



RESONANT

Ideas That Carry Further

Managing Up Effectively

No matter what phase of your career you're in or how much authority and responsibility your job title implies, managing up is likely one of the most challenging tasks you face. Succeeding and being considered for new opportunities depends on building a good relationship with your supervisor.

Here are 7 concrete steps you can take to successfully manage up, whether you're in an entry-level role or your boss is the CEO.

1. Ask what their priorities are

You likely have way too much to do. So does your supervisor.

If you know what they're focusing on, and what they want you to focus on, you can make smarter decisions about how to spend your time, what to bring to their attention, and what's important to them

2. Inquire about their thought process

When your supervisor makes a decision, ask them to walk you through the thought process that led them to the decision.

It can be a hard question to answer, as it requires that they slow down and distill their thought process so they can explain it. And it shows them that you want to learn and grow.

3. Ask what problems they want to hear about

A saying that some leaders use is "bad news early is good news." That is, they want to hear about problems early, even before a solution is at hand - and they want the team to not be afraid to raise concerns and problems.

Other leaders may want their direct reports to bring solutions along with the problems. Or to brainstorm solutions together. Or to hear how the problem was solved after the fact.

Until you ask, you don't know what problems they want to hear about and when. And you can't be clear on what they're ok with you handling on your own.

4. Find out how they like to receive information

Do they want everything by email? Slack/Skype/Teams/another platform? During a standing meeting? Do they want you to hold everything for a periodic summary, or to send information as it arises?

Giving them the information in the ways that work for them will help you get a better response.

5. Manage expectations

Make sure the person you're reporting to has the whole picture of what's on your plate and keep them informed of your progress and competing priorities.

This helps them make better decisions about what to ask you to do next. It also demonstrates that you're being proactive about reporting to them, which builds trust.

6. Own your narrative

Make sure the person you're reporting to has the whole picture of what's
Make sure that your supervisor hears about challenges and bad news from you before they hear it about you from someone else. And be sure to let them know about your accomplishments. It's not bragging if you're stating a fact, and if you don't do it too often. Both of these help build trust, and your supervisor will know they can rely on you in times both good and bad.

7. Ask for feedback

Don't wait until it's annual review time or until your supervisor has something to say about your performance. Instead, regularly ask them "How could I have done this better?" or "What would you have done differently?" These questions demonstrate that you're open to feedback and committed to continued growth and improvement.