Cascades

How to Create a Movement That Drives Transformational Change

Greg Satell

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ISBN: 978-1-260-45401-7

Estimated reading time of book: 4–5 hours

Key Concepts

Take these key steps to drive transformational change in your organization:

• Identify a keystone change. This is a concrete, tangible goal that unites diverse stakeholders and

institutions. It smooths the path for future change.

• Make a plan. Determine which stakeholders must be won over before change can occur. Create a

plan to achieve the vision of tomorrow and the keystone change. Base your plan on The Spectrum

of Allies and Pillars of Support frameworks.

• Build a network of small groups, or cascades. Cascades occur most often in small world

networks, which are composed of small groups linked with other small groups. They can become

very powerful when triggered by an event.

• Indoctrinate genomes of value. A shared purpose is more likely to endure when it’s based on

shared values. Successful movements articulate, train, and enforce their shared values.

• Create platforms for participation, mobilization, and connection. Nonviolent change movements

are more successful than violent ones because the barriers to participation are lower. As a result,

they mobilize more activists. The best platforms for mobilization pull people in rather than shame

or coerce people into participating.

• Survive victory. Once a change movement achieves its primary goal, it often disintegrates. A

successful movement survives victory and endures by focusing on its core values. These values

remain constant, even as the movement's goals evolve over time.

Introduction

In the business sector, as well as in the world at large, change is constant. Organizations and movements

that succeed are typically those that embrace transformative change. Making change happen, however,

can be challenging. For many, the process is mysterious. In Cascades, Greg Satell discusses how and

why some transformative change movements are successful, while others fail. He offers a framework for

understanding network

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**The Unwritten Rules of Managing Up**

**Project Management Techniques from the Trenches**

Dana Brownlee, PMP

©2019 by Dana Brownlee

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ISBN: 978-1-25-309818-7

Estimated reading time of book: 2-3 hours

**Key Concepts**

While every situation is different, there are certain steps everyone can take while *managing up*:

* *Anticipate problems.* Predict problems and possibly stop them before they happen.
* *Be reliable and productive.* Be your boss’s go-to by being dependable and industrious.
* *Adjust your work and communication style.* Work with your boss more easily by adjusting to fit their preferences.
* *Be flexible.* Take on projects that no one else wants.
* *Tell the truth.* Tell your boss the hard truths when no one else will.
* *Learn to deal with difficult personalities.* Navigate tough personalities that can bar the way to success.

**Introduction**

Managers are often the top factor in determining job satisfaction. Even the most well-meaning bosses sometimes exhibit behaviors that make them difficult to work with. This could be because of quirks in their personalities or because they’re more distant from day-to-day processes and swamped with managerial responsibilities. However, according to Dana Browlee’s **The Unwritten Rules of Managing Up**, there are steps that subordinates can take to work with their managers more effectively, whether their managers are excellent or difficult, to keep things running smoothly.

**Defining the “Difficult Boss” and “Managing Up”**

It isn’t easy to define what makes a manager difficult because we all have our own work and communication styles. Most managers occasionally find themselves exhibiting poor behaviors to varying degrees. Generally, a *difficult boss* is one who demonstrates behaviors that impede their success and that of their subordinates. Often, the issues stem from poor communication between the manager and their direct reports.

Managing up is based on the idea that making the manager’s job easier will lead to greater success for the entire team. It suggests that to get optimum results, subordinates should take steps to customize their individual working styles to match how their boss prefers to get things done. This will make the manager’s job easier and by extension, help everyone else get their work done successfully.

**Managing the Tornado**

*The Tornado* is the type of manager who tends to intimidate subordinates, take over projects and meetings, and ignore everyone else’s opinions. Here are some strategies for managing up when your boss is a Tornado:

* Meet with them early and often. If you can find out their opinions and hot-button issues before team meetings, you may be able to adjust your strategy to prevent them from completely taking over.
* Use the *Round Robin* or *Compliment, Document, Pivot* (CDP) techniques. In a Round Robin, you start with your manager’s idea, and then go around the table to hear other opinions. With the CDP method, you compliment you boss’s idea, write it down, and then ask the rest of the team for other ideas.
* Ask the team for written, anonymous feedback on how the group can operate more effectively.

**Managing the Wishful Thinker**

The *Wishful Thinker* is a manager who is always pushing subordinates for more by adding new, unrealistic tasks and expectations without considering the full repercussions. Here are some strategies for managing a Wishful Thinker:

* Have a conversation with the manager to determine the real reason why they made the request. Once you have uncovered the underlying motivation, you may be able to propose a more feasible alternative that achieves the same goal.
* Quantify how the manager’s request will affect the scope, cost, and time of the project. It’s possible the manager hasn’t considered the full impact.
* Frame the manager’s requests as changes to the project and introduce a formal change management process to help the manager see the consequences of the change.

**Managing the Clueless Chameleon**

With a *Clueless Chameleon*, subordinates often get conflicting or unclear directions about their projects and responsibilities. Often, this is because the manager isn’t sure what they want. How do you manage a Clueless Chameleon?

* Clarify assignments early by asking questions, providing samples of deliverables, and creating project charters.
* Work with your boss to determine what they would consider a successful outcome for the project so that everyone has the same long-term goal in mind.
* Identify what specific issues are most important to your boss so you can keep them in mind throughout the project. In addition, identify any important opinions or biases they hold that may impact the project’s progress.

**Managing the MIA Boss**

The *MIA Boss* is frequently absent from the office for personal or business-related reasons. The absences cause significant delays in the team’s work because you’re unable to obtain necessary approvals and input. Here are some ways to manage up with an MIA Boss:

* Develop a relationship with your boss’s administrative assistant and leverage their access to your boss if possible. They could also be a great source of advice for ways to manage your boss’s hectic schedule.
* Suggest that the team use a group calendar so you can plan for your boss’s absences as far in advance as possible.
* Offer to take some tasks off your boss’s plate whenever you can to ease their stress and open up time in their schedule.

**Managing the Meddlesome Micromanager**

If your boss is a *Meddlesome Micromanager*, you probably feel like they don’t trust you because they constantly ask for updates or get overly involved in the day-to-day details of projects. Here are some ways to handle Meddlesome Micromanagers:

* Try to understand the underlying anxiety that makes them feel compelled to take such an active involvement in your work. This will better position you to address their real concerns.
* Work with them to clarify in writing who will be responsible for each task throughout each project.
* Point out the other important tasks you will be unable to complete because of the unnecessary updates they’re asking for.

**Managing the Naked Emperor**

A *Naked Emperor* manager has serious flaws that are obvious to everyone but them. Their faulty ideas and excessive egos sabotage the team’s success, but everyone is too afraid to speak up. This is a difficult type of boss to manage up, but here are some tips:

* Suggest that the team institute a policy of anonymous 360-degree feedback so that everyone, including the manager, gets regular feedback from their supervisors, peers, and subordinates.
* Play devil’s advocate by illustrating a plausible worst-case scenario that could result from the boss’s ill-informed ideas.
* Enlist the support of your team members when suggesting contradictory ideas and be sure to voice your support when others choose to speak up.

**Managing Up with Any Boss . . . Even a Great One!**

Whether your boss is one of the types discussed above or a fantastic manager, there are a few best practices that will benefit any working relationship and help the team run like a well-oiled machine:

* Build cordial relationships with your manger before you need something from them.
* Be congenial and low-maintenance.
* While networking is important, your first focus is being stellar at your current job.
* Tailor your communication to fit your boss’s preferences by taking into account the time and style they prefer when communicating and getting to know their pet peeves and priorities.
* Think strategically by analyzing risks, being up-front about both good and bad news, and proposing important changes to day-to-day processes when necessary.
* Offer to take on some of your boss’s tasks so they can concentrate on managerial duties.

**How Managers Can Help Their Staff Manage Up**

If you are a manager who wants to encourage your subordinates to manage up, there are certain things you can do to make it easier:

* Share your preferences for work and communication styles openly so they don’t have to spend weeks, months, or even years trying to puzzle it out.
* Work to develop a culture that values questions and even challenges from subordinates.
* Collaborate with your subordinates to develop a set of ground rules for working together that encourage openness and teamwork.

**About the Author**

**Dana Brownee, PMP**, is an energetic and innovative corporate trainer, speaker, and workshop facilitator who helps individuals and teams reach new levels of performance. She is the founder of Professionalism Matters, a corporate training company based in Atlanta, and previously worked at AT&T, IBM Consulting, and EMC Corporation, She has been featured by *Working Mother*, CNN, *HuffPost*, *Entrepreneur*, and *Fast Company*. A dynamic speaker, Brownlee has presented to audiences across the United States and globally.