Managing Up Around

Projects

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Session Overview

Part I: Managing Projects
Part II: Managing Up
Part II: Managing Around
Part I: Managing Projects
Managing Your Time

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<td>Dealing with late inputs from stakeholders, team</td>
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<td>Forcing decisions &amp; closure</td>
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<td>Thoughtful, creative work</td>
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<td>Low-value, but required, reports &amp; presentations</td>
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<th>Quadrant 4</th>
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<td>Over-analysis (“analysis-paralysis”)</td>
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<td>Pointless web-surfing</td>
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<td>Gossip, idle speculation</td>
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12 Steps

Define the Scope
The first, and most important, step in any project is defining the scope of the project. What is it you are supposed to accomplish by managing this project? What is the project objective? Equally important is defining what is not included in the scope of your project. If you don’t get enough definition from your boss, clarify the scope yourself and send it back upstairs for confirmation.

Determine Available Resources
What people, equipment, and money will you have available to you to achieve the project objectives? As a project manager, you usually will not have direct control of these resources, but will have to manage them through influence.

Check the Timeline
When does the project have to be completed? As you develop your project plan you may have some flexibility in how you use time during the project, but deadlines usually are fixed.

Assemble Your Project Team
Start a dialog. Approach people from different divisions, find out what they know and how they can help you.
How to Project Manage

List the Big Steps
What are the major pieces of the project? If you don’t know, start by asking your team. It is a good idea to list the steps in chronological order but don’t obsess about it; you can always change the order later.

List the Smaller Steps
List the smaller steps in each of the larger steps. Again, it usually helps you remember all the steps if you list them in chronological order. How many levels deep you go of more and more detailed steps depends on the size and complexity of your project.

Develop a Preliminary Plan
Assemble all your steps into a plan. What happens first? What is the next step? Which steps can go on at the same time with different resources? Who is going to do each step? How long will it take?

Request Project Adjustments
There is almost never enough time, money or talent assigned to a project. Your job is to do more with the limited resources than people expect. However, there are often limits placed on a project that are simply unrealistic. You need to make your case and present it to your boss and request these unrealistic limits be changed. Ask for the changes at the beginning of the project. Don’t wait until it’s in trouble to ask for the changes you need.
How to Project Manage

Work Your Plan, but be Open to Changes
Making the plan is important, but the plan can be changed. You have a plan for driving to work every morning. If one intersection is blocked by an accident, you change your plan and go a different way. Do the same with your project plans. Change them as needed, but always keep the scope and resources in mind.

Monitor Your Team’s Progress
You will make little progress at the beginning of the project, but start then to monitor what everyone is doing anyway. That will make it easier to catch issues before they become problems.

Document Everything
Keep records. Every time you change from your baseline plan, write down what the change was and why it was necessary. Every time a new requirement is added to the project write down where the requirement came from and how the timeline or budget was adjusted because of it. You can’t remember everything, so write them down so you’ll be able to look them up at the end-of-project review and learn from them.

Keep Everyone Informed
Keep all the project stakeholders informed of progress all along. Let them know of your success as you complete each milestone, but also inform them of problems as soon as they come up. Also keep your team informed. If changes are being considered, tell the team about them as far ahead as you can. Make sure everyone on the team is aware of what everyone else is doing.
Part II: Managing Up
This simple story is one that I’ve heard a few times now and it illustrates the point about perspectives really well.

Two shoe salesmen were sent to Africa to see if there was a market for their product. The first salesman reported back, “This is a terrible business opportunity, no-one wears shoes.”

The second salesman reported back, “This is a fantastic business opportunity, no-one wears shoes!”

The only question that I have is, when confronted with a problem or challenge, which salesman are you?

- Recognize the limitations and potential problems and communicate that with your bosses, BUT never stop there, provide your ideas and suggestions for solutions. By doing that, you’re showing that you OWN it, and ownership is sexy.
Manage Your Bosses

♦ Accept the fact that your boss has been given the power to direct your activities
This is true even if you are much smarter than he is, even if you should have been given her job, even if he is the most obnoxious loudmouth on the planet. You are stuck with this boss for the immediate future, so becoming rebellious will only make a bad situation worse. Accepting reality and working to increase your influence will produce better results.

♦ Don’t expect perfection
Managers are people, not androids, so they have an endless variety of quirks and eccentricities and odd little habits. Recognize your boss’ hot buttons and for heaven’s sake don’t push them! There’s a name for people who annoy their managers on purpose - masochists. If you have a wonderful boss who is a pleasure to work with, celebrate! Be grateful every day for as long as it lasts. If not, lower your expectations.

♦ Study your boss’ management style and figure out what makes him/her happy
Look for clues that tell you how she likes work done or how she prefers to get information. If you’re not sure what your boss expects from you, in terms of results, work habits, communication style, or anything else, then don’t try to guess - ask! You need to find out ASAP. Any reasonable manager will gladly answer these questions and, in fact, will be pleased and surprised by your interest.
Manage Your Bosses

♦ Try to make your boss look good
Produce quality results, meet deadlines, stay within your budget, respond to people quickly. Find problems that need solving and address them. Contribute new ideas and suggestions. Share useful information with your boss. And your visibility will grow when your manager tells everybody how wonderful you are!

♦ Never, never, never complain to others about your boss
Especially to people outside your department or to your employees (if you are a manager). Strategizing with trusted peers about how to handle your manager’s more challenging peculiarities is one thing - kind of like a group therapy session - but trumpeting your unhappiness far and wide will only get you in trouble.
Manage Your Bosses

♦ Give your boss a sincere compliment from time to time
Managers hear lots of complaints, but few employees ever bother to
give their boss a kind word. Unless your manager resembles Attila the
Hun or Adolph Hitler, you can surely find some quality worth praising.
Mention it at some appropriate point. But let’s be clear - paying a
sincere compliment is not the same as groveling or sucking up.

♦ Finally, remember it’s not just your boss who protects your job, it’s
your boss’s boss and others in management
Look for opportunities to interact with higher-level managers. If they
know who you are and think well of you, then you will have enhanced
both your visibility and your job security.

Successfully managing upwards will make your time at work more
pleasant and make it easier to accomplish your goals.
Part III: Managing Around
Managing your colleagues

Be Honest And Communicate
When it comes to building relationships with your co-workers, be open and honest. Having a social relationship and communicate that you want to get to know them better helps you adjust to the working environment and people effectively. Some people see work as a place to show up, do what they are supposed to do, and go home. Others may see it as a place to spend half of their waking lives and an opportunity to build social relationships. At the very least, knowing who embraces relationships and who doesn’t may help you understand how to work with them better.

Be Professional
Sometimes being open and honest about building a relationship with your co-worker won’t get you the response you are looking for. However, don’t completely write-off someone who isn’t interested in building a relationship. Sometimes, you may end up excluding them or devaluing them, and that ends up creating a negative relationship and possibly hurting the company. Instead, be sure to keep them in the communication loop and still offer assistance and support to work-related tasks. Simply put, be professional.
Managing your colleagues

Be Observant
Some people might now know an appropriate way to build a good relationship with a fellow employee.

Take a look at the company’s culture and use that as one of the factors to inform your decision regarding if and how to engage co-workers outside of regular work activities. If you’re unsure about inviting a co-worker to grab some dinner after work, or go out for a run over the weekend, why not start small and ask them out to lunch? You don’t have a whole lot to lose and, if you have a good time, it can become a regular thing and help you grow as co-workers.
Managing your colleagues

Find A Common Interest
For some, it can be a little awkward to get to know a complete stranger. One way to make this a little easier is to focus on an interest you both have in common. Perhaps you both own dogs, went to the same college, watch the same TV show, or have similar travel destinations you want to visit. This common interest can be a good foundation for a positive relationship.

Don’t Be Afraid To Aim A Little Higher (Or Lower)
Though it might be easier to build a relationship with a co-worker who holds the same working status as you, it doesn’t mean you can’t try to build a relationship with a co-worker who outranks you – or even one you outrank – in the company.

Mentoring relationships in the workplace benefit both parties, and the company gains when more employees are engaged and supporting each other. Another benefit is that should the ranks between co-workers change, having already established a positive relationship makes the transition run more smoothly.
Thank you!

Questions:
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