



# MANAGER MOMENTS™

HOW TO **EXCEL** IN  
**TRICKY SITUATIONS**



**MANAGER'S GUIDE**  
**PREVIEW**

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## ABOUT THIS TRAINING

### **MANAGER MOMENTS** How to Excel in Tricky Situations

Includes 5 video programs:

- *How to Curb Employee Gossip*
- *How to Deal with Difficult Peers*
- *How to Manage Upward*
- *How to Manage Time Thieves*
- *How and When to Delegate*

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

**MANAGER MOMENTS** is a flexible program designed to meet your unique time requirements, learning objectives and learning style. Customize the program to best suit your needs.

**Interactive Self-Study** – Use this manager’s guide in conjunction with the Manager Moments video. Work through the manager’s guide in your own time and at your own pace. Keep it on hand as a ready reference.

**Colleague Study** – Approach a colleague or two and put together a study team. Set aside a couple after-work sessions or lunch hours to get together to view the film and discuss various sections of the manager’s guide. Compare and share ideas and reactions with your colleagues for more powerful learning.

**Workshop Training** – Customize a group workshop according to the needs of your team. Give each member a manager’s guide for reference during the session and to keep as a helpful resource.

# MANAGER MOMENTS

## HOW TO CURB EMPLOYEE GOSSIP

**Why do people gossip?** Gossip makes people feel that they have power and control. It makes them feel good to be the person sharing information that others don't have. Sometimes gossip is unintentional and people really don't know that what they are saying *is* gossip. Sometimes it's malicious and people know exactly what they are doing. Either way – it's deadly to the unity and morale of a team and it's up to you as a manager to stop it. Here are some practical, efficient tips to help you address and stop gossip within your team.

### TIP #1

**Address the problem of gossiping *without* stating the specific gossip.**

Instead, say something like:

*"I understand you've been talking about Carl's private life behind his back."*

Remember, it's important not to mention the topic of the gossip when you talk to the person who's been gossiping. After all, you don't want to be an example of what you are trying to stop.

### TIP #2

**Let your team members know that gossip, *intentional or not*, can be hurtful and is unacceptable.**

Like we said, not all gossip is intentional, but in the end, it really doesn't matter. A good rule of thumb to avoid gossip entirely is:

*"If it's **not** about business, it's **none** of your business."*

### TIP #3

## Stay on track and be aware of sidetracks when dealing with malicious gossip.

When someone is confronted with a negative behavior, it's human nature to become defensive and try to justify, deflect, or change the subject. We call those sidetracks. As a manager, you can avoid the sidetracks that employees might try to throw at you by using the following steps:

- Address the problem without stating the specific gossip or rumor. (Example: "I understand you've been spreading rumors about Katie's last job and her personal life.")
- State the expectation: "Gossiping and spreading rumors are unacceptable and I expect you to stop."
- Explain the consequences if the behavior continues. "If you continue, there will be consequences up to, and including termination."
- If they deny gossiping, say that you must have been misinformed and review the company's position on gossip. (That way, they get the message anyway.)

### TIP #4

## Lead by example.

Stopping gossip starts with you. You set the tone for the team, and your people will learn by your example.

- Do you share stories that might embarrass the people involved if they knew?
- Ask yourself: "*Is this my news to share?*" If the answer is no, talk about something else.
- The truth is, we're all human and sometimes gossip just happens. If you find yourself gossiping or if gossip slips into a conversation you are involved in, stop it by saying: "*I'm sorry, but I'm sure that \_\_\_\_\_ wouldn't appreciate us talking about this.*"

# MANAGER MOMENTS

## HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEERS

People with difficult personalities can make the people around them miserable. In your personal life, you can avoid someone who really irritates you. You can walk away or choose not to spend time with that person. But in the workplace it's not that easy. You can't get away. You still need to work with that person. So what can you do? Here are some practical ways to deal with difficult peers that will benefit both you and your team as you coach them through similar situations with challenging co-workers.

### Speak to Them Directly

The best way to handle peers at work who make your life challenging because of their inappropriate or offensive behavior is to **speak to them directly**. Notice we said best way, not the easiest way. It isn't ever easy, but nothing will ever change if the offending party is never confronted. *Here's how to start:*

- **When confronting a difficult person's inappropriate behavior, use "I" statements:**

- *"I didn't like..."*
- *"I felt really angry when you..."*
- *"I felt hurt that you..."*

An "I" statement explains how someone else's actions affected you. It's much more effective than accusing someone with "You" statements like "You were totally off-base" or "You made me so angry when you..." "You" statements raise the listener's defenses and trigger a fight-back mentality, which immediately blocks any effective communication.

business level versus a personal level. How can you plan ahead right now to deal differently with a peer who has a pattern of making things personal by his or her difficult behavior?

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- Think about some past interactions you have had with a difficult person. How could you use the phrase, *"I felt angry when you*

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Fill in the blank as it pertains to that situation. This will give you clarity and serve as a helpful tool in preparation for future conversations.

- With that same person in mind, how could you complete the phrase, *"Going forward I expect*

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## The Final Word on Difficult Peers

Dealing with difficult people is stressful, in part because we may feel out of control by what's happening. You can't change a difficult personality. But you can choose how you react. If you've had someone in mind the whole time you've been reading this, you probably already have some good ideas. That's a first step. Make a plan to approach that person with the tips you've learned. By clearly stating your expectations, and choosing your reactions ahead of time, you can rise above and disengage from the drama of an unhappy, disagreeable colleague.

**Important Reminder:** If a colleague or another boss is behaving in an abusive manner toward you or anyone else, you should talk to another manager or Human Resources. Everyone deserves to work in an environment that is respectful and free from harassment.



# MANAGER MOMENTS

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## HOW TO MANAGE UPWARD

We've talked about dealing with difficult peers. But what do you do when the difficult person at work is your boss? Maybe she's so disorganized that she thinks she has communicated information, tasks, and deadlines when she really hasn't. Maybe he doesn't want to be bothered with questions, but gets irritated that you haven't read his mind. Maybe she hands off a project to you and your team only to step in again and again to make sure that everything is being done the "right way" – the way she would do it. What about the boss who gives you little or no direction only to criticize your work after the fact?

Every boss has a different style and is human just like you with strengths and weaknesses. But sometimes their weaknesses create a barrier for you to be as successful as you know you could be. How can you help your people and yourself when the challenge you are facing is your boss? Good question! Let's look at the three principles that will help you "manage upwards".

But before we do, let's take a look at a single word that is key to this whole process: PROACTIVE. Let's see that again in bigger letters...

# PROACTIVE

There, that got your attention. Managing upward is a proactive process that helps you and your boss succeed. It helps you stay one step ahead of what's expected of you – and it begins with communication.



## PRINCIPLE #1

### Keep your manager well INFORMED.

Your manager is ultimately responsible for the success of your team even though he or she may not be intimately involved with the work being done. As a manager yourself, you know how that feels. If a manager feels out of touch or uninformed, things can start to feel out of control. They may get anxious and feel the need to step in and oversee everything, or question your direction, or react emotionally to things they weren't aware of. You can alleviate all of these issues by simply and intentionally keeping your manager informed.

- **Provide the “BIG PICTURE”**

- Give the landscape overview.
- Skip the small play-by-play details.
- Only give details if you have a manager who *needs* the details in order to feel informed.

- **Skip all the bumps in the road along the way**

Your manager doesn't need to hear about all of the nitty gritty problems you have been dealing with in the process. Unless you need their input on a serious or ongoing issue, you show your value as a great manager by keeping the problems off their plate entirely.

- **Have DETAILS ready if needed**

You don't want to bog your manager down with unnecessary details, but do have critical details ready and available to share if needed. This will help your manager feel confident that you have the big picture *and* the details under control.

## PRINCIPLE #2

### Present problems *with* SOLUTIONS.

By presenting problems you've already solved, or problems *with* ideas for solutions, you establish yourself as someone your boss can trust with important matters.

## Manager Moment Reflections:

### ■ Think about the interactions you have with your boss.

It may be time to do a better job managing upward if:

- Your manager is frequently asking you for more information.
- You're often unprepared to address your manager's questions and concerns.
- Your manager is overly involved in your work or your team's work.
- You spend more time talking to your manager about problems than solutions.

### ■ Anticipate sticky situations with a challenging boss

Think about your manager's most common reaction when:

#### 1. A proposed deadline can't be met.

Probable reaction:

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How could you respond while keeping your emotions in check?

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#### 2. An error was made and a client is unhappy.

Probable reaction:

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How could you respond while keeping your emotions in check?

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