

## Career Influencers

When you are relatively new in your position, you know that you want to get to know the players —the real players who influence your career. They may or may not be on the formal organization chart. Some may even be clients.

Too often, we get lulled into forgetting to do this on an ongoing basis - no matter how long you have been in your job or with your company. We recommend that revisit this list every three months.

By way of definition, “bosses” are people at a higher-level who can influence your career. Perhaps you ARE the boss. Don’t go strictly by the organizational chart. “Bosses” would include the Board of Directors, perhaps some of their peers, and maybe even one or two people outside of your organization who are in the position of influencing your career. Remember that “influencers” may even be in other geographic areas.

Most people have six to eight “bosses.” Make a list of yours. Each quarter, go through your list and ask yourself: “What does this person think of me and what should they think of me?” If your bosses forget that you had extensive marketing experience before you took this job, you can easily remind them of this. If they have not noticed that you have been working seventy hours a week on an important project, make sure they know.

Keep in mind what you want people to know about you so that if you run into a boss in an elevator you can quickly slip it into the conversation, however brief it may be. You have many opportunities to communicate with people who are more senior than you, but you have to *purposefully plan* your communication. This is a way to manage informally the impression that senior bosses have about you. Don’t let things build up until it’s major problem and you have to ask for a formal meeting. Instead, *manage your internal PR as you go along*:

- For bosses, ask yourself, “What do these people think of me and *how do you know this is so (what is the evidence this is the case)?* What should they think of me?”
- For peers, ask yourself, “What is my relationship with each of these people and *how do you know this is so (what is the evidence this is the case)?* What should it be?”
- Don’t forget those who are lower down. “What is my relationship with each of these people and *how do you know this is so (what is the evidence this is the case)?* What should it be?”

Now, make a list of your peers—usually 12 to 14 people who are at your level. The relationship you have with this group peers is critical to your success. Here again, you are not simply plucking the names from your division’s organization chart. Certain peers may work right up the hall; others maybe in other cities, or other departments or divisions. Review the list every quarter and ask yourself, “What is my relationship with each of them and what should it be?” *Make sure your opinion is grounded is solid observable behavior.*











In addition to reviewing your relationships with your bosses and peers, also make a list of your “subordinates”(those at a lower level than you in the organization). They may include your assistant or your boss’s assistant, for example. Do you treat your subordinates well? Do they complain about you to their bosses? *How can you validate your judgment with concrete examples?*

Also make a list of your clients—those that you service inside or outside your organization. Most people are conscious of focusing on their clients, so this may not be an issue for you. However, to be thorough, make a list of these as well, and review your list at least quarterly.











### Circles of Influence

Fill in the real organization you're dealing with —not the one on the formal organization chart. These people may be in your organization, outside of it, in a different location, or even a vendor. Write each person's name in the circle. Also include the person's title, age and tenure.











Start with those above you who influence your job:

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Now, fill in peers: those who are at your level and influence your job:

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Finally, fill in those who are lower-level than you (not necessarily direct reports):

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