

# Managing Up

## Forging a Successful Relationship with Your Supervisor

### Principles of Managing Up

Your goal: Make your supervisor's life easier

- Ask yourself, "What did I do today to help achieve a goal?"
- Anticipate your supervisor's needs and take steps to meet them
- Be your best: Every day, find something to improve or learn

### Get to Know Your Supervisor

- What are your supervisor's most outstanding strengths?
- What are your supervisor's weaknesses or areas where he/she needs the most support?
- What does your supervisor enjoy doing in their free time?

### Recognize Work Style Differences

Tailor your work style to support your supervisor:

- Organized vs. disorganized
- High need for control vs. laissez-faire
- Logical vs. intuitive decision maker
- Proactive vs. reactive
- Process-oriented vs. outcome-oriented
- Accepts vs. avoids conflict
- Talks little vs. talks a lot
- Plans vs. improvises

### How to Handle a Disagreement

- Express your disagreement in private.
- State your position clearly and calmly. Support your point of view with objective information.
- Always be respectful.
- Ask to test your proposal on a trial basis.
- Put yourself in your supervisor's shoes to understand his/her point of view.
- Present a united front once a decision has been made.
- Recognize and accept your supervisor's authority to make a decision.

### Identify Your Supervisor's Priorities

In addition to discussions about priorities, gain further insight through careful observation.

- What does your supervisor spend the most time on?
- What does your supervisor talk about the most?
- What does your supervisor's manager demand of him/her?

### Establish Expectations

Ask these questions to ensure that you and your supervisor are on the same page:

- What are the key things you need me to accomplish in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term?
- How much autonomy do I have in determining how I go about achieving these goals?
- How will success be measured?
- What resources are available to help me accomplish these goals?

### Be a Proactive Problem Solver

- Describe the problem succinctly
- Identify people and functions involved
- Separate facts from opinions
- Brainstorm potential solutions
- Develop objective criteria to assess each option
- Choose the option that provides the best solution
- Develop an implementation plan

### Don't Frustrate Your Supervisor

Behaviors that typically irritate a supervisor:

- Lack of enthusiasm or effort
- Selfish attitude
- Personal tangents
- Arriving late and/or leaving early
- Not paying attention
- Making no effort to get along with others