

## MDS Alert

### Staffing Strategies: Manage Your Boss In 4 Simple Steps

**"Managing upwards" is not manipulation--it's cultivating a productive relationship so everyone wins.**

Your workplace's established hierarchy may seem set in stone, but shaking it up could strengthen your company's operations.

Old way: Traditional business hierarchy usually means your chief executive officer sets the rules that then trickle down to executive managers, middle managers, and employees.

New way: Upward management reverts the hierarchy so that those in the trenches--the customer service reps--can set the terms for everyone else, leading to more success in accomplishing goals. "Managers are the best people to implement the changes and improvements that work best for you," says **Joseph Takash**, performance management expert and author of *Success Rolls Uphill: 4 Steps To Manage Your Boss*.

You don't have to be a "Yes Man" to effectively navigate workplace hierarchy. Simply follow these steps to turn the tables on your boss:

Step #1: pick the right time to approach your boss.

You may be full of excitement for your innovative idea or technique, but your manager won't necessarily feel the same way.

Best bet: Choose a quiet, stress-free time to discuss your idea with your superiors. Ask them how they'd improve on your ideas or what concerns they have with your technique. By getting their buy-in, you'll have an easier time convincing higher ups to change over to your process.

Do this: Focus on listening when you first discuss your new idea. Take notes and ask questions to show your manager that you value his contribution and that you're willing to adapt your idea to best fit the company.

Don't do this: Avoid shooting down or brushing off your boss' ideas. This will lead her to believe that you are unwilling or unmotivated to be flexible or a team player.

Step #2: approach your boss in the way that suits her best.

You probably know your manager better than anyone else, so you know whether she'd prefer you to introduce your idea with hard facts, customer transcripts, extensive research, or anecdotal evidence.

Good idea: Spend an hour or more preparing to introduce your new system to your manager. Go over the pros and cons, as well as how you plan to overcome obstacles. Pitch your idea with all of this in mind so that you can get your managers on your side.

Step #3: present a strategic plan and clarify your ideas.

Now that your direct manager is on-board, you must create a strategic plan that outlines the investment your company must make as well as the potential benefits. This vision is what you and your manager will present to those higher on the totem pole.

Next step: As you get more input from each management level, revise your strategic plan to incorporate everyone's vantage points and address how you'll overcome obstacles. Streamlining your plan will save you time and effort each



time you present it to a new superior or department.

Step #4: follow up on your plan.

You've presented your plan, gotten plenty of feedback and now you're ready to implement your system.

Crucial: You must set an efficient timeline and meet each deadline you've set for implementation. Failing to meet deadlines or not following through with the goals you've set will cause your superiors to lose faith in you as a project leader.

However, to keep everyone's buy-in, all you must do is follow through with your implementation goals. Each time you meet a deadline or accomplish a goal, you show upper management that employees can be trusted to run the show.