

## Managing your Manager

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### Managing your Manager

*"Who is the manager if I must manage my manager!?"*



Surprising as it sounds managing your manager whether a supervisor, manager, or managing director is something we do every day! We are all managing our time, projects, family priorities, personal challenges and tasks constantly. In reality, every one of us is a manager!

Managing your manager is the first step to becoming a successful manager in the future and achieving your career goals.

As our environment becomes more competitive and our companies successful, we all need to become more effective at managing our competing demands. If we do not effectively manage upwards, set expectations and communicate in a timely manner, our work life will become more stressful.

Managing your manager is all about managing upwards, managing expectations, managing your work and communicating effectively to ensure that you are the most effective, efficient and creative in doing your job.

Here are some tips and tricks to help you manage your manager effectively!

### ***1. Keep your manager up to date.***

Often managers are frustrated that they have to keep following up all the time on many different things. "Did you do this, did you do that, why are you late!" We have all heard those words from our manager. In an effective work environment, your manager should never follow up on your tasks, but you should follow up with your manager!

**How to do this?** Send your manager regular updates on what you are doing and how it is going - this could be done every week, or every two weeks depending on your work load. Discuss with your manager how he or she wants to be updated. Before the deadline of any task, you should be giving your manager the results of your projects not waiting for your manager to ask for them.

### ***2. Communicate your challenges with possible solutions***

Communicating a challenge does not mean you cannot do your task, it means, you are managing expectations and your work effectively. It is not a good thing if you reach a deadline and say "but I could not because..." Don't wait until the last minute to inform your manager of challenges - it's too late!

**How to do this?** Tell your manager immediately if you are unable to do something and importantly, make a recommendation and give ideas of what you think you can do to overcome the challenge! Don't say "I can't do this..." rather say, "I have tried all these things, but this is what has happened. I suggest we try a, b, c. I would like your inputs to continue with my task."

Discuss your ideas with your manager and find a solution together. Always provide a solution to a challenge, don't just bring the challenge or problem to your manager!

### **3. Keep your manager informed of your competing priorities - Be realistic.**

Sometimes, we have too many things to do! It does not help to say, my manager gives me too much work to do. We must discuss and keep our manager and team members informed of all the tasks we need to do - especially if we have more than one manager.

**How to do this?** Try and have regular meetings with your manager and your team. Make sure that "Work Load - Who is doing what?" is on the agenda so that you are aware of all the things your team and manager are doing.

Discuss when you have too many deadlines and need support.

Very often, there is someone in the team who will be able to give some support!

If there is no time for a meeting, try have a 5 minute discussion during the day or send an email. Remember that if you don't communicate, then you cannot complain!

### **4. Ask for information & plan in advance**

Sometimes managers assume you know something but you don't! It is important that you ask questions about what you are doing and why.

What are the objectives, deadlines, risks we will face, etc.?

Managers are busy people and it is not an excuse to say - "But my manager was busy!"

You have colleagues and other team members that can give you information and ideas.

If you don't ask, you won't know and you will never be able to be proactive and anticipate.

Plan your work in advance, and plan on regular update meetings with your manager so that you can be effective in your job and get the required inputs from your manager you need.

### **5. Be proactive and anticipate**

A challenge for managers is that often their staff and team only do what they are told and nothing more. It is important that we are proactive and anticipate challenges, different opportunities, and ideas.

**How to do this?** Think about what you are doing and how it will impact other processes and projects and going on in the office. Remember that you cannot be proactive and anticipate, if you never asked any questions!  
Take an interest in other projects going on in the office.  
If you have identified an opportunity, challenge, negative impact of the tasks you are working on - communicate them to your manager.  
Don't wait too long, especially if the impact will be big!

The few golden rules are all about communication and being aware of how your job and tasks are an important part of your organisation! We must all manage upwards and manager our manager. If you try a few of these things, you will see that your work will run smoother, you may have less stress and most importantly, you will enjoy what you are doing and succeed because you are meeting expectations!  
Remember that practice makes perfect and you cannot do what the article says and expect things to change - how you manage, plan, prioritise and communicate needs to become a habit and an integral part of the way you work, so that you can climb the career ladder and achieve your professional goals.

*This article was written by Sandra D'Amico, Managing Director of HRINC, Cambodia's leading HR services firm and published in the Phnom Penh Post on 12 January 2009.*

*A job isn't just a job, it consumes more than a third of your day - make sure you enjoy what you do and challenge yourself to be creative and do things differently! Contact [hrinc@hrinc.com.kh](mailto:hrinc@hrinc.com.kh) for more information*

