Managing Your Boss or Executive Sponsor

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Agenda

- The Nature of Organizations
- Checklist for Managing Your Boss
- Drucker’s Divide
- Special Situation: You as outside advisor
- Action Plan

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Who is Your Boss?

The Nature of Organizations

- Dysfunctional (i.e. not perfect)
- Humans with needs
- Humans with aspirations
- Humans with different styles

- Focus: generally on our OWN self-preservation
With Your Boss in Mind:

- Needs:
- Aspirations:
- Style:

Checklist for Managing Your Boss*

HBR Managing Your Boss

- Understand Your Boss and his/her context:
  - Goals and objectives
  - Pressures
  - Strengths, Weaknesses, blind spots
  - Preferred Work Style
- Assess yourself and your needs:
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - Personal style
  - Predisposition toward dependence on authority figures

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Checklist for Managing Your Boss*

Develop and Maintain a relationship that:
- Fits both your needs and styles
- Is characterized by mutual expectations
- Keeps your boss informed
- Is based on dependability and honesty
- Selectively uses your boss’s time and resources

Peter Drucker on Bosses

- “Listeners” and “Readers”
  - How your boss prefers to receive information
- Readers:
  - Get information in report or memo form
  - Prefer to read and study
  - Therefore: Send memo first, then set up time to discuss
- Listeners:
  - Prefer information and reports presented in person
  - Like to ask questions real time
  - Therefore: Brief in person, then f/u with memo
Special Situation: You as Outside Advisor

- Consultant, temporary advisor, coach, trainer, speaker

- Tricky: telling the truth while not making your executive sponsor or client look bad or feel inadequate
  - If you were called in to help, they already know they have problems

- Therefore, this statement is not helpful: “This is a dysfunctional organization”

relationships Consulting = relationship business

- Building & maintaining trust
  1. Do the work – be the solution you promised
  2. Frequent communication and progress updates
     - Who is your executive sponsor?
     - Who is your project liaison?
     - What is the chain of communication?
     - What is the frequency and mode preferred?
     - Where are we with milestones and on timeline?
  3. Be honest, earnest
Managing your relationships
Consulting = relationship business

- Building & maintaining trust
  4. Stay out of politics and avoid triangulation
  5. Always know whose “toes” you will step on by your presence – enroll them in the “change”
  6. All organizations are (a bit) dysfunctional
     - Improve your client’s situation anyway
     - Assess but don’t be disdainful (they asked for your help remember?)

Managing your Executive Sponsor relationships

- Managing meetings (1-1 or 1-many)
  - Where stuff happens
  - Incumbent upon YOU to be an excellent facilitator and strategist
  - For every meeting (EVERY), know the following:
    - Agenda
    - Objective
    - Your findings to date + recommendations (keep it brief)
    - Next steps
**Action Plan**

- Know who your boss(es) are
- What is their preferred mode for getting information?
- Go through the “Checklist”

**Additional Resources**

- Managing Your Boss - HBR May-June 1993
- 10 Rules to Managing Your Boss - Horvitz
  - On the PSC site
- “Flawless Consulting” - Peter Block