

The Top Three Complaints about Managers

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Your first quarter is almost closed. Things are already hectic and project deadlines are piling up. There is a pressure to make the numbers. Does this sound like your life as a manager? If it does, be cautious of making the work take precedence over your people skills. Subordinates will notice. In fact, they look to their managers as role models. When you don't emulate the behaviors they think are critical, they complain and do it loudly. Here are the top three complaints our organization hears regularly about managers.

- 1. My manager is a poor listener.** Before you pat yourself on the back and dismiss this, consider the following. Do you ever glance at your phone, tablet or computer while a direct report is talking? Do you interrupt or “talk over” before the individual is finished? Do you allow others to interrupt you during a meeting, even if it is just for a quick decision? As managers, do not think these slips will be overlooked. They will be noticed. Resist the temptation of thinking you have to do three things at once. Multi-tasking comes with risks. Put yourself in your subordinate's shoes. Consider what it feels like trying to convey something important to a person who appears pre-occupied. Listen with complete attention.
- 2. My manager rarely coaches me. I don't feel I am being developed.** Every employee wants to do his or her best and continue to rise in the organization. Sometimes, they just don't know what to do differently. As managers, you mold the next generation of leaders by coaching and mentoring them. A part of each manager's daily job is to formally or informally coach his/her team. You should never feel you are too busy to help others to grow. Your subordinates need timely feedback and regular conversations about their development. Get to know your team. Take the time to understand what drives them. Make sure they understand the connection between their job and the growth of the company. It's your job to help your people achieve success and be more of what they want to be.

- 3. My manager isn't clear.** In meeting situations, in particular, direct reports often wonder what they are supposed to do with the information the manager has given them. To avoid any confusion, start by giving an overview of why the information you are about to discuss is critical and what specifically they are to do with it. Then, present information in a way that is easy to digest and simple to follow. Limit your discussion to three key ideas, not ten. Too much information can quickly overwhelm. As you speak, don't rush. Pause and ask for input as you go. Conclude by restating the importance of the issue, the benefits for tackling it and any required actions.

Being busy is no excuse for poor communication skills. In fact, managers who pay attention to their people skills distinguish themselves. You are as good as the people you lead. As you pay attention to the things that are important to your subordinates, you ensure your team's success and demonstrate what a strong leader should do.

***Question:** What additional points can you suggest for your manager to improve the way he relates or talks to you? We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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