

Managing Up:

*Engaging Your Board and
Getting the Feedback You Need*

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**Presentation by Marcia Sharp
Millennium Communications Group Inc.**

Millennium Communications Group Inc.
58 Salem Street, Andover, MA. 01810. 978-623-9966
Marcia Sharp, Principal. sharp@millencom.com
<http://www.millencom.com>

Managing Up...

- **1980 article in Harvard Business Review, John Gabarro, John Kotter**
- **Managers and bosses -- two sets of needs**
- **Responsibility lies with the manager**
- **Managers often not good at this -- bosses often don't know what's needed**
- **If you can master this, it's a major win/win**

Checklist for Managing Up

(from Gabarro and Kotter in HBR, see citation below)

Checklist for Managing Your Boss

Make sure you understand your boss and his/her context, including:

- ❖ Goals and objectives
- ❖ Pressures
- ❖ Strengths, weaknesses, blind spots
- ❖ Preferred work style

Assess yourself and your needs, including:

- ❖ Strengths and weaknesses
- ❖ Personal style
- ❖ Predisposition toward dependence on authority figures

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

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Two additional (big!) considerations for foundation staff

Consideration #1:

In business, the boss has performance requirements...his/her success, and maybe job, depends on you

Consideration #2:

In business, there's only one boss...

One (exasperated) person's view* of possible types of multiple bosses on the Board: good ones of course, but also flame throwers, dominators, wasters, clueless, naysayers.

Others we might add: father figure, saint, community activist, keeper of the flame, foundation novice, wastrel grandson, dutiful daughter, legal watchdog, one issue girl, busy business leader.....

See, for example, “The Exasperated CEO’s Guide to Troubleshooting Bad Board Behavior,” from resource collection of ASAE:
www.asacenter.org/PublicationsResources/EUASrticle.cfm?ItemNumber=11515

Making this all more concrete

A starting list of situations where you may need to manage up -- with your many and different volunteer bosses

Entice and Engage:

- site visits
- read docket
- learn about grant areas
- learn about best practice
- be ambassadors for foundation
- go to conferences and workshops

Manage/curtail Behaviors Like:

- eccentric grants
- inappropriate access
- squabbles
- micro management

Get Support You Need as Manager:

- give you feedback, reviews
- support your efforts to build good culture, workplace
- constructively respond to your ideas for new ways of working
- support and participate in Board orientation/development

Work with Them on the Big Issues:

- grant strategy
- evaluation
- risk

- **asset management**

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