

MANAGING UP VERSUS LEADING UP

Managing up is a phrase that broadly includes anticipating your manager's needs and proactively adapting to support them. In other words, making their lives easier and at the same time, getting better results for you and your team.

While, managing up is a great way to build a good working relationship with your boss while setting yourself up for career advancement, there are downsides. Building trust and then using that trust to manipulate situations in your favor is a very costly mistake. That's why it's important to always keep in mind that managing up is a sincere, not selfish approach to architecting a productive and healthy work environment. In other words, managing up should produce mutually positive outcomes for your manager, your team, you and your organization.

Enter the phrase 'leading up.' This phrase builds on the idea of managing up but emphasizes stepping into your leadership shoes. This includes adopting the mindset of a leader, becoming an example others will follow, inspiring collegiality and productivity, sharing your voice without being disrespectful and using your strengths for the overall good and not just to 'get your job done.'

It doesn't matter what position you hold within an organization; you can always lead up. Mark Sanborn's book, *You Don't Need a Title to Be A Leader*, provides motivation and techniques for embracing the leader in you.

Here are ten ways that you can lead up and achieve career excellence:

- 1. Lead yourself.** This is the time when you want to demonstrate the ideal characteristics of a leader. Making effective decisions, leading your team thoughtfully, being productive in your work, managing your emotions and being consistent with efforts and within your relationships.
- 2. Help support your manager.** Look for ways that you can step in and take care of projects, team challenges, tasks, conflicts and reduce their overall workload.
- 3. Anticipate your manager's needs.** Be proactive when it comes to solutions and long-range goals. Get a head start on projects, propose ideas for redesigning workflow, look for ways to reduce costs, improve productivity and get ahead of obstacles.
- 4. Foresee opportunities worth exploring.** Be prepared for each meeting you have with subordinates, colleagues and your own manager. Come with an agenda and share opportunities that you deem worthy along with sound reasoning for your decisions.
- 5. Do what others won't do.** Shine as a thoughtful leader by stepping in and taking care of business that isn't being attended to. This may include working through conflicts, creating processes that will help improve productivity and conducting crucial conversations on behalf of your leader.

- 6. Invest in people.** Spend time with team members, key constituents, clients, leaders, vendors and anyone with whom you should be interacting. Build these relationships so that you can empower them, gain trust, get results and communicate effectively.
- 7. Be a better leader each day.** Work on yourself through professional development trainings, mentoring, reading and education. Don't wait for your manager to share with you what they believe you need to know. Seek out guidance from influencers in your field and build your resume and your leadership acumen daily.
- 8. Learn from mistakes.** Don't get caught up in what happened yesterday, rather focus on how you can improve today. Admit when you're wrong or when you don't know and don't be afraid to ask for help. Leaders who are transparent and 'human' will sustain their upward trajectory and inspire others to follow their lead.
- 9. Be respectful of others' time.** Time is precious so consider making every interaction brief and impactful. Also, by taking a hard look at ineffective meetings, outdated processes, mundane tasks, inconsistencies and imbalance in workloads, you can curtail waste and help others be more productive and effectively manage their day.
- 10. Document everything.** As your coach, you hear me say this numerous times and for numerous reasons. First, recording your results is a great confidence booster. Second, being able to articulate your efforts and accomplishments will really come in handy when going into your next review, promotion, raise negotiation, interview or pitching for a leadership seat.