



# MANAGER MOMENTS™

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



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



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# MANAGER MOMENTS™

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

## MANAGER'S GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this, you're in some sort of leadership or management position where you're working with people every day to encourage their best performance. It's your job to keep your team strong, unified, motivated, and productive. Simple to read, but not so simple to do, right? Right. Managing people is challenging – very challenging.

As a manager, recognizing a potentially troublesome employee situation then quickly taking action is key to keeping your team motivated and running smoothly. So whether you're dealing with employee gossip, difficult and disruptive personalities, a dreaded performance appraisal, or you just need some tools to better manage your time, **MANAGER MOMENTS** offers quick, practical tips to help you handle these "moments" in your day.

### ABOUT THIS SERIES

**MANAGER MOMENTS** is a 20 module series of short, succinct programs to give you practical tips at your fingertips to efficiently and successfully deal with the management issues you face on a daily basis.

Broken into 4 separate units, you can use these programs individually or group them together for a more formal training session.

#### The Complete **MANAGER MOMENTS** Series includes:

- *How to Excel in Tricky Situations* (5 videos)
- *How to Build and Foster Strong Teams* (7 videos)
- *How to Interview and Terminate* (6 videos)
- *How to Prepare & Deliver Performance Appraisals* (2 videos)

## 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.*"

Leading by example, you help form a healthy culture in your workplace that fosters trust instead of alienation among team members. People work together better in a trusting environment; they share ideas, they take risks, they help one another. A healthy team makes your job more enjoyable and rewarding. And big picture - healthy teams make for healthy companies.

## Manager Moment Reflections:

- Are you aware of a gossip problem within your team?
- Can you think of someone you need to talk to?
- It's often helpful to write out a brief, specific outline of exactly what you plan to say, so you can stay on target if someone tries to sidetrack you.
- Think back on some of your recent conversations. Has there been a time where you slipped into gossip without even realizing it? If so, imagine yourself in that same conversation - catching yourself and using the phrase *"I'm sorry, but I'm sure \_\_\_\_\_ wouldn't appreciate us talking about this."*

### The Final Word on Gossip

Stopping employee gossip is really not that complicated and it only takes a matter of moments. The biggest obstacle is inaction, but that's an obstacle you can easily overcome. Take the step: Put these manager moments into practice and you can effectively curb gossip and create a more respectful, harassment-free work environment for yourself and your entire team.



# 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.

## ■ **Keep your emotions in check and stay on track.**

Clearly set up your expectation by saying:

### ***“Going forward, I expect that you will...”***

- *...talk to me with more respect.”*
- *...keep me in the communication loop.”*
- *...give credit where credit is due.”*
- *...include me in the decision process.”*

Often, assertively and clearly stating your expectations will solve the problem. But some difficult colleagues just aren't that agreeable. When confronted, they may not change their behavior at all - **or it might make things worse. What then?**

## ■ **Choose your reaction.**

You can't control what other people do, but you have total control over how you react.

- Ignore difficult or inappropriate behavior.
- Keep your emotions in check.
- Take a deep breath.
- Count to 3.

It's not easy – even if you're used to the person's difficult personality. But, when you remain poised and ignore poor behavior, you diffuse the emotion of the situation and show everyone else your self-confidence and control.

# Some People Go *Beyond* Difficult

For whatever reason, some people are downright mean-spirited and seem to go out of their way to sabotage you, make you look bad in front of others, and generally make your life miserable. The first thing you need to know is that this inappropriate behavior is all about them and not you. This is their pride, their insecurity and their immaturity spilling out on you. If their behavior is abusive or hinders the work that you need to do, talk to another manager or human resources so they can take the appropriate action. However, if your colleague is simply a royal pain, but you still have to work with him or her, here are some things you can do:

- **When dealing with the intentionally difficult colleague:**

- Limit your interactions.
- Use e-mail to communicate and copy your boss.
- Invite another manager or an assistant to meetings.

## Manager Moment Reflections:

- Can you think of a time when a conversation with a difficult colleague went sideways because your emotions flared up? What might it have looked like if you could have responded assertively, but without the emotion?

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- Think back to the scene in the video where Kim ignores the offensive behavior of her co-worker in the meeting. She simply pauses and continues her point calmly and professionally. In essence, she doesn't stoop to his level and in doing so, she keeps things on a

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.

### ***Proactive Tip:***

Before you rush to your manager with a problem that needs to be addressed, take the time to write out possible solutions. If you have the authority to take the action needed to solve the problem, do so. Then inform your manager of the problem and the action you took to solve it.

Sometimes you need your manager's involvement before you can take action. In that case, take the time to investigate and formulate some solutions that you can present to your boss when you present the problem. *"We ran into some issues with \_\_\_\_\_, but I've come up with some ideas for solutions that I'd like to get your input on."*

## **Verbal or Written Communication?**

Take a minute to think of your manager's style. If he or she likes to process issues through conversation, present your solution ideas verbally...briefly and succinctly. If your manager processes better (or remembers better) by seeing things on paper, provide a written document with a short outline of your solution ideas.

### **PRINCIPLE #3**

## **Anticipate your manager's questions and concerns.**

Before bringing a situation or problem to your manager's attention, think about *how* your manager will likely think or wish to proceed, depending on the circumstances.

- What questions will she ask?
- What concerns will he have?
- What information does she need?

Thinking through these questions will help prepare you to be part of your manager's solution. Over time, you earn a reputation in your

manager's mind as a **“Problem Solver”**. That's a reputation you want!

## **Managing Upward for a boss who is just plain difficult.**

How do you manage upward with a difficult boss? What do you do when just anticipating your manager's questions and concerns makes you want to run the other direction? You take a deep breath and follow the same principles with one added point.

### **Anticipate your manager's reaction while keeping *your emotions* in check.**

Anticipate your boss's reaction so you can be prepared to keep your emotions in check – even if he or she doesn't. If an inflexible or demanding boss usually reacts to issues with anger and blaming, then you can anticipate the same response to a change in a deadline or other unforeseen issue. Recognizing the probability of your manager's reactions will prepare you *before* it happens and allow you to plan a professional, non- emotional response.

#### **Tips to KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS IN CHECK:**

- *Stay cool*
- *Don't take someone else's “stuff” personally*
- *Focus on the facts and not their behavior*
- *Breathe deeply*



## 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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3. Think about a recent work issue that triggered an emotional response from your manager. If you could go back and handle things differently now, what would you do?

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SAMPLE  
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### Final Thoughts on Managing Upward

#### ***COMMUNICATE – ANTICIPATE – BE PROACTIVE***

Regardless of your boss's management style, managing upward has the potential to strengthen your relationship. ***By keeping your boss informed and positioning yourself as a problem-solver, you help your boss look good, which in turn, helps you look good. That way, you both win.***

PLEASE CONTACT US AT  
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