

Why Leading Up Is Necessary

Old Beliefs	New Beliefs
1. Leaders lead from the top down.	1. Leaders are needed at all levels and in all functions of the organization.
2. Leaders have all the answers.	2. Leaders need to learn, listen, coach, and experiment.
3. Leaders plan changes, and followers implement them with minimum questioning and challenge.	3. Leaders are co-learners.
4. Leaders can't risk seeing what employees can do and how creative they can be, and cannot delegate and "let go."	4. Leaders must operate like mentors who encourage individuals to think on their own.
5. Followers have little power and can't be trusted to care about long-term concerns.	5. Followers have power. In today's complex world, both leaders and followers must think and do.

Leading up is necessary because:

1. No one is really completely qualified to be a boss.

People become managers because they have demonstrated some important skills and knowledge. Usually managers lack some qualities that are part of effective leadership.

Leaders are human and must learn:

- Very few were schooled in technology.
- Few had role models to teach them leadership skills needed today.
- Few planned to lead such a diverse workforce.

2. Many demands in today's organizations are new to everyone and require new skills, behaviors, and interactions among managers and employees at all levels.

- New leadership skills and behaviors.
- New worker skills and behaviors.
- New interactions among all players.

3. Managers and employees who are closest to the delivery of products and services often see challenges and opportunities before those at the senior management level.

People closest to customers get clues about change all the time and see new challenges long before they are formal topics of strategy discussions by top management, and can offer early warnings and more opportunities for change. People on the front lines can see what leaders are missing. As many good ideas come from the bottom up as from the top down.

4. If people are afraid to help leaders lead, those leaders are likely to miss opportunities to improve the entire organization's performance, and those leaders are likely to fail.

Great insights on what the organization should achieve and the best path ahead are often far from obvious, even to those who rule. Strategic thinking is one of the greatest challenges of all for those at the top, and most of those at the top can use all the help they can draw from below.

Sometimes those above you don't yet see what must be done, and your calling is to spark their attention and move them along a course of change before it is too late.

Tracking the terrain, the threatening conditions, and the physical and mental states of the boss and the team members is everyone's responsibility. So is transforming that intelligence into a responsible course of action.

5. There is a paramount duty to rise up when your boss is faltering, whether for reasons of poor health or limited clarity.

Confidence in and respect for your boss is essential, but no one is invincible. Biding your time and deferring to authority serves no one well when it's clear that the boss would fare far better with your upward help. Although authority is to be respected, self-reliance, initiative, and upward intervention--leading up--must have their place, too.

Why Some Bosses Micromanage

1. Some are inexperienced and don't realize they don't have to oversee the placement of each paper clip.
2. Some are perfectionists who think they are the only ones who can do the job right.
3. Some are so fearful for their jobs they are afraid to let others shine. Insecure bosses rarely recognize their real motivation. They convince themselves employees are idiots who have to be treated like children.