

Building Your Boss' Confidence in You

Believe in Yourself

1. See yourself as a peer to top management. If you see yourself as a lower level employee, top management will see you that way also.
2. Draw up a list of who you are, what you can do, and who you know, and use it as a resource tool and confidence builder when being assertive with your boss.
3. Keep a log of the positive comments people make to you and the tasks you do well.
4. Replace self-criticism with regular, positive self-talk.
5. Cultivate people who build you up and help you grow.

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Building the confidence of your boss in you is essential, and failing to preserve it can be fatal. The more credible the messenger, the more powerful the message.

When you earn respect for your performance, you gain power and influence along with it. Deficiencies in your work product and work output can limit your ability.

- 1. Regardless of how you feel about your boss or whether you always agree with your boss, display a respect for his/her position, recognize the reality of the relationship, and work to make the best of the situation.**
- 2. Remember that reputation has two main elements:**
 - Being known as a “go-to player” who gets the results an organization needs and gets them reliably.
 - Getting results in the right way, which usually means being a team player.
 - Being loyal to the people around you by protecting or enhancing their reputations and career prospects.
 - Not hanging the organization’s dirty laundry out to dry.
 - Playing the game, but avoiding moral grandstanding.
 - Participating in the network of favors, understandings, and small deals which hold organizations together.
- 3. Show initiative to lay the foundation for confidence and support from above.**

4. Make your boss look good, give credit to your boss, and praise him/her generously.

All human beings like to be recognized for their performance and need psychological strokes. Bosses are prone to self-doubt, lack of assertiveness, insecurity, fear, confusion, and paranoia, just like everyone else in the organization.

Positive feedback alters behavior more consistently and more reliably than negative feedback. Positive feedback must recognize very specific behaviors you would like to see more of (such as clear directions, good listening, thoughtfulness, effective decisions, etc.) in a way that the recipient has no doubt about which actions you are recognizing.

Credit shared is credit multiplied. It may well have been your work, your decisions, your creativity, and your efforts that brought the project to a successful conclusion, but you are seldom, if ever, a total solo act.

When you start to concentrate on giving people positive feedback, they often initially regard you with suspicion and defensiveness. Be patient. They will come to appreciate you sooner or later.

5. Don't become a threat to your boss.

You can be perceived as a threat, or even be a threat, without ever intending to or sometimes without being aware of it. You will be perceived as a threat (or be one) if you are seen as smarter, more of a go-getter, better connected, or more capable than your boss, or if you are seen as seeing yourself as those things.

To avoid being seen as a threat:

- Remember that the threat comes in the comparison, not in the underlying element. Being smart is good. Being seen as smarter than your boss is bad.
- Avoid comparison by building up your boss, not by tearing yourself down. The more successful and able your boss, the more successful and able you can be without becoming a threat.
- Say good things about your boss to show your full support for him/her at all times.
- Avoid any show of ego or self-promotion about your abilities.

6. Keep your boss well informed of what you have done, what you are doing, and what you plan to do.

Withholding information makes your boss' job more difficult and damages his/her trust in you.

7. Give advance warning about problems.

Bosses hate surprises. Recommend a solution at the same time you identify a problem.

8. Take personal responsibility for any activities or projects you are participating in.

- Know what problems are yours to solve, and make your own decisions instead of running them up the chain of command.
- If risks are yours, take them rather than kicking them upstairs.
- Err on the side of solving more and asking less.
- Take responsibility for your actions when things go wrong.
- Even if your boss dodges responsibility and leaves you holding the bag, accept responsibility fully. You may get into short-term trouble, but your reputation for integrity will be enhanced, and the truth has a way of emerging in the long run.

9. Ask for feedback.

Ask your boss if there are any areas or situations in which he/she would like to see you improve or change or handle differently the next time.

10. Review your mistakes through discussion with your boss to determine what went wrong.

Blunders should be exposed, dissected, and transcended instead of avoided, denied, and concealed. Tolerance for mistakes unleashes creativity and initiative.

11. Continually learn and hone your craft.

Management's challenges change daily. If you are not continually growing, the organization will not grow either.