

Dealing Effectively With Superiors

More middle managers are fired for their inability to get along with their superiors than for incompetence. A key to future promotions often lies with your boss. It is vital that you develop a good working relationship with your supervisor.

Adapting To A New Boss

You want to start out on the right foot with a new boss. Make a good first impression. Be friendly and sincere. Don't prejudice your boss's way of doing things. Try to find out about your superior's management style, problem-solving techniques and work preferences. If your boss likes details or simply prefers a pertinent overview, follow that style. Keep predictable hours and be available for extra time if needed. Be punctual and prepared for meetings. Keep your work area and written communication neat.

Effective Communication

Inform your boss of departmental issues. Show loyalty and cooperation. Demonstrate that you are a "team player." Don't hesitate to ask questions if the answers will help you comply with your boss's requests. Be sure to clarify words like "soon," so you are both operating under the same definition. Be open, honest and available to discuss problems with your boss.

Complement your boss's talents and try to be an important resource. Avoid intimidation or making your boss feel defensive. Don't be a "yes person." Instead, develop your own talents and abilities. But it is important to keep your department's and your supervisor's goals in mind. Compromise in areas you don't feel strongly about. Then, when you do feel deeply about a situation, your opinion will be taken seriously.

Listen to your boss's advice. If you make a mistake, admit it. Learn from it, and don't repeat it. Discuss assignments completely to ensure mutual understand-

ing. Report important problems but be ready to offer possible solutions.


If you effectively manage and develop your staff, your boss will see your competence.

Increased productivity and creative handling of potential problems will gain your boss's respect. Take on new challenges. Make your assistance vital by handling projects your superior dislikes. Demonstrate that you can handle all matters efficiently.

Silent Superiors

If your boss is uncommunicative, it makes your job difficult. Try communicating through writing. In meetings you may force a more open discussion if you talk less. Persistently ask for feedback. If you continually ask questions, your boss may eventually realize that you want more communication. You may gain clues about how to communicate more effectively with your boss by observing his or her management style or problem-solving techniques.

Saying "No" To Your Boss

If you have to say "no" to your supervisor, do so tactfully and with forethought. Give an honest explanation of why you aren't able to comply with a request. Try and temper the "no" by offering a compromise or solution such as, "I can't stay late tonight, but I can come in early tomorrow." If the refusal angers your boss, remain calm. Reiterate your reason for the refusal and work towards an agreeable compromise. Try to see things from your boss's perspective. Don't be inflexible. Go over your boss's head only if the situation is intolerable. 



YOU AND YOUR BOSS