

LEADERSHIP

5 tips for managing up

JOEL GARFINKLE NOVEMBER 21, 2018

Create your own plan for managing up, putting some of your own energy into consistently and visibly furthering the ideas of your managers.



The process of actively “managing up,” or actively working to further the goals of senior leadership, to mutual benefit, is more than just an occasional tactic or a meeting-room behavior. Managing up is a philosophy by which you frame your actions to make sure that those leading you feel as supported and energized by your efforts as those you are leading.

Interested in learning how to put your skills to use and make sure both you and your bosses end up on top? Read on.

Know what matters

To effectively work towards achieving the goals of senior leaders, first you must know what they are striving to accomplish. Understanding what’s important is critical, and it’s not just about the day-to-day performance metrics or the quarterly results. Know what the larger picture is and how your bosses plan to realize their vision for the organization’s growth and prosperity – that’s what you really want to know. Whether they’re trying to shift a group’s business focus, [solve a problem](#), open a new line of revenue or change a corporate culture, listen up and take notes.

Connect broadly

It may seem that focusing all your attention on just one manager may be the way to go, but opportunities are missed when you don't see the larger vision. Spend the time and effort to learn the motivations of multiple senior leaders — not just to help further your goals or those of your bosses, but to broadly work towards achieving success. The more you know and can choose your actions wisely, the more you can contribute to the overall success of the organization, which will put you in good standing with many people.

Garner support

Managing up is not just following the goals and aspirations of your managers – it's also about presenting your ideas (and how they fit into the larger picture) so that everyone can work to mutual benefit. Who better to advocate at a senior level than the senior leadership who has you working to further their objectives and help them succeed. [Help others, and they will help you](#); when you genuinely work together, great things can happen for both of you.

Keep stakeholders informed

Make sure your stakeholders are well informed. Very few of us like workplace surprises, and one of the best ways to support senior leaders is making certain they have the right info, at the right time. Whether they have to do a formal presentation or navigate an informal hallway conversation, [communicate to make sure](#) they're always in the know, it will go a long way to securing your place as a valued member of their inner circle.

Build personal relationships

Similar to the connections you build within your own team, it is important to establish personal [relationships with senior leaders](#), too. Knowing the motivations of your managers – inside and outside the office – can help you best position your actions to help achieve their goals. Having a genuine, shared interest or personal rapport will also keep you top of mind in their decision making.

Very few senior leaders are looking for so-called yes men (or women) or for people to selflessly throw themselves into achieving the organization's larger goals. They are, however, very interested in establishing strong, mutually beneficial relationships with hard workers who see the big picture. If you want to gain support [for your own ideas](#), start by creating your own plan for managing up, putting some of your

own energy into consistently and visibly furthering the ideas of your managers. Managing up will make you a better manager, no matter the direction.

Joel Garfinkle is the author of 300 articles on leadership and seven books, including [How to Be a Great Boss](#) and [Getting Ahead](#). As an [executive leadership coach](#), he recently helped a senior leader become a valued member of top leadership by working with her on many of the key steps listed above. More than 10,000 people subscribe to his [Fulfillment@Work](#) newsletter. [Subscribe](#) and you'll receive the free e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!"

If you enjoyed this article, sign up for SmartBrief's free e-mails [on leadership](#) and [career growth](#), among SmartBrief's [more than 200 industry-focused newsletters](#).