

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a process. Working together is success.

Henry Ford



Module Ten: The Team of Two

Working as a team with your manager is essential in keeping the lines of communication open and building rapport. A good and positive relationship with your manager is the foundation and support structure that gives you the ability to function independently. In this module, you will learn the basis of building

a good relationship with your manager.



Working with Your Manager

Your best relationship to build is the one with your manager. Being an assistant to them is a crucial part of their success. Good communication with your manager is essential and keeps you on track.

Working with your manager requires some of the following to take place in the relationship:

- You must build trust
- You must remain professional
- You must communicate constantly
- You must always speak positively of your manager
- You must have a high level of integrity
- You must keep things confidential when appropriate

These elements take time to build. Building trust comes with a high degree of quality in your work. What and how you produce speaks volumes of you. This instills trust and gives your manager the peace of mind that you know how to do things right. Remaining professional is essential. It is tempting to become more personal with your manager. Avoid sharing too much detail about your home life or other personal issues. This could cause conflict of interest. Of course, if you have a personal issue that affects your job, you can discuss it with your manager, but remain professional about it.

Foster communication. Find out how your manager likes to communicate. They may prefer email over voicemail. It is your goal to determine the best form of communication. Many times, your manager may get bogged down with issues, try pulse checks throughout the day to keep communication flowing. Always speak positively about your manager. If you have issues with your manager discuss it with them directly. Avoid venting about it to coworkers. This could get back to your manager, jeopardizing your trust. Work with a high degree of integrity. Always do the right thing. Your performance reflects on your manager. Many times you may be included in a sensitive discussing about the organization. Never share those things outside of your manager's office.

The next lesson will give you some tips on how to influence your manager.



Influencing Skills

As an administrative assistant, you may find times where you think your ideas are viable and worth implementing. However, you need to gain your manager's buy in. Influencing your manager is possible and enables you to expand your career in a direction that could lead to a promotion.

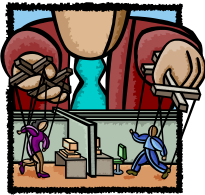
There are steps to influencing and by no means are you to manipulate your manager. These steps are meant to foster relationships that help your manager see your point of view and consider your ideas.

- Build a trusting relationship with your manager as discussed in the previous lesson. This is achieved through your integrity, quality of work and commitment to your job.
- Aligning your goals with your manager's goals helps to create common ground. If your goals are to move to another department, and your manager's is to develop a sales program, then your goals will conflict. Align your career goals on the success of your manager's projects. This way you will work as a team.
- Assume positive intent by your manager. By this we mean to always believe your manager has your best interest at heart. When you assume positive intent, you will be more open and accepting of your manager's actions and decisions.
- Try not to change your manager. You may be tempted to try to improve you manager's demeanor or personality. Attempting to do this will cause your manager to reject you and

question your motives. Accept your manager for who they are. Work with their faults. We all have them.

- Learn from your manager. Nothing expresses more gratitude when you learn from someone. Your manager needs positive reinforcement too. Seeing you adopt their management style, or other practices says you respect and find value in your relationship with your manager.

Influencing is not about manipulation. It is about placing others first and showing them how important they are to you.



What to Do in Sticky Situations

It is a reality that things could go wrong between you and your manager. We should always assume positive intent, but when matters cause you to feel uncomfortable, it is best to try to move this discussion to the right parties at work.

First of all, if you suspect your manager of doing something illegal, report that to the proper authorities at work. Covering up such things could land you in jail for aiding and abiding.

However, there may be times when things are more subtle. Actions like harassment, verbal abuse, and vindictiveness are things you should not tolerate. Here is the Four D approach to handling a sticky situation.

- **Discuss**, calmly, with your manager the issue and ask for it to stop
- **Document** each time your manager repeats the offense if they do not respond to your request, then
- **Discuss** with your manager's supervisor
- **Defer** the matter to human resources if your manager does not respond to their supervisor

At any time you feel the situation is out of control, skip this process, go immediately to your human resources department and get them involved. They are there to help you in these types of situations.

Case Study

After convincing the manager that some of his decisions were wrong for the good of the company, Paul knew that he could improve his position by knowing how to work with his manager well. After learning his normal behavior, Paul worked towards building trust, remaining professional and communicating in order to obtain a high level of integrity, needed for a working relation.

Together with this, Paul also had to have the ability of persuasion in order to guide the persons he worked with towards rethinking their decisions and putting employees first. Paul also learned what to do in sticky situations through this experience and finally managed to put the company on the road to success.