

## **You and Your Boss – What You Need from Each Other**

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This briefing is written for senior employees who report directly to the CEO. Use it to have a conversation with your boss. Bring clarity to your relationship by discussing what you need from each other.

### **What Your Boss Needs From You**

1. Step In. Don't hold back when a problem needs to be solved or action is required. Take action, and let your boss know what you're doing. This will give her confidence that when she is not around, you will take charge. This also frees her time to attend to external matters, such as public speaking and meeting with donors.
2. Generate Ideas. Come up with new ideas on how to improve the organization. Think about the *whole* organization, not just your area of responsibility. Your boss cannot think of everything, and will appreciate thoughtful suggestions.
3. Speak the Truth. Tell your boss what he needs to know, even when it is uncomfortable. He cannot address concerns if he does not know what is really going on.
4. Teamwork. Work well with others, and help everyone work together for the good of the whole. Rise above the turf battles. Your boss needs people who can see the big picture and are willing to set aside personal goals when they conflict with organizational goals.
5. Lead Initiatives. Be willing to take the lead in new projects. Don't give excuses for why something new should not be done, or why you cannot be involved. If necessary discuss your workload and trade-offs with your boss, but do so in a spirit of trying to make it work.
6. Develop Leaders. Just as your boss wants you to develop as a leader, he expects you to develop leaders among those who report to you. You should expect from others what he expects from you.
7. Stay Current. You should stay current with your profession, as well as with other areas that impact the success of your organization, which may include the local economy, politics, demographic trends, etc. Share what you learn with your boss.
8. Anticipate. Think ahead and be prepared. Think about what is likely to happen, or what might happen. Look for signs of change. Prepare contingencies.
9. Take Responsibility for Yourself. Take responsibility for your own growth and development as a leader.

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10. Support Your Boss in Good Times and Bad. When things are tough, do the heavy lifting with your boss.

### **What You Need From Your Boss**

1. Clarity of Direction. You should clearly understand the direction your boss is taking the organization.
2. Stated Goals and Objectives. Your boss should give you specific goals and objectives for you to achieve in a given period of time.
3. Frequent, Immediate and Specific Feedback. You need to know what your boss thinks about your work so that you can address his concerns. This need not be a formal or elaborate process. All you need to hear, on a regular basis, is: “What I like about your performance” and “What I’d like to see improved.”
4. Access. Your boss needs to make time for you. You need to be prepared so that you don’t waste your boss’ time.
5. Honesty and Candor. You need to hear the truth from your boss, so that you can act accordingly. You need to trust one another.
6. Fair Salary and Benefits. Although money is not the primary motivator for a leader, you should expect compensation commensurate with your performance and level of responsibility. If this is a concern of yours, you should talk to your boss about it.

This Management Briefing is based in part on “What Your Leader Expects of You” by Larry Bossidy, Harvard Business Review, April 2007