



THE OFFICE

on Lagos Talks 91.3 FM

TOPIC

MANAGING DIFFICULT BOSSES

EPISODE 15



In an ideal work environment, we have fantastic managers or bosses who would help employees succeed and make them feel valued. However, that is not always the case in most organisations. However, whether the person you report to is a difficult boss or not, you still have to ensure you make the best of the situation and get your job done.

Different people have different stories to tell regarding managing difficult bosses. In the career journey, there are all manners of bosses and the reality is that no one has a choice of deciding who the boss would be. Bosses come in different shapes and sizes with their temperaments, but you need to find ways to have a common ground and build a healthy working relationship with them.



Some bosses act difficult because they themselves are products of difficult bosses. For instance, if you have been unlucky to have worked with a difficult boss, you are likely going to be exhibiting some of the characteristics that you inadvertently inherited from that difficult boss. So, sometimes, it just flows through the hierarchy. The culture of the organisation would determine the kind of bosses in that organisation. Some organisations have managers while some have leaders. Managers rely solely on authority to achieve their targets and goals which sometimes make them act difficult because the system expects so much from them. Leaders, on the other hand, achieve their targets and goals through developing people, coaching them and supporting them; in so doing, it becomes difficult for them to act difficult.

CAN DIFFICULT BOSSES BE MANAGED?

Yes, difficult bosses can be managed. The first thing to do when you have a new boss is to know his/her work

style. Try to know what motivates them. Manage your thoughts and emotions, and do not get angry or raise your voice at your boss. If your boss is upset, use active listening to help them calm down. When you are wrong, accept that you are wrong and don't argue blindly with your boss in order not to worsen the situation. Choose your words very carefully when dealing with your boss because your boss is your boss irrespective of age. Ensure you do not gossip about your boss and do not talk down on him/her to co-workers because whatever goes around comes around. Keep doing your best and ensure you get the best out of him because if you leave your job because of your boss, you do not know the kind of boss you will meet in your next job.

TIPS ON HOW TO MANAGE A DIFFICULT BOSS

- Do not gossip about your boss to colleagues or people around you as that might come back to his ears
- Study your boss. Seek to understand your boss. Know when to talk to your boss and when not to
- Understand his/her communication style
- Find out what triggers him/her and find a way to adapt to it
- Do not let his/her behaviour affect your job or your ability to deliver excellently at your job because once you do, you may lose everything by leaving room for you to be replaced



HOW TO MANAGE A SITUATION WHERE YOUR BOSS MAKES YOU FEEL INCOMPETENT

As earlier mentioned, difficult bosses have ego problems. They make people under them look little, and most times they are mean. To manage a situation where your boss makes you feel incompetent:

- Display your self-worth. Believe in what you can do and keep doing your best
- Do not let the attitude of your boss affect your job. Keep communicating and engaging your boss constructively
- Do things for the greater good of the team and be generous with your time

If an employee formally reports a difficult boss, what the Human Resource (HR) Professional should do is to examine the environment to determine if people are really happy doing their jobs. And for those who are not happy, find out what the problems are. If there are a preponderance of complaints from a particular department, find out what the issues are. Sometimes, HR can help by supporting that manager through training interventions.



In conclusion, do not allow a difficult boss to hamper your job. Ensure that you deliver and take record of what you are delivering. In a system where there is a transparent appraisal system, ensure your tasks are reviewed at the beginning of the year and where you are not meeting the expectations on the job, escalate, engage your boss, demand feedback on a monthly basis for better improvement on your performance.
