweighs the potential pleasure.

A cure to this paradox is to phrase the question as an implication question
I.e. what will happen if I DO NOT manage my boss?

The answers are in effect the reverse of the pleasure i.e. I will not be promoted ... pay increase etc.

This is still not guaranteed to happen, however, combined with the pleasure, it is usually enough to tip the scales into action.

Putting aside the initial pain of developing a strategy to manage your boss, the reality is ... it is critical for your career development.

The fact is bosses need cooperation, reliability, and honesty from their direct reports. People rely on bosses for making connections with the rest of the company, for setting priorities and for obtaining critical resources. When you take the time to cultivate a productive working relationship – by understanding your bosses strengths and weaknesses, priorities and work style – everyone wins.

Consciously work with your manager to obtain the best possible results for you, your boss, and the company.

It is the most important working relationship you have--make the most of it!!

Managing up plan

1) Communication style

	Talker	Thinker
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •People •Talking •Outside world •Welcome interruptions •Do, think, do •Variety and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time alone •Think, write •Think ideas through •Dislike interruptions •Think, do, think •Hard to read
Me		
Boss		

Thinker Boss tips

- Present an agenda or ideas (preferably in advance, by email)
- Make questions concise
- Take care not to fill the silence after you have asked a question with another question or a possible answer! Wait and listen
- Give colleagues boss reflection time
- Focus on the things they should be thinking about
- Remember these people tend to think – talk – think and take on average 3 seconds longer to answer questions than Talkers

Talker Boss tips

- Remember they need to articulate their thinking and often cut across what you are saying – they are not being rude
- Allow them adequate time to discuss / ask questions
- Focus on the action they should take
- Provide immediate feedback and verbal acknowledgment
- Remember these people like to Talk – think –Talk and need to know you are participating

What action do I need to take?

2) What are my Boss's goals/objectives?

If you want to manage your boss, you have to understand what is driving them. Getting in their shoes gives you insight into what it is they are trying to do. You may be surprised at how much you have in common!

Boss's Goals/Objectives

- His/her objectives--what, in the eyes of your manager, are their key objectives and what support can you give towards achieving them
- What personal value does your boss hold dear--for instance customer care. Work on supporting these values and do not do things that are contrary to them. Be wary, however, of evidently self-interested values, such as personal status
- What pressures are they under

Notes

What action do I need to take?

3) High level or Detailed

We can all do high level and detail, however generally we prefer one over the other and usually start at one end and work to the other

High level to detail

Or

Detail to high level

	High level	Detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts • Specifics • Realistic • Focused on the here and now • Practical • Observant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas • Big picture • Imaginative • Focused on anticipating the future • Theoretical • Conceptual
Me		
Boss		

High-level boss tips

- Remember they need the big picture first and then the detail
- Offer options at the first call rather than prescriptive answers
- Focus on the future (opportunities and ideas)
- They will be looking for the executive summary in proposals and then jump around
- Quite often miss key detail – show them what they have missed

Detail Boss tips

- Remember they need to understand the order / sequence / detail / mechanics
- Offer specific, practical solutions
- Focus on the present (and how your solutions have worked in the past for others)
- They will go through proposals thoroughly
- Quite often get stuck in the detail and cant see the big picture – show them how it links to the bigger picture

What action do I need to take?

4) Boss's strengths/ weakness's

As well, as identifying your boss's strengths and weakness you need to have consideration of your own. This way you will a clear picture on how you can balance each other out

<p>Boss What are their strengths?</p> <p>What can I learn from them?</p>
<p>You What are mine?</p> <p>What can I contribute?</p>

Boss

What are their weaknesses?

How can I help?

You

What are mine?

Is this damaging to the relationship – if so what do I need to action?

6) Hot Buttons & pet hates

Press the hot buttons – avoid the pet hates.

Hot Buttons

What gets them in a good mood i.e. certain conversations, figures, results, football results!!!.

Pets hates

Think about your pet hates. How annoyed do they make you?
Figure out theirs and avoid them i.e. lateness, grammar, clothing etc etc

7) Non -verbal clues

Over half of people's communications is non-verbal.

If you take some time, you will find it easy to read people you know.

Knowing someone's state of mind from his or her body language helps put you on the front foot with a relationship.

If you have a brilliant idea, it is probably not ideal to present it when the boss is not in a good frame of mind

Non verbal language clues when in a good mood

Non Verbal Language when in a bad mood

Attitude rules

No surprises

Obviously, your boss does not want surprise negative news... especially in a meeting with their boss! Do all you can to minimise surprises, keep them informed. This also applies to positive surprises. Which may seem odd? I was once in a meeting where I surprised my boss with some good news about budgets, I had held the information back until I could meet him. The positive good news surprise landed badly, the timing delay had closed an opportunity to redirect monies elsewhere.

Admit mistakes...quickly

Everybody makes mistakes. If you mess up let your boss know ASAP. At least they will be the first to know and may be able to help. Trust me someone else telling your boss about your mistakes is not fun. If you have made a mistake apologise properly. Do not apologise and then blame others... it looks like you are passing the buck.

Provide solutions not problems

My biggest pet hate is people bringing me problems without thinking about possible solutions. Always have some ideas on solutions – this shows you have a can do attitude – this shows you are promotion material!!!! I cannot tell you the number of times I have heard people being reviewed where they fall into two camps

- 1) Always moaning about things - never has a view on how to fix things
(problems only person)
- 2) Great attitude – solves problems / takes action
(Problems with solutions person)

Be honest and trustworthy loyal and committed

People do not like people who cannot do the above...simple as that. Generally, people do not promote people they do not like.

Never go above or behind your boss's back

If you step into this territory, you have just entered a very dangerous area. If your boss finds out (which they always do)... going back to "Be honest and trustworthy loyal and committed" you are on your own...good luck!

REQUEST FEEDBACK AND ACCEPT IT

Ask your boss for feedback on your performance (most people do not).
There is a good chance you may not like some of the feedback or feel it is very wrong. Whatever you feel accept this.... Their feedback is their perception....
Their perception is their reality. ... Their reality is your next appraisal

Finally...

Have a strategy and follow it... your career may depend on