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## MANAGING UPWARD - WORKING WITH YOUR BOSS

In challenging times, sometimes your boss's behavior becomes erratic. She may overmanage or undermanage you and your work. She may lose sight of all the things you are working on. You may not be sure what your boss's priorities are; they change daily.

The costs associated with this business malady are many including: missed deadlines and opportunities, working on unimportant tasks, avoidance, frustration, the appearance of incompetence, stress, and burnout.

What can you do? You have three options:

### Option #1: Get in Front

Take time to understand your boss's:

- Goals: What are his aspirations? How can you help him achieve them?
- Problems: What common problems prevent your boss from being more effective? Are any of your boss's problems your strengths? Can you take responsibility for meetings, communication, planning, follow-up, etc?
- World: Describe the world from your boss's perspective. Who are the players?
- Pressures: What pressures are placed on your boss? How might these pressures affect him? How might they affect priorities? How might they affect your job?
- Boss: What kind of a boss does your boss work for? How might this affect your boss?

Proactively approach your boss with a way you can help solve one of his or her problems.

### Option #2: Get in Back

Recognize that your boss is in his position because of past successes and demonstrated competence.

Check your attitude. Are you supportive? Or do you complain?

Check your ego. Do you really have a difficult/incompetent boss? Or does your boss have difficult/incompetent employees?

Show support and encouragement.

Be specific in your positive reinforcement.

Always provide constructive feedback in person and in private.

Recognize that your relationship with your current boss is critical to your future success.

### Option #3: Get Alongside

Understand and work with your boss's style:

- Give the "doer" boss results and don't waste time.
- Support the "speaker" boss's intuition and need for recognition; provide assurance.
- Accommodate the "listener" boss's need to talk things out before getting to business.
- Present the "thinker" boss with logic and detail.

Recognize that your relationship with your boss is a relationship of mutual dependence by two human beings with strengths and weaknesses. Get to know your boss's and get to know yours.

If your boss comes to you with a crisis, remain calm and collect pertinent information: what is really wanted? By whom? By when? How will it be used?

Communicate what you are doing, especially information that may impact your boss (customer problems, project slippage, etc.) Your boss should NEVER be caught by surprise resulting from your failure to communicate.

When raising problems, come with alternative solutions and your recommendation already identified.

Always be honest and dependable.

Be the employee that you would want your employees to be. Model the behavior YOU would expect from YOUR employees.

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