Managing Up

BET/MPA Coffee & Conversations Series
What is Managing Up?
Managing Up Defined:

When employees develop a good working relationship with a superior.

* It is not rebelling, kissing up or trying to turn the tables on a higher-up

* Managing up is solving problems that our supervisors need solved

Whitney Jonson
Disrupt Yourself: Putting the Power of Disruptive Innovation to Work
If you forge ties with your boss based on mutual respect and understanding, both of you and your organization will be more effective.

- Understand the Boss
- Understand Yourself
- Develop and Manage the Relationship

Gabarrow and Kotter, Managing Your Boss, HBR, 2005
Understand your Boss

Do:

* Get to know your boss.
  * Observe behavior and communication style – fast paced or deliberative – mirror his/her preferences.

* Anticipate his/her needs, pressures, and expectations. Help your boss to fulfill them - Do the best job you can.
  * Proactively communicate using your supervisors preferred methods: email vs in-person drop-ins, lengthy memos

* Imagine the bigger picture from your supervisor’s perspective.
  * What is your supervisor working toward?

* Know and help to support your superior’s weaknesses.
Understand your Boss

* Don’t:
  * Try to manipulate
  * Attempt to cover things up
  * Get involved in office politics
  * Mistake work for family

Caution: if your supervisor is a yeller, criticizer or a judge, stand firm, and don’t give in to bullying.
Words and deeds matter, but what are the underlying values?

- What does an open door policy mean?

Is your superior a listener or reader?

- Hear first, read later or vice versa

Does your superior prefer detailed facts & figures or an overview?

- If details, focus on accuracy and completeness
- If an overview, focus on clarity and clear main idea

How often does s/he want to receive information?

- Regular or periodic updates?
Understand Yourself

- Know your own needs, strengths and weaknesses.
- Know your own personal communication and behavior styles and adjust to mirror your supervisor’s.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Be open to learning and empathetic to your supervisor’s perspective.
- Strive to understand your supervisor’s expectations.
Millennials as Superiors

Millennials are coming of age and assuming leadership positions -- sometimes over Boomers or Gen X-ers.

Traits of Millennial leaders:
- Collaborative/democratic decision-making
- Tech-savvy
- Socially Accepting
- Disruptive

Values of Millennial Leaders:
- Customization, Authenticity, Speed, Flexibility

Communication World, Dec., 2016
Tips for Communication with Your Superior

- Be clear and specific when discussing deadlines.
- Be honest about what you can and cannot accomplish.
- Be clear and explicit when outlining your objectives.
- Ask clarifying questions to understand expectations and opportunities.

- HBR, post from Managing Up
Bosses, like everyone else, are imperfect and fallible. They don’t have unlimited time, encyclopedic knowledge, or extrasensory perception, nor are they evil enemies.

Gabarrow and Kotter, *HBR*, 2005