

Some Management Tips

Managing Up

It is important to know when to involve your Manager.
Ask yourself "What should be on his/her radar screen?"

Possible reasons for your Manager to be involved in decisions or aware of issues are:

- Financial or strategic reasons that impact the business.
- Media or press implications.
- Issues that could embarrass or surprise your Manager (avoid surprises).
- Issues that affect important stake-holders (customers, authors, agents, HCP US/UK, News Ltd).

Managing Down

Managers should keep their staff informed about what is going on - not only in terms of things that relate directly to their work, but also in terms of the broader business. People like to feel they are part of something bigger. Managers should explain to their staff how what they are doing fits in to what we are trying to accomplish

If someone does a good job, they should be given positive feedback immediately. If someone does a bad job, it is important that they receive feedback on that quickly as well, but this is always best done in private - never in front of the staff. Managers should avoid grandstanding.

Managers should take an interest in their staff's development - encourage open communication with them, and take responsibility for their success - helping them to succeed, not to fail.

Managers should provide guidance and advice when they know that their staff is going to come across roadblocks.

Managers should give their staff clear direction and priorities - be specific as to what needs to get done, by when. They should avoid favouritism, and judge people on their ability, not just on their personality.

Managing Across

How we communicate to colleagues is important.

When to use a direct or indirect strategy / approach varies by person and situation.

Dictating to a colleague or third party to do something "or else" may be effective in the short term, but is useless as a long term strategy and must be avoided.

Know when it is important to involve your colleagues' Manager - and how to involve them too

Know when NOT to involve your colleagues' Manager. This is usually preferable as long as the 'Managing Up' rule is followed (refer above).

The best 'Managing Across' result is: "We identified a problem, and we are looking into it. We will get back to you next week with our plan. We thought you should know because it may be an issue".

Communicating Problems

Identify the problem, put it in context - what is at stake or what is the worst thing that can happen. Propose options to solve the problem.

It is OK not to have an answer to a problem, but you need to have options and you need to raise the problem before it becomes serious – NEVER hide problems or stuff-ups.
Be clear how your Manager might be able to help.

Decisions, Disagreements and Debate

Healthy debate should be encouraged - it usually leads to the best outcome for the company.
It is important when 'Managing Up' to give your honest assessment, even if it is different from that of your Manager.

Managers should encourage opinions from their staff – have an 'open door' policy.
Discussion / debate should never be personal. It should always be about what is in the best interest of the company.

When making decisions - it is important to balance the trade-offs of the relevant stake-holders.
Some decisions are about long-term versus short term issues, others weigh risks versus benefits, so the reasoning behind a decision needs to be clearly communicated to those directly affected.
Once a management decision is made - it is crucial for everyone to rally behind the decision.

Email Structure

Stick to the facts - try to avoid speculation or emotion.
End with options and, preferably, with a recommendation.
Make the email easy for your Manager to read AND to make a decision (try to keep it short).
Realize that your email may be forwarded to anyone so tone is important.
If someone has done something that really irks you, don't go straight into print – whenever possible, wait a few hours before sending an email. Better still, go and see the person to discuss the situation.

Remember - emails are legal documents and can end up in a courtroom as evidence.

Judgement

Judgement is a critical competency.
The hard business decisions usually involve an assessment of difficult trade-offs across various stakeholders. Think about who needs to be involved in these key decisions / trade-offs.
It may be important to consult with, or involve, those who are likely to be affected in other divisions or departments because most difficult decisions do not affect only one area or department.

Ethics and Moral issues

Never do anything that you are uncomfortable doing - talk to your Manager if you are concerned.
Apply the "newspaper" test - if you would be embarrassed to read about your action or decision in a newspaper, then you shouldn't do it – but discuss it with your Manager. Don't take unilateral action.
Be honest. Integrity, reputation and respect are easily lost and very hard to win back.

Things to Remember.

Encourage creativity and innovation.
Encourage intelligent risk taking - push the boundaries.
"We" is normally better than "I".
Show by example.
Be positive.