MANAGING YOUR BOSS

REVISITED

thinking and develops their skills but also makes a positive contribution to society.

An idea is about to be shared, one that may herald a breakthrough or, at the very least, a little chuckle as I was still in primary school and the majority of my colleagues today would not have been born when the book was first published.

It would have been invaluable to have read this back in the day, as the simple yet germane messages still apply in light of present day workplace dynamics. Let us reproduce the advice put forth by Gabarro and Kotter.

MISREADING THE BOSS-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP

From the Silent Generation to Gen-Z The combination of having a good understanding of each other’s strengths, weaknesses, work styles and needs, and developing a healthy working relationship based on that mutual understanding, has historically been mostly found in highly effective managers.

Having had the opportunity to work in Gen-X, Gen-Y, and Gen-Z recently and lead a team comprising Gen-Y, Gen-Z, and me, this is increasingly common. On different occasions, I have been part of a widely dispersed team. It certainly had its ups and downs.

Having a presence in different contexts and cultures gave us quick access to valuable insights and helped avoid potential issues in project execution on the ground. At the end of the day though, human connection and just being in the same room to be able to read each other was crucial to develop the necessary understanding of our strengths, weaknesses, work styles and needs.

An idea needs to first take form in your mind. If you cannot drop what you are doing, fine. But it’s your idea and you will have to make time to work on it.

When my relationship with my boss thrives in a virtuous cycle, or fizzes in a vicious cycle of interactions does depend much on how I understand my relationship and respond to my boss. And then working on developing an effective relationship for the future.

Developing and managing the relationship And now, action! The Checklist for Managing your Boss (Harvard Business School) certainly applies today. To go from surviving to thriving at the workplace, we need to work on managing a relationship that fits the needs and styles of both boss and employee.

It should be based on clearly defined and mutual expectations of both, as well as dependability and honesty.

While we need to keep our bosses informed, bosses of today realise that developing relationships and working closely with our bosses is a great idea for both of us to thrive.

If your boss is an emotional and brainy type, you might want to take a cue from the following advice.

Consider some of the following openers: 

- “That sounds interesting. Can you tell me more?”
- “What excites you the most about this idea?”
- “What is the essence of your idea – the core principle?”
- “How do you imagine your idea will benefit others?”
- “In what ways does your idea fit with our strategic vision?”
- “What information do you still need?”
- “Who are your likely collaborators?”
- “Is there anything similar to your idea on the market?”
- “What support do you need from me?”
- “What is your next step?”

Understanding yourself: Evergreen advice At LeadershipWorks, we recognise that self-awareness is a starting point for everyone seeking to develop themselves, be it the youth, college students, working adults or senior leadership of organisations. This applies too to the working relationship with a boss.

Whether my relationship with my boss thrives in a virtuous cycle, or fizzes in a vicious cycle of interactions does depend much on how I understand my relationship and respond to my boss. And then working on developing an effective relationship for the future.

If your head generator, take a deep breath, and begin

Creativity cannot be legislated. It requires tuning you in, tuning you up, a form of mental and emotional resonance, a virtual connection that not only fosters innovative thinking and develops their skills but also makes a positive contribution to society.

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By KAREN NEON

Karen was recently included in a focus group discussion representing Gen-X, where her investigator was appropriately amused (and confused) that Karen was clearly not the poster child for her generation. For more leadership content, do go to www.leaderonomics.com

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