



The Art of Managing Up

Excerpted from the best seller: *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful Sycophants*

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Stalled in middle management? Weary of waiting for your talent and hard work to be rewarded while less worthy, self-promoting colleagues leapfrog over you up the corporate ladder? Now's the time to *take charge of your future* by following these seven simple rules for managing up.

#1. Lose the Fear. Remember that those nasty names you're afraid of being called—*suck-up*, *toady*, *brown-noser*—were all coined by corporate *losers* who didn't have the guts to shelve their self-respect in the interests of advancing their careers at any cost.

#2. Lead by Example. Nobody likes a hypocrite. You must commit to reward those who kiss up to you—regardless of their real value to the organization—as lavishly as you expect to be rewarded by those you kiss up to. Seize the moral high ground.

#3. Forget Birthdays. Everybody sends cutesy birthday cards to the boss. Strategic sycophancy demands that you convey the impression that you're far too busy for such trifles. Here's what I wrote to my first boss shortly before scoring a big promotion. "Dear Bob—As I was leaving an important meeting at Atlas Corp (where I booked another \$200K order—thanks to your help with my pitch) I suddenly realized I'd forgotten your birthday two weeks ago! Please accept this belated card with my apologies, along with my four tickets to next Sunday's Super Bowl. I'm just having too much fun working weekends to waste time on football. Enjoy!"

#4. Ignore Reality. Remember that the facts about your actual work performance are just the raw pigment, Van Gogh's tubes of paint if you will, with which you will create a compelling portrait of your indispensability to the organization. You can even *use* your unit's poor performance as persuasive evidence you need a promotion. "Frankly, a

chimp in charge of my department—with *competent staff*, of course—could produce better numbers than I did this quarter. This job's too *small* for me, boss. I'm a big picture, *vision guy*."

#5. CYB(Boss's)A. Since you're investing your smarmy charms in cultivating your boss, you'll need to keep him or her employed long enough to promote you. Protect your boss from doing really dumb stuff—unless, of course, you have that job in your crosshairs, in which case you'll want to grease the skids (for tips, see my best seller, *How to Get Your Boss Fired in 30 Days*).

#6. Don't Praise Down. Although some management "gurus" claim that praising your subordinates helps to motivate them, I've found that this kind of praise often "leaks up," convincing your superiors that your employees are actually more talented than you are. So play it safe. Bite your tongue whenever you feel the urge to pass on a kind or encouraging word.

#7. Dare to be Shameless. Let's face it, everyone tells higher-ups what they want to hear. That's called *doing your job*. Strategic sycophancy demands that you tell your boss the things that he or she has only *dreamed of hearing*. In the executive briefing that proved pivotal to catapulting me into senior management (albeit short-lived, due to wild allegations of insider trading, forcing me to take up the pen with my first book, *The SEC: Fourth Axis of Evil*) I compared my boss—in one beautifully rhapsodic sentence—to Gandhi, Jack Welch, Einstein, and Alexander the Great. As I gazed out at the faces of my sneering colleagues in the room, some trying to stifle guffaws, I did note one grateful and attentive listener. My boss was as rapt as a child who's been told that, yes, there really is a Santa Claus. *Yeah, baby*, I thought, *I'm on my way!*

*as told to Director of Communications, Clark McCann