

DOES YOUR BOSS COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY? (DO YOU?)

“He doesn’t listen to my suggestions...”

“She never recognizes my contributions...”

“He is terrible about returning emails...”

“She is an awful communicator...”

It’s no surprise that the [#1 reason employees dislike their jobs](#) is “poor management”. More specifically, ‘poor communication’ is the common denominator found in most lackluster leaders. Leadership should create an environment of collaboration and open communication. A true leader provides employee with a setting where they can thrive, offering advice, mentorship, and recognition for a job well done.

If you believe everything you read, this type of leadership is the exception, not the rule. In fact, a lot of leaders are just plain awful. While this may be true, the simple fact is this:

They are the boss. You are the employee. Unless you want to find employment elsewhere, you are going to have to learn how to effectively communicate in order to do your job successfully.

Communicating Effectively with Leadership

Learn Your boss’s communication style

Regardless of how you like to communicate, it is important to [learn your boss’s communication style](#). Your approach is key to a successful meeting in any form. Does she prefer face-to-face meetings or emails? Are you more likely to get a moment of her time if you send a message briefly and succinctly outlining the issue you want to discuss? Is she a numbers and visuals person? If you are able to schedule an in-person meeting, shoot an email to her or the person who handles her calendar, including a 1-line subject of the issue you plan to address.

Cut to the chase

Whether you like it or not, your boss is busy, his time is precious. Respect that. Do not approach your boss with a long-winded discussion about an idea you had. Start with the bottom line. Using numbers, facts, and other examples, get to your point immediately,

skipping a lengthy introduction. Your boss will get the needed info through follow-up questions and discussions.

“Always be able to tell me where we are, where we’re going, and how we’re going to get there. If we’re at point B and you want to get us to point A, then tell me how you plan to do that, and what will happen once that step occurs. Communicate the results of your plan and what the next steps are that I can help you with.” [Rick Krantz, President, OverGo Studio, Inc.](#)

Do not break the chain of command

No matter how ‘hands on’ your leadership may be, they cannot speak to everyone—especially in larger companies. It is important to remember and [abide by the chain of command](#). “If you have concerns you want to address with your boss, but you’re not the main point of contact with her, you should bring your concerns to your direct supervisor. This person will address your concerns with you, or take it up the food chain to your boss.” Of course, there may be times when it’s appropriate and necessary to skip a few level rungs in the hierarchy.

Be a problem solver

Good leaders build good teams. You were hired because you have the skills, experience, or know how to contribute to the success of the company. Therefore, if you see a problem, communicate it *and a solution* to management. Be proactive and demonstrate you have the company’s best interest in mind. Your solution may not always be implemented, but it will have a better chance if you come to the table with a plan in mind.

Manage up

Not every boss is interested in improving communication. Some simply don’t have the time as they are juggling many balls at once. If this is the case, [you will have to be your own advocate](#). If management continually fails to communicate expectations or does not provide feedback, the responsibility lies with you to ask the right questions. Molly Donovan of The Muse suggests asking for deadlines, clarifying responsibilities or deliverables, and determining priorities when you are managing multiple assignments. Be the impetus of communication in order to keep your own work life happy and manageable. “Being your own advocate isn’t just about managing your own workload—it’s about making sure you’re being the most effective, efficient, and valuable member of the team you can be.”