

THE MANAGING UPWARDS POCKETBOOK

By Patrick Forsyth

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"Everything you wanted to know about dealing effectively with your boss,
but were afraid to ask."

Steve Hurst, Editor, "Winning Business" magazine

"If your boss is beginning to get to you, read this book to regain your sanity.
The emphasis on developing constructive working relationships and a succinct list
of do's and don't's will be invaluable for employees and their managers alike."

Richard Chaplin, Executive Editor, "professional marketing" magazine

CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

1

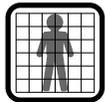
Intentions, defining a manager, what you want, what your manager wants, benefits of working effectively together, testing ways of working, corporate culture



THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

13

Virtuous circle, your job description, sound working structure



ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE PROFILE

21

Perception is reality, key objectives, who to impress, the right image



WORKING TO CREATE IMPACT

27

The right targets, what and how, delivering, doing your homework, a good idea, enhancing impact



COMMUNICATING WITH SENIOR PEOPLE

35

The basics, meetings, listening, listening checklist, make them listen to you, be assertive



GETTING YOUR BOSS TO AGREE

49

Two key principles, persistence, understanding decision-making, persuasion's magic formula, added weight, specific requests (pay, promotion, training and development)



DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

63

Different types of difficult boss (is secretive, won't delegate, interferes, resists change, is rude, says 'leave it with me', never consults), cover up, big problems, creating big problems, if all else fails, success breeds success



GETTING THE MOST FROM JOB APPRAISAL

85

What are appraisals for, how they can help, preparing, what will be discussed, during the meeting, follow-up action, dealing with criticism



SUMMARY

103

Key issues, looking ahead

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE BOSS FROM HELL



Bosses come in every shape, size and sort. Let us hope that yours is not irredeemable, but – like most – he or she probably has some characteristics that make for some difficulty. Over the next few pages we look at some common problems.

First, consider some general points:

- Identify the problem and try to ascertain **why** it is occurring (perhaps just ask?)
- Do not over-react, especially with visible irritation
- Plan your response and, if necessary, see it as a campaign and do not aim for an *instant fix* (which may not be possible)
- Approach it sensitively and use all your communications skills

Remember bulls in china shops usually cause more damage than anything else – softly, softly may be the (only) way.



DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

COMMUNICATION HELPS!



Never automatically assume things are complicated. Sometimes, problems are caused by sheer ignorance. Something is done unthinkingly, or for good, though ultimately inappropriate, reasons and can be corrected very easily. How? **You just ask.**

Example: I remember receiving regular information from my boss. It was necessary and allowed me to complete a task I enjoyed. But its form necessitated some sorting out. My boss had never asked how the information should be provided, and it subsequently turned out that he honestly felt it was ideal.

The answer? A simple request – *I wonder if you could ...* backed with an example of how it could be better arranged, and a brief explanation about how that would save time – received instant agreement. A permanent change in practice (no additional effort was necessary to produce the information in the revised form) followed.

If it is not a problem, do not treat it like a problem (just make it easy to agree a change).

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE BOSS WHO IS SECRETIVE



First, accept that there are things that your manager knows that you do not, because it is inappropriate or unimportant to inform you (you could probably spend all day just exchanging details, after all).

If there **is** a habit you need to try to change, resist the temptation to gripe or complain vaguely. Rather:

- **Be specific:** discuss particular things where your non-involvement has caused problems
- **Gather evidence:** show why it affects you (other than being irritating) and what results from it
- **Emphasise the plus side:** spell out the advantages of more openness, suggesting *improved information flow*, rather than *stopping being secretive*
- **Involve others:** as such a habit may affect others similarly, get everyone to engage in the same sort of action to rub in the message

Finally, do *not* respond in kind and be secretive yourself; your good example may help.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE BOSS WHO WILL NOT DELEGATE



Why not? There are many reasons (beyond sheer cussedness!) why a manager may be bad at delegation. Discovering *why* may prove the first step to changing matters. Major reasons include:

- Fear that the process is time consuming (demonstrate that you can pick things up and take over fast)
- Fear that something will go wrong and he will be blamed (trust may remove this in time)
- Fear that you will do something *better* than him (well, so you might, perhaps you should describe it as being done differently rather than better)
- Hanging on to things which, although appropriate to delegate, he *likes* doing (find him something else more important or even more satisfying to do)

Discovering the reasons and dealing with them is more likely to change things than just a general complaint.



DO NOT
DISTURB

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE BOSS WHO INTERFERES



This is a sign of the control freak and usually goes along with an inability to delegate. The only antidote is to **build up your boss's confidence in you**, showing that all *does* go well even without their monitoring every moment.

Specifically:

- Supply progress reports or arrange discussions ahead of being asked
- Create regular continuity of contact; gaps will simply encourage unnecessary contacts
- Work to a plan you can describe (this says not only that all is well, but that it will continue to be so)
- Stick to the brief (later you can try to make changes, once the confidence in you is there)
- Deal with checks objectively and factually and do not let your irritation show
- Be sure that you can **always** quote chapter and verse on what is happening **at any time**

And be patient – this needs a campaign to cure it.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

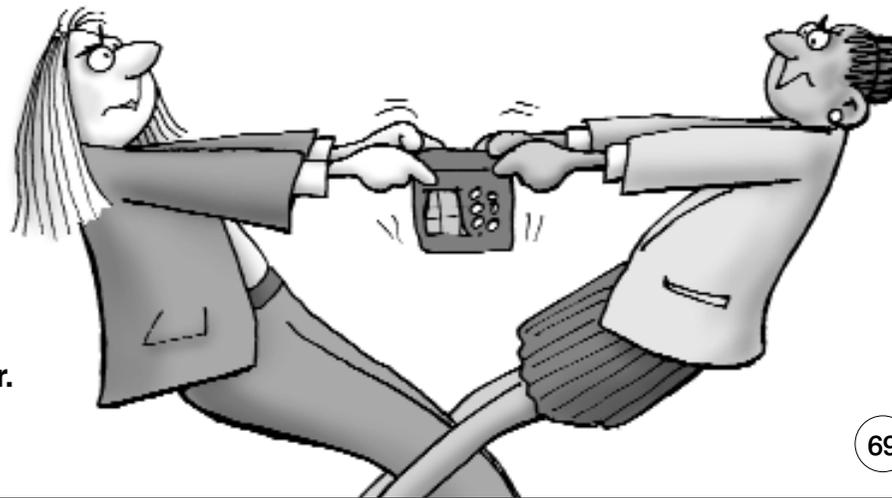
THE BOSS WHO RESISTS CHANGE



Again, it helps if you can work out **why** this is occurring. If it is one major thing you may be able to tackle it. Maybe she is frightened of new technology (a problem often made worse by having younger staff who are not). If so, you might be able to help (pick something straightforward you know is a problem and offer help; you might even become a source of regular help).

Maybe she is just busy, stubborn or old fashioned, reacting against anything that upsets her existing ways, in which case other methods are needed.

**Do not fight your boss,
you will add stubbornness
to resistance – work *with* her.**



DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES

THE BOSS WHO RESISTS CHANGE



Three particular tactics may help here:

1. In making suggestions, **separate the process of change from the results of making the change**. Often what is feared or resented is just the inconvenience of making the change – sell the results (benefits) and reactions may be different; minimise the hassle and the case is stronger still
2. **Assist – indeed, enliven – imagination**. Describe **how** it will be after a change and paint an attractive and truly descriptive picture
3. **Do the groundwork**. Make agreeing the change consist of saying yes to the results, not yes to a difficult process of sorting everything out

All three points make getting agreement easier. Afterwards (thinking of next time) do not try to take all the credit – even if it is rightfully yours! If your boss made a good decision, it does no harm to say so. You are a team, right?

Twas ever thus: ***Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.***
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

About the Author

Patrick Forsyth

Patrick runs Touchstone Training & Consultancy, an independent firm specialising in work in marketing, sales and management and communications skills. With more than 20 years' experience as a consultant, he has worked in a variety of industries and in countries worldwide. His training involves one-to-one tutorials, in-company and public seminars, and also speaking at business conferences.



He is the author of several pocketbooks, including *The Starting in Management Pocketbook* and others on meetings, sales and negotiation.

He has also written many other management books including *Successful Time Management* (Kogan Page) and *Kickstart your Corporate Survival* (Wiley). His books appear in 22 languages. Additionally, he writes articles for a variety of business journals and creates corporate publications.

Contact

Patrick may be contacted at:

Touchstone Training & Consultancy, 28 Saltcote Maltings, Maldon, Essex CM9 4QP, UK.

Tel/fax: 01621-859300. E-mail: patrick@touchstonetc.freemove.co.uk