

9 types of managers and how to manage them

We can get so caught up in getting to know the company culture, our colleagues and the work itself that we can forget about one overarching factor: the boss's management style.

But if you can better understand how your manager works, you're likely to enjoy a more productive working relationship – even if your styles differ dramatically. To help you out, we've asked career coach Nicole Grainger-Marsh for tips on how to effectively work with nine types of managers.

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1. **Micromanagers.** These managers closely monitor every element of their staff's work and can be quite controlling. The best way to work with these types of managers is to build trust with them. "Make sure that you deliver on your word consistently and, over time, their grip of control will start to loosen."
2. **Passive managers.** These types of managers aim to keep everyone happy and be their friend. This can be frustrating for employees because they tend not to provide constructive criticism. Grainger-Marsh recommends asking for positive feedback first: "What should I keep doing more of?". Then, once you've established a level of comfort, ask for constructive feedback: "Is there anything I need to change going forward?"
3. **Indecisive managers.** "The hardest thing when working for an indecisive manager is that feeling of lack of control – constantly changing priorities, moving deadlines and an absence of focus," says Grainger-Marsh. Instead of trying to change your boss's behaviour, "Work out the things you can control and impact, and channel your energies into these areas. The result will be decreased frustration and an increasing sense of empowerment."
4. **Impulsive managers.** These managers tend to make decisions quickly, without considering the consequences. But the worst thing you can do is question them – that will make them defensive, says Grainger-Marsh. So, what do you do? "Paraphrase and clarify what they say to you – reflect back their decision and the likely outcomes. This acts as a 'circuit breaker', giving them perspective on the situation and options going forward."

5. **Missing managers.** Rarely available, these managers tend to provide little direction because they're time-poor. Get time with them by scheduling monthly meetings, Grainger-Marsh recommends. "Unless the issue is urgent, collate a report that you email to them at the end of each week. Keep it to a couple of bullet points to update them on key projects and the actions you require from them."
6. **No-detail managers.** These managers delegate tasks they haven't thought through and leave things open to interpretation. This means you need to become a master clarifier. "Paraphrase back to your manager what your understanding is," says Grainger-Marsh. "This gives them an opportunity to confirm or clarify further." If you're still unsure, keep asking questions until you're clear on the outcome that's required.
7. **All-about-me managers.** These managers are mostly concerned with how projects, people and work is going to affect them directly, so you need to be careful how you communicate. "If you need something from your manager, don't use words that can be construed as critical or challenging, as questioning their work is tantamount to questioning them as an individual. Think about how it can be communicated in a way that benefits them."
8. **Spread-themselves-too-thin managers.** These managers either don't have enough resources or don't want to delegate because they think they can do everything themselves. Grainger-Marsh says, "The framing of the discussion should be about how you can take on additional responsibility for your own development and career progression. This way, they're able to delegate to you, the job gets done and they don't feel threatened."
9. **I-needed-it-yesterday managers.** These managers always spring projects on staff at the last minute. Unless this is having what Grainger-Marsh calls a "critical" impact, there's not a lot you can do. If there is, you need to tell your manager. "It's then up to them to make the call on where your attention and energy are best focused. Stay focused on what you can control, as it makes for a happier and more effective work life."

Once you've identified which of these types of managers your boss is, you will be able to better understand them and work with them.