

Building A Better Relationship With Your Boss

from the American Counseling Association

Recent economic problems have most companies pushing harder to get maximum performance from every employee. As a result, many people find themselves facing a harsher work environment and deteriorating relationships with supervisors as performance goals become more critical.

Building and maintaining positive relations with your boss will pay benefits in terms of reducing work-related stress, improving overall job satisfaction, and how you are treated (and paid) at your job.

But a more positive relationship with your boss doesn't just happen. Getting there requires you being pro-active and taking the lead in building that better relationship.

Start by learning about what matters to your boss. As you learn your supervisor's values and concerns, it becomes easier to interact with him or her as a person, rather than simply as a boss.

It's also important to understand your boss's expectations. Are there reports or other job actions your supervisor needs to do his or her own job? Are there certain "pet peeves," such as dress codes or timeliness, that matter a lot to him or her? Make time to talk with your supervisor and ask questions about what's really expected of you.

Communication is a vital step. That doesn't mean always being ready to complain, but rather being open and approachable. Ask periodically, in a genuine way, how you're doing. Make it easy for your boss to talk with you, try out new ideas, offer suggestions, and feel that his or her responsibilities can be shared with you. When there are problems, try a solution-based approach, offering ideas on how to fix things, rather than just complaining.

It also helps to be flexible. When meeting times, deadlines, or job goals are changed, it's easy to blame your boss for such problems, but it often isn't his or her fault. Blaming the boss won't improve a relationship. Instead, try to accept and adapt to changes, and realize that an employee who can handle the unexpected will be appreciated. Discuss the problem if the changes are really making something impossible for you.

A supervisor wants to know you're interested in more than just collecting a paycheck. Supervisors notice when there's open communication, when criticism is accepted in a positive manner, and when an employee is actively working to build a relationship that will help you both work better. And in tough economic times, a happier boss is a very good thing.

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