

Managing your boss

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We should consciously work towards managing our relationships with our bosses, in order to achieve the best possible results for us, the boss and the company. There are three main areas to focus on, to develop a productive relationship with the boss:

Understanding the boss: We should understand our boss's goals and pressures, strengths and weaknesses. We should clarify our boss's objectives. Being sensitive to the boss's work style is also very important. Some bosses are 'listeners' and prefer reports presented in person. Others are 'readers' who like to read and study before discussions. Some get completely involved in taking every decision, while others delegate such tasks. We should understand our boss's preferences and work accordingly.

Understanding yourself: We should be aware of our own strengths, limitations and personal style. While we may not be able to radically change ourselves or our bosses, understanding what impedes or facilitates working with our boss will help us to make the relationship more effective.

Some of us find it frustrating when we find our own actions are being constrained by our boss's decisions. We instinctively become resentful, and view our boss as an enemy. This is called **counter dependent behaviour**. The boss also loses trust in us sensing hostility, and behaves less openly.

Some of us are **over dependent** people, and unquestioningly accept every decision of our boss. We keep nodding our head in agreement, even if the boss is open to other ideas, or when giving some additional information would make the boss easily alter the decision. We should analyse our tendencies in such situations, and try to work on them.

Developing and managing the relationship:

- *Compatible work styles:* We should create a relationship which accommodates our work styles as well as our boss's. We must draw on each other's strengths, and make up for each other's weaknesses.
- *Mutual expectations:* We must clearly understand what our boss's expectations are, even though we may not spell it out explicitly.

- *Flow of information:* We must not underestimate what our bosses need to know, and should keep supplying information regularly. Even if our boss is not keen on listening to bad news, we must make our boss aware of what is going on.
- *Dependability and honesty:* These are two qualities that a boss always looks for in a subordinate. Without a basic level of trust, bosses feel forced to look into every decision of our managers, making it difficult to delegate even simple tasks.
- *Good use of time and resources:* We should not waste our boss's time, energy and resources on trivial issues, and instead focus on larger matters.