



# Book Suddenly in Charge

## Managing Up, Managing Down, Succeeding All Around

Roberta Chinsky Matuson  
Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2017  
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### Recommendation

Leadership expert and four-time author Roberta Chinsky Matuson knows that to succeed you must manage your relationship with your boss and with those who report to you. Her book features a unique format: Start at the front of the book with the “Managing Up” cover, read the text that follows and learn how to manage your boss. Flip the book over, open the “Managing Down” cover and learn how to manage your team. Thus, the author provides two separate books with two separate covers within the same binding. *BooksInShort* believes that Matuson’s book will dramatically help you become a better manager and advance your career.

### Take-Aways

- No one trains you to be a manager; teach yourself how to manage people.
- They don’t teach “managing up” in college or in most management training courses, yet this skill is critical for career success.
- You need to manage your boss so you can get the resources you and your people need to be successful.
- If your boss is younger than you, manage your attitude and be aware of your responses.
- Learn to deal with, not ignore, office politics.
- With growth opportunities all around, strengthen your position at work, and always be ready for the next opportunity.
- You must adjust to those who report to you, not vice versa.
- A malcontent can infect your team with negativity, which damages spirit and productivity.
- It’s a lot easier to attract talent than it is to recruit people.
- Guard your exits to prevent employees from taking the next flight out.

### Summary

#### “Managing Down”

Managers are professionals, yet unlike doctors or even plumbers, there’s little training for the job. One day you’re a respected employee, the next day you’re managing people – without ever having managed or learning what to do. How do you begin? For a manager, relationships are everything. To build strong connections, use these seven techniques:

1. **“Trust me”** – Without trust, you are a dead duck. You will have no influence over those who answer to you (your “direct reports”).
2. **“First impressions count”** – Be open, welcoming and collaborative. Involve your group in team building.

3. **“Jump into the trenches”** – Expect your early days to be like warfare with plenty of action and surprises. Leap into the fray, and learn who you have at your side.
4. **“Be respectful”** – If you want respect, show your staffers you hold them in high regard.
5. **“Flex your style of management”** – You must adjust to those who report to you, not the other way around. Do not focus on “me” but on “we.”
6. **“Listen more, talk less”** – Let everyone see that you value their input.
7. **“Help others shine”** – Your superiors assess your performance on how well you inspire others. Recognize your team members’ contributions, reward them for jobs well done and show you appreciate them.

## How to Find the People You Need

In most cases, you can train people to do what you want. Always hire people according to their talent and how they will fit on your team, not according to their individual skills. Avoid these common recruitment errors:

- **“Failure to clearly define the role”** – Create precise job descriptions for all open positions on your team.
- **“Failure to cast a wide net”** – Interview as many applicants as possible.
- **“Refusal to pay recruitment fees”** – Recruitment agencies perform a valuable service. Don’t haggle over fees, or they will offer you only the dregs of their talent.
- **“Hiring for skills rather than fit”** – Recruit staffers whose personalities and work ethics align with your needs.
- **“Settling: hiring Mr. Right for right now”** – Hire someone for the long term.

## How to Retain the People You Worked So Hard to Find

Nobody likes to talk about it, even though it is happening in workplaces all across the globe – employees who have decided to leave. Departure lounges are overflowing with these types of employees – all waiting for their final boarding call. Here are some signs your employees may be seeking greener pastures and how you can bring them back into the fold:

- **LinkedIn connections go from a total of fifty connections to fifty connections a day.** Take the employee(s) out for a cup of coffee and discuss their next move in the company.
- **Longer lunches outside the office.** Ask how to improve your leadership style.
- **Uptick in the number of requests for personal time off.** Have a heart to heart talk. If your hunch is right, see if there’s anything you can do to help your people find opportunities inside your company.

## Managing a Multigenerational Workforce

Be sensitive and aware in your dealings with all your employees, new hires and seasoned veterans alike. They will span five different generations with these likely traits:

1. **“Traditionalists”** – Technology-averse senior employees.
2. **“Baby Boomers”** – Highly competitive workers born between 1946 and 1964.
3. **“Gen Xers”** – Staffers born between 1965 and 1981 hate meetings and working late.
4. **“Millennials”** – Born after 1982, they’re comfortable with technology and are natural multitaskers.
5. **“Gen Z”** – Employees born after 2000 appreciate working in virtual teams, as they are used to operating five screens simultaneously.

## Problem Employees

Certain workers, whatever their age, will always be problematic. Confront such staffers with specific details concerning how their bad behavior damages your team and the organization. Similarly, directly confront employees who underperform. Document everything. Don’t worry about whether your subordinates dislike you. Your job is not to be liked but to get results. You must constantly monitor and manage performance. Follow these tips on how to discharge problem makers:

- **“R-E-S-P-E-C-T”** – Demonstrate it with every word and gesture.
- **“Avoid surprises”** – Provide problem employees with clear warnings that they must shape up or you will ship them out.
- **“Be prepared”** – Develop a script, and stick to it during your termination meeting with a problem employee.
- **“Focus on performance”** – A termination based on perceived attitude invites a civil suit. But no one can argue about quantified poor performance, so present your evidence.
- **“It’s not about winning”** – If possible, convince the problem employee to resign.

## “Managing Up”

Managing up comprises the far trickier task of managing your boss. Your job depends on this essential skill. Learn everything you can about your boss. Develop a sustainable working relationship with him or her. Adapt and keep adapting. Never go over your boss’s head. There are four recognizable types of bosses:

1. **“The dictatorial manager”** – Never take the authoritarian boss’s heavy-handed management style personally. Avoid battles because you will lose.
2. **“The laissez-faire manager”** – This hands-off manager assumes that you can do your job without direction. Ask what your boss expects of you. Keep your superior informed about your activities, especially your successes.
3. **“The bureaucratic boss”** – This boss’s holy text is the rulebook, so learn the rules. Always follow company protocol, and keep your paperwork up-to-date.
4. **“The consultative leader”** – This is the boss you want – one who involves you in important decisions. When this boss asks, offer your honest opinion.

## Office Politics

Office politics is part of every organization. Since you can't avoid it, become political. Power in an office takes two forms: hierarchical, which depends on position, and personal, which depends on influence. Learn where the power resides in your organization, and behave accordingly. Follow these tips to survive office intrigues:

- **“Know the other players”** – Office politics is all about people. Know who is who.
- **“Think before moving”** – Office politics is a chess game; plot your moves.
- **“Learn from your mistakes”** – If you repeat unproductive behavior, your job is at risk.
- **“Play quietly”** – Avoid the spotlight.

## Age Disparity

If your boss is much younger than you, you must carefully manage how you act toward him or her. Successful management has nothing to do with age. This individual probably would not be a manager without a previous demonstration of superior skills. Give him or her a fair chance. Never play the role of parent. Instead, treat your boss with the same deference you would someone older. Work hard to meet your boss's expectations and needs. Whether young or old, every superior deserves your respect, at least initially.

## “Bad Bosses”

Some bosses quickly prove that they are not worthy of esteem, these types of bosses are:

- **“Indecisive bosses”** – These leaders tell you what they want and then get angry when you do it. Confirm your understanding of any assignment in detail.
- **“I’ve got you under my thumb’ bosses”** – These micromanagers do not trust their direct reports. Demonstrate that your boss can rely on you.
- **“Bosses who play favorites”** – This is not fair, but neither is life. Don't compare yourself to the boss's special pet. Simply do the best work you can.
- **“Bosses who discriminate”** – It's against the law, but managers still get away with it.
- **“Screamers”** – These superiors quickly lose their tempers. Do not accept abuse placidly. Tell the screamer to treat you with respect.
- **“Workaholics”** – Such bosses don't mind working around the clock. They expect you to do the same. But don't let them infringe on your personal time. Leave with the rest of the office. Turn off your mobile device. Don't answer emails that arrive after work.

## Tooting Your Own Horn

You want to ensure the next promotion goes to you? Never think your accomplishments will speak for themselves, because they won't. Don't be overly humble. Others in your office are reminding the bosses of all the wonderful things they've done. With so many capable and self-aggrandizing colleagues, here are six tips on gaining attention for yourself:

1. **“Storytelling”** – Stories enable you to reference your successes without bragging.
2. **“Deliver with confidence”** – When you speak with others, do so proudly. Hold your head up, enunciate and be forthright.
3. **“Create a master list of boastful moments”** – You might forget them otherwise. Gracefully reference your accomplishments to remind yourself and others of your value.
4. **“Lead, don't just follow”** – It's great to join professional associations. It's even better to lead them.
5. **“Volunteer for highly visible projects”** – Your CEO can learn about your capabilities.
6. **“Keep your boss updated on your accomplishments”** – If you don't, who will? Speak with ease, and never make your boss feel that you are trying to one-up him or her.

## How to Work with a Coach or a Mentor

Even New England Patriot's star quarterback Tom Brady has a coach. A coach or a mentor can help you dramatically accelerate your development and improve your performance as a leader. Here are some questions to consider when looking for a coach or a mentor:

- **Does this person's experience make the grade?** You want to work with someone whose already been where you are going.
- **Do your styles match?** You need to be comfortable showing this person who you truly are and at times hearing some difficult feedback.
- **Is this person willing to give you a trial period?** This does not mean you will be entitled to a full refund should you decide to part ways. This simply means they are willing to agree to an out clause in case you need to go your separate ways.
- **Is this person available?** Finding a wonderful coach or mentor won't do much for you if this person doesn't have the time to help you.

## Thanks for Your Hard Work; You're Fired.

No matter what profitable contributions you make, you can still lose your job. Prepare for that possibility. Line up your references. If your company asks you to sign a separation agreement, make sure a lawyer reads it first. Watch out for these seven signs:

1. **“You are no longer in the loop”** – You are invited to fewer significant meetings. Your company no longer wants your input.
2. **“Your boss asks you to train a ‘backup’”** – Ask detailed questions as to why the firm needs a backup and what this new person's job will be.
3. **“Your company is tanking”** – Carefully assess how important you are to helping the company stay afloat.
4. **“Self-imposed barriers box in your company”** – Senior executives make stupid decisions that hurt the company. Get out while you can.
5. **“Your company is merging or being acquired”** – Your firm has plenty of managers and professionals; so does the other company. Someone will be redundant.

6. **“Your boss gets fired”** – Your new boss likely wants his or her own team.
7. **“There is no place left to go”** – You can’t advance any higher. Don’t hang about.

## About the Author

Leadership expert **Roberta Chinsky Matuson**, often referred to as “The Talent Maximizer”. She is the president of Matuson Consulting.

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