

10 Essential Tactics To Get Your Boss To Seriously Value You!

Create the absolute most value from each
One-on-One Meeting for each party



For the manager, the one-on-one meeting is an amazing opportunity to build relationships, find out exactly what is happening in the team and to help, support and develop.

For the team member, the one-on-one meeting is vital to update the boss on what has been achieved, progress of current work and to get vital feedback to improve

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Example Agendas

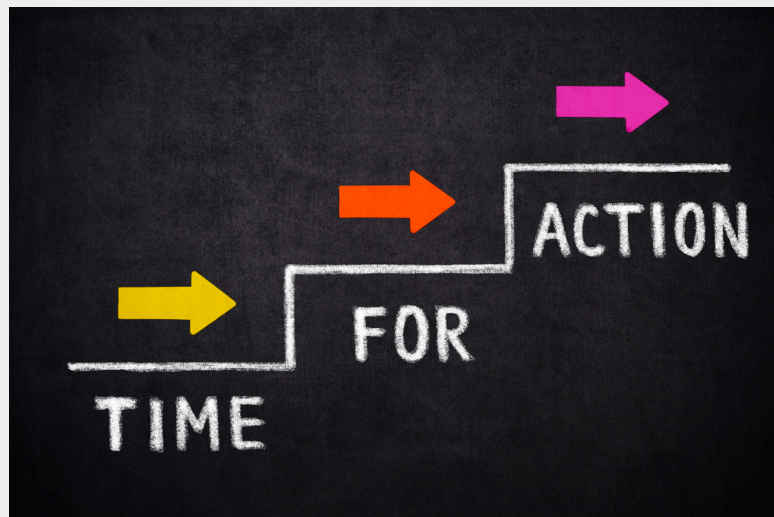
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The Purpose Of All These Actions

Good relationships at work are built through mutual help and support, trust, appreciation and reaching common goals.

To have a good working relationship with your boss, you don't need to be friends, someone you would socialise with etc, but you do need to appreciate them, respect them and most importantly help them.

The more you make your boss's life easier, less stressful and less pressurised, the more they will like and appreciate you. The more you make your boss look good to their peers and boss's, the more your boss will like and appreciate you.



Take action to specifically help your boss. Being useful and helpful to your boss is a great foundation to create a good working relationship, which in turn will help you personally.

The relationship with your boss is the most important one you have at work. There is a lot you can do to improve your relationship, no matter how difficult, rude, uncaring or indifferent your boss is. When you have a reasonable relationship, you can still work to improve that relationship.

The better your relationship with your boss, the more benefits, happiness and career progress you will get.

Here are 10 actions that I have used over decades to build good working relationships with a lot of different bosses and managers.

Action 1 - Be Responsible For The Relationship With Your Boss

It can be very tempting to be passive in managing your relationship with your boss. Being passive is the easy route, the route with the least effort and psychologically the safest route.

Don't fall into the dangerous trap of being passive – that is taking no proactive action.

The impact of a poor relationship between you and your boss is hugely damaging for you. A poor relationship with a team member is annoying, a hassle, another problem for your boss but not hugely damaging. i.e. there is a big imbalance in favour of your boss.

You get a lot more benefits from a good relationship with your boss compared to an okay relationship. An okay relationship is a lot better than a poor relationship. The better your relationship the more likely you are to get better development opportunities, to get more interesting work, to be happier at work etc.



The next trap to avoid is thinking you are not able to make a big difference to the relationship you have with your boss. After all, you are 50% of the relationship.

Take ownership and responsibility for the relationship. This is a big mental bridge to cross. Expect to put in 70-80% of the effort to build and maintain the relationship with an okay manager. With a good boss, this percentage will drop towards say 60%.

The main point is you need to take responsibility and expect to put in more effort than your boss to build and maintain a good relationship.

Action 2 - Ask Exactly What Your Boss Wants From You

It is 10 times easier to build a good relationships with your boss with you when you know what to do to make them happy.

The easiest way to find out exactly what your boss wants is to ask them.

Use questions like “I am really keen to make sure I am supporting you in the best way I can – what should I focus my time on delivering for you over the next month?”

or “It would be super helpful for you to tell me exactly what you need me to deliver over the next month so that I can support you in the best way. What should I focus on?”



There are times when your boss won't really tell you what they want. They might not be sure all the way through to being difficult. There are lots of other ways to work out what they want and need. Some of the actions you could take to find out:

1. Ask other team members – the ones doing similar jobs will be particularly useful
2. Pay attention to what your boss pays attention to. These areas are likely to be the important ones to them
3. Work out how you can personally contribute to reaching team and functional goals and spend more time in these areas
4. Look at your boss's personal goals or objectives if these are available and work out how you help them reach these goals

Spend more time and effort on the areas that your boss cares about and will contribute the most to team performance.

Find out what is important to your boss and exactly what they expect from you.

Action 3 - Do A Good Enough Job To Be A Help To Your Boss

Doing a good enough job is a fundamental requirement to keep your boss happy.

When you do an average job or better, your boss sees you as a help, an asset, a person they can rely on to support them. Do a better than average job, and you help the team perform better, which in turn makes your boss look good.

When you perform below average, you are a problem, a distraction, a hindrance and someone that adds to your boss's workload. Below average performers negatively impact team performance by more than just their individual contribution, which never makes a boss happy.



Put the effort in to learn, to improve and to work so that you are at least average in your team, preferably better than average.

This instantly improves your relationship with your manager, and they are predisposed to think positively towards you. Doing a better than average job opens the good relationship door with your boss!



Action 4 - Understand The Pressures Your Manager Is Under

If you know what is causing your boss to feel pressurised, you can work out how you might relieve some of this pressure.

Your boss is human – they don't like pressure any more than you do. When you specifically put in effort to help them, they will feel you care, and you want them to do well. A great way to build trust and a good relationship.

You are also tapping into reciprocity – a social/group dynamic as old a time - which will encourage your boss to help you in return.



To find out what issues, problems and tasks are adding to pressure on your boss:

Firstly - ask about their work, what projects need to be done, what requests are coming for their boss or others and what their current challenges are.

Listen carefully to what they say. Ask what you can do to help and tailor your work to help alleviate those pressures as much as possible.

If you don't feel you can ask directly then pay attention to what your boss talks about, what your boss is spending their time on, what they are asking you and others in the team to focus on and think about what you personally can do that will help your boss.

Find one or more areas that help your boss. Don't forget to tell your boss what you have done, or are doing, to help them!

Action 5 – Bring Solutions With Problems

Communicating problems to you boss is valuable. They know what is happening and what issues need to be fixed which is a lot better than not knowing about them.

From personal experience, getting a list of problems on its own is pretty soul destroying. You feel your own workload has just gone up x number of notches.

When you only bring problems to your boss you are in effect:

1. Communicating that you are side stepping responsibility to solve the problems.
2. Adding to your boss's workload which is the exact opposite of what you want to build a better relationship

Neither of these outcomes is helping your boss.



10 times better is when you spot a problem, think of at least one practical way to solve the problem. If you really struggle with problems solving skills, confidence or just don't know how to create at least one solution, ask colleagues to help you get to a solution.

Then when you speak to you boss about the problem you can also provide a solution. Then you are communicating:

1. I have taken responsibility to solve the problem which is one less for your boss to solve
2. You are keeping your boss informed and are actively trying to reduce their workload
3. You are seeking their input and/or approval for the solution you have proposed

Bringing solutions with problems is a great way to help your boss. Bring solutions consistently and they will love you for it.

Action 6 – Learn Your Boss’s Communication Preferences

Your boss will find it easier to deal with you when you match how you communicate to their preferences.

Do they prefer email updates or meeting face to face? Do they want an update each day or will once a week do? Do they need meetings booked into their calendar or are they happy for you pop round to their desk?

Do they want lots of detail or just the key points. How much control do they want to exert – via giving permission or do they leave you to it. Are they hands on or hands off in the communication and management style?

Ask your boss what they prefer. If your boss doesn’t give you much or any indication, then ask colleagues and spend time observing what works best with your boss.



I suggest you make the time to experiment with trying different approaches to see what works best with your boss. Tailor how you communicate to get the most engagement and response from your boss.

In general terms, I try to maximise the face to face time I spend with a boss to a point. It is much quicker to build relationships when speaking face to face than any other communication approaches.

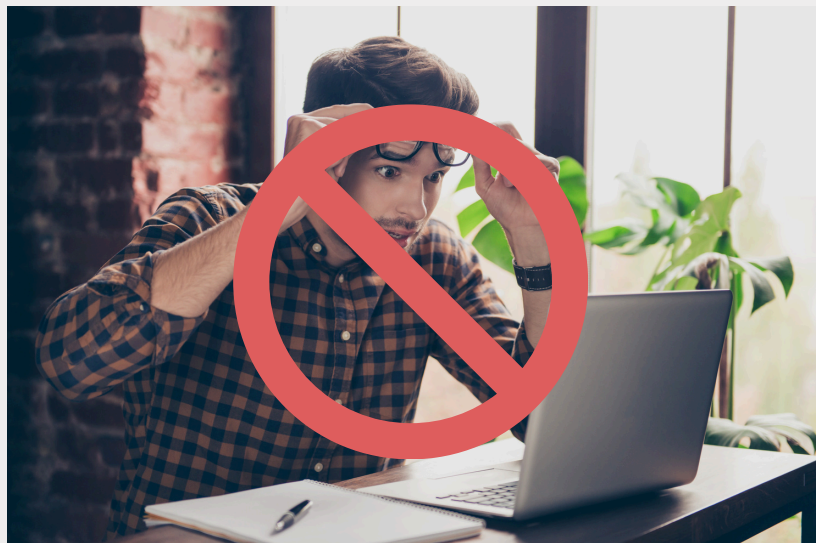
Tailor your communication to match your boss’s preferences.

Action 7 - No Surprises

Bosses hate surprises – even the good ones. When bosses get surprises:

1. They don't have time to plan solutions, mitigations or responses if surprising to the downside
2. Your boss doesn't look good to peers and more senior staff. If your boss's manager gets surprises, they assume your boss either: doesn't know what is happening in their team or they haven't bothered to manage expectations properly. Neither are good for your boss.

The more you can reduce surprises for your boss, the better. You will give them the chance to manage expectations ahead of time or reduce the impact of the situation if negative.



When things change, make the time to communicate these changes to your boss promptly. Communicate impact of the change as well.

Try to have a plan in place to get back on track if it is a negative surprise and tell your boss what this is i.e. bring solutions with problems.

Keep surprises to a minimum and you demonstrate you are dependable and reliable to your boss.

Action 8 – Take On Extra Work To Reduce Pressure On Your Boss

The performance of your boss will be assessed largely by the performance of their team. To help and support your boss, you can help them personally, help the team or do both.

The proactive investment of an extra hour or two each week in the right areas can make a big difference to your boss. Try to target tasks, activities or problems that are outside your standard work or what is expected of you. Look to demonstrate that you are going above and beyond what is asked of you.



Ideas include:

1. Solving problems your boss had not got round to solving
2. Asking to take tasks, activities and problems from your boss
3. Organising team members to prevent problems developing
4. Help increase co-ordination, collaboration and communication within the team i.e. improve teamwork
5. Help other team members when they are under pressure or overworked or stuck
6. Deal with requests from outside of the team so your boss doesn't have to get involved

Don't just do more of what you are already doing. This will not stand out in the same way as taking on different tasks, activities and problems.

When you put in extra work, it is also important that you tell your boss what you are doing. If they don't know you are helping them, then they won't be able to appreciate it.

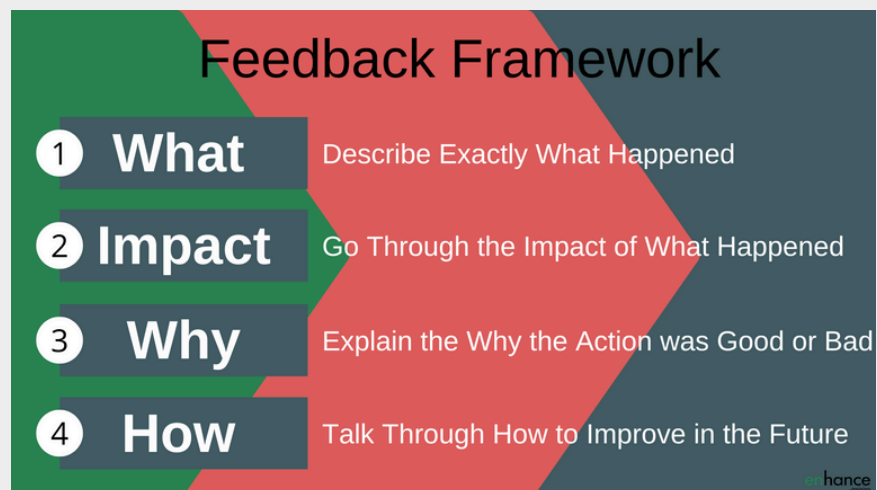
Take work and pressure off your boss.

Action 9 - Give Your Boss Positive Feedback

Your boss enjoys getting praise and appreciation just like everyone else. Your boss will get a lot less feedback than you do. Help your boss by telling them what they are doing well. Positive feedback is safe to give to a boss and they will really appreciate it.

Make sure your feedback is genuine, and heart felt. Make your feedback specific. Tell your boss what they did, the impact on you or the team and why what they did was so good.

Positive reinforcement works very well on anyone, including your boss.



An example could be:

“Just to let you know, I and most of the team really appreciated you taking the time to walk us through the XYZ project - what was going well and what was behind, and importantly, how it was going to affect us. It gave us all a lot more confidence and stopped some of the negative rumours circulating in the team.”

Everyone likes compliments they have earned and it is a great way to show you appreciate you boss.

Action 10 - Don't Complain About Your Boss At Work (Ever)

Your boss will make mistakes and will annoy you or frustrate you at times. They are human. What is really important is you don't succumb to the temptation of venting your anger, annoyance or frustrations to colleagues or anyone in the company.

Firstly, complaining about your boss, even when it is justified, is unprofessional and won't increase your standing with colleagues.



Even more important is that your complaining about bosses will get back to them at some point, often out of context or overblown. When this happens, it will undo the good work you have put in to build good relationships with your boss.

Resist the temptation to talk badly about your boss at work. Find other ways to vent your emotions and frustrations about your boss - for example - vent to friends or others outside of work.

Don't complain about your boss at work full stop!

In Summary

The relationship you have with your boss is the most important relationship you have at work. Any time put into improving this relationship will help you personally feel and be happier and more successful at work.

There is a lot you can do to make your boss's life easier and more enjoyable at work and to make you boss look good to peers and their boss's.

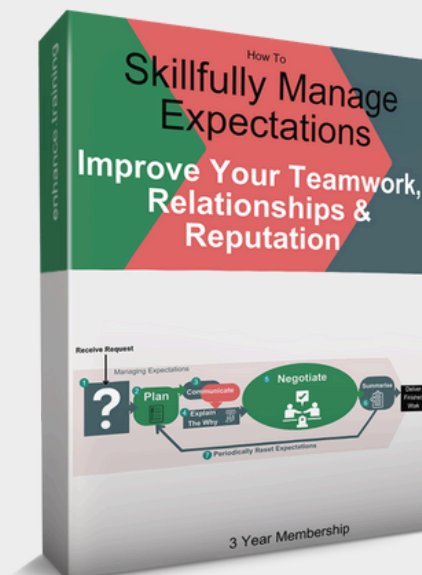
Putting in the effort to do so and making sure your boss is aware of what you are doing , will make building a good relationship with them a lot easier and quicker.

Build a good relationship with your boss and work to keep your relationship strong.

Nervous about saying “No”, struggling to negotiate realistic expectations or find yourself letting others down?

Give yourself a better opportunity to do a good job, to deliver against expectations and to impress colleagues and bosses.

Reduce the pressure and stress you feel and reduce your workload. Learn how to negotiate realistic expectations with anyone, with offending or annoying.



Learn what this course will do for you

