

# How to Manage your Boss without Kissing Up!

Valerie Horton  
Executive Director  
Colorado Library Consortium

## Managing your Boss Presentation Outline

- ◆ Why should you care
- ◆ What motivates your boss
- ◆ Steps for managing up
- ◆ Let's practice
- ◆ Lending a hand

## Fine line between Kissing Up and Managing Up

- ◆ Kissing up is flattery based on self interest
- ◆ Managing up means:
  1. Working with your boss to obtain the best results for you, your boss, and the organization
  2. Awareness of your bosses workload and helping when you can

## Why manage your boss?

- ◆ "A mutually dependent existence between two fallible individuals"
- ◆ Don't be a passive receptacle for your bosses 'management'
- ◆ You need to build a warm, professional relationship

... to secure your position, to seek advancement, or to get a raise

## It isn't about you

- ◆ Most managers have way TOO MANY items on their "to do" list
- ◆ In reality, managing employees is just one more "to do"
- ◆ So from your boss point of view:  
**Are you an easy "to do" or a difficult "to do"?**

## Bosses are suppose to be...

- ◆ Sensitive, able to read a person
- ◆ Good at problem solving
- ◆ Decisive and self confident
- ◆ Socially competent
- ◆ Emotionally resilient
- ◆ Proactive and Creative
- ◆ Multi-taskers
- ◆ Spin straw into gold, walk on water...

## What motivates most bosses?

- ◆ Need for RELATIONSHIPS
  - Desire to establish close relationships
  - Likes to chat, team-building exercises
- ◆ Need for POWER
  - Desires to win arguments, to control
  - Seeks status, visibility and credibility

Continuum: **POWER <--> RELATIONSHIPS**

## Other needs

- ◆ To achieve, compete
- ◆ To conform
  - Follow rules, make no waves
- ◆ To be autonomous, independent
- ◆ The organization over the needs of the individual
- ◆ To be creative
  - Have big ideas, stir things up

## Study your situation

- ◆ Watch how your boss reacts
  - ... to colleagues, superiors, and with you
  - What works best?
  - Keep a PRIVATE notebook
- ◆ Ask co-workers for tips
  - Keep it positive, no gossip
- ◆ Bibliography

## What does your boss expect of you?

- ◆ Credibility
  - Do what you say you're going to
- ◆ Professionalism
  - Act like a professional, volunteer, be dedicated
- ◆ Integrity
  - Don't always agree, have principles and stand by them
- ◆ Caring
  - Walk a mile in your bosses footstep
- ◆ Knowledge
  - Be an expert at something important to the library

## Mini-Assessment (handout)

1. What motivates my boss?
2. What does my boss think of me?
3. How have I helped my boss recently?

## Steps for Managing up

1. Focus on your boss
2. Create the right atmosphere
3. Speak clearly and calmly
4. Frame the message
5. Counter arguments
6. What's in it for your boss
7. Focus on key agreements
8. Graceful endings

### 1. Focus on your boss

- ◆ Arrange your arguments from your boss' perspective
  - Needs: Relationships, power, other
- ◆ Determine your boss' preferred mode for gaining information
  - Email, Phone, In person, IM?
  - Long report with data or exec summary?

### 2. Create the right atmosphere for open discussions – no blindsiding

- ◆ Schedule a meeting
  - Give a brief heads-up first
- ◆ No emotional moments in hallways
- ◆ Ask permission to bring up difficult topics

### 3. Speak clearly and calmly

- ◆ Above all stay calm
- ◆ Manage your moods

## Crucial Conversation: Tools for Talking when stakes are High

### 4. Communication: the message

- ◆ Provide the “right” amount of information
- ◆ Clearly state what you need
  - *“I’m struggling to cover the desk with John out, I’m hoping you can help by...”*
- ◆ Mutual expectations
  - Make sure you’re in agreement by using the ‘restate’ technique
- ◆ Celebrate good news
- ◆ Bring bad news forward
  - Heads-up before a problem becomes a crisis
- ◆ Offer solutions to problems
  - Two or three ideas ready
  - With pros and cons for each

### 5. LISTEN before making counter arguments

- ◆ Don’t have rehearsed counter arguments already lined up
  - Respond to what your boss says
  - Active Listening: Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead
- ◆ Postpone
  - Ask to think it out and get back to him by...

### 6. What’s in it for your boss

- ◆ Suggest what’s in it for your manager
  - *“You mentioned we need to improve our web site, I’d like to suggest...”*
- ◆ How to avoid ‘Kissing up’
  - Using departmental examples
  - *“I know that tech services places great value in...”*
  - Focus on organizational goals
  - *“Our strategic plan includes...”*

## 7. Focus on key agreements

- ◆ If your boss has agreed to do something for you, restate it back
  - *"Thank you for agreeing to bring this matter up with HR, I was getting nowhere and your help means..."*
- ◆ Restate what you agreed to do
  - *"I will check with purchasing and get back to you by 3:00 with the answer"*

## 8. Graceful conclusions

- ◆ Make a follow-up appointment
  - *"I'm sure you'll want to think about this, I'll talk to you about it again..."*
- ◆ Offer a thank you for her time

If you really want to make a  
difference, give your boss a hand  
*"I noticed you have ten things going on right  
now, can I help you?"*

## Boss from Hell – Choices

1. Stay, wait it out
  - Stop complaining
2. Complain up
  - Atomic option -- Lawsuit
3. Leave, find a better boss
4. Maybe your relationship needs some work and managing up techniques will help

