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NEXT STEP

Dealing with multiple bosses

As businesses become more complex and departments merge, it's increasingly common for employees to work with more than one manager at a time. While this is likelier to happen in bigger organizations, it is just as common in start-ups and family-owned businesses. In a family-owned business, the structure of authority is often shadowy and roles frequently overlap. As a result, employees can find themselves reporting to multiple members of the same family.

But there are some challenges to working for more than one person that you just have to look out for. What can you do to manage these challenges?

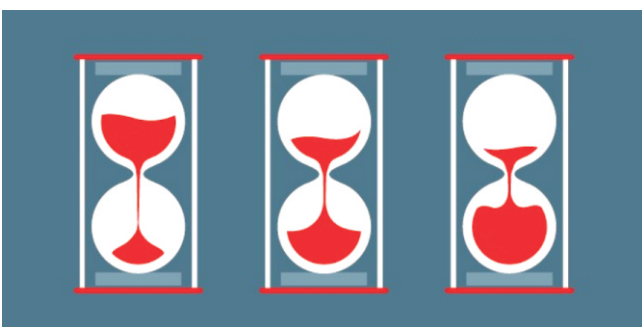
Identify the challenges

Work overload inevitable when assignments come from different bosses. When managers are in charge of separate projects and tasks, they might give directives without considering if their subordinates have other duties.

Multiple bosses sending mixed messages further confuse the process of prioritizing tasks and meeting goals and deadlines. Bosses might not purposefully give directives that conflict with one another's, but they do have different management styles and personalities. Moreover, the quality of work that one boss finds acceptable might not be acceptable to another.

Be open about your work load

If you have two bosses giving you work, then there will always be competition for your time and attention. If it gets too bad, for example, where the goals actively clash and you can't achieve both, then it's not something you can solve yourself and you need to speak up about it to your bosses. Be sure your bosses know what's on your plate. While it may not be in your job description to negotiate between your bosses, research suggests that most bosses prefer proactive employees.



Know who's on top

It's your job to report to all of your bosses, but if you work for multiple bosses from different administrative levels, the one at the top of the totem pole will likely have more important demands that must be submitted on time and require more of your attention. Know who your real boss is. Who does your final performance review? Who makes decisions regarding your compensation?

Be professional, say no to nepotism

It's not unusual to like one boss more than the other. This is dangerous because sometimes you might subconsciously do the work of one boss better or faster than the work of the other. The best thing is to remain impartial and professional. Successful employees think strategically about their careers and where they want their careers to go. If sales is your focus and one manager clearly has more of a sales role, you may want to gravitate towards that person. But don't forget about your other boss. Make them feel like you care as well. Remember that you can learn so much from anyone, so don't let two managers throw you. Make sure you profit from every experience.



Understand personality differences

Mr Rafiq supported several individuals as an Executive Assistant. One boss was much more hands-on - he liked to have constant communication and wanted to know all the details. Another was absolutely hands-off; he would much rather see Mr. Rafiq take initiative, work independently and take over the bottom line. It was important for him to manage them differently. Chances are pretty good that the people you work for will all have different personalities, preferences and work styles. You'll need to adapt your strategy for each individual. Make sure you recognize the differences and take note of how each person likes things done.



Get your bosses to communicate

Your bosses are not talking to each other, and all the projects are "due yesterday". You spend more time trying to interpret what is your real priority and what isn't, who is being genuine when you're told the project is "due immediately" and who isn't. Working for two bosses is like being involved in a love triangle. However, to avoid the foreseeable blow-up, there should be transparent communication between all parties. It's often tough to get everyone together for a face-to-face meeting, but in the end, face-to-face meetings do work best. If there's a conflict between bosses, make it clear that you're not choosing sides and you want your bosses to fix out over what gets done first instead of putting you in the middle.

Having more than one boss can have its advantages—but it needs coordination. By using these simple strategies, you can minimize the challenges and harvest the benefits of working in this stimulating environment. Don't wait for someone else to make your goals and position clear. Take this as an opportunity to carve out your own ideas and shape your role in areas that interest you. You are the only person who really understands your role in entirety.

MANJUR AHMED

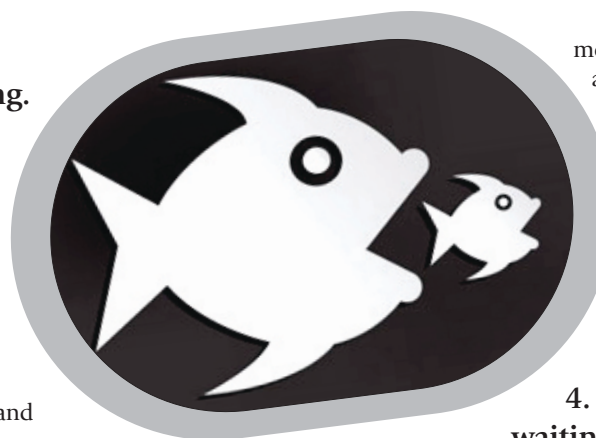
The writer is the Head of HR & Admin at Grameen Telecom Trust

Eat you alive

5 issues with your boss can resolve on your own

1. You're an under-appreciated underling.

Try asking for feedback if you're getting neither constructive criticism nor recognition from your boss: "What am I doing well and what could I better?" And don't underestimate the power of compliments; warm up to your cold-hearted superior - make him feel comfortable and confident praising you.



methods to communicate and pick the one that works best. Then get him to help you prioritize your workload and request a weekly meeting. At least this way you'll always have an alibi for not getting in "this file" by "that time."

2. Your boss is distant and intimidating.

Respect his privacy, but here's a thought: how can you break his defenses? Stay on the lookout for an opening to befriend him. Keep him updated on progress so that he's aware of your presence. If things don't get any better, consider taking the matter to another manager or HR. Connect with your peers and other superiors. If all else fails, you might find a mentor in somebody else.

3. Your whole work life is one big fire drill.

Does your manager assign tasks due "yesterday?" Stay one step ahead of this kind of boss. If he's too scary to approach and everything's a mess, explore different

4. It's a time-bomb waiting to explode.

If your boss is inclined to putting you down, take steps to prevent being reprimanded in the first place. Make sure you understand the instructions correctly: "What you exactly want me to do is...?", so you don't end up breaking any rules. Wait for his confirmation. If he has an ego, never ever give the impression you're fed up with his antics.

5. There's an office pet.

Better sit this one out because you can't win it with logic. Resist the urge to whine about the boss' favorite - it won't get you anywhere. Instead, figure out what your boss admires in that person. Schedule a time to sit down with him to lay down your goals, and aim for a 110%. At the end of the day, a paper trail of achievements speaks louder.

AMIYA HALDER

No chance of lemons

Interview of Stefan Haubold

Global Co Founder & Managing Director, Carmudi.com

The used car sales business is huge worldwide. In the global list of emerging markets for automobiles, China is still at the top, while the Indian subcontinent promises to be the next region to receive an influx of private four wheeled transport. It's a good time to be in the car business and be located in Dhaka, and a customary look through the classifieds sites will yield proof of that.

Yes, the tax structure for automobiles in Bangladesh is steep and discourages import of cars into the country, but it's still a thriving business for reconditioned car importers. Moreover, the used cars business is also on the rise, as a large part of the car-owning population frequently rotate and change their cars, trading in old cars for newer ones. There's a scope for making a good amount of business from this area. We caught up with Stefan Haubold, co-founder and managing director of CarMudi.com, to talk about the emerging car market in Bangladesh, and CarMudi's experience in operating here for the past few months.

Where does CarMudi come in? A subsidiary of Rocket Internet, a Germany based global online business promoter, CarMudi.com is currently operating in 11 countries (6 of them in Asia alone).

As Mr. Haubold says, "CarMudi is going to markets where there is a

huge potential. Look at Bangladesh. 160 million people, and if we consider just a tiny fraction of that number to be potential car-owners, that's a huge market right there. Best part is, that number can always rise, with the country moving forward and with the GDP is rising at almost 6%."

Operating in a country like Bangladesh is bound to throw up some hurdles. When asked about the challenges the CarMudi team have faced while operating here, Mr. Haubold had this to say: "Internet penetration is low, and most of the internet users are using it through mobile devices. But we're focusing on capitalizing on that. We are ambitious, patient, and we want to be the top in this market, we want to win the market. CarMudi has a good team which works hard in trying to accomplish that."

What sets CarMudi apart from all the other classifieds sites and the traditional way of selling cars?

"If someone looks at the classifieds section of a paper, he or she can see maybe 10 cars. Go to a used car showroom and you can get about 50 cars. Go to CarMudi.com and you can have access to about 10,000 cars, all from the comfort of your home. You have access to all the details, like mileage, specifications, contact info of the seller, and you can compare the price with the rest of the cars on sale."

One of the main drawbacks of an online classifieds site is clutter. More



often than not, if you search for a particular car model, the entire range of models from that particular manufacturer is hurled at you, a volley of paid likes and promoted ads taking away valuable time as your search for the car you want. How does CarMudi.com deal with clutter? As Mr. Haubold says, "We deal with clutter by focusing on the user experience when they go to the site. Its all about customer satisfaction, if you can find the car you're looking for, we've done our job. We make sure our site puts the most relevant search results on top."

INTERVIEW BY SHAER REAZ

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marches with time



AUTO INSURANCE

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.
BE INSURED. BE PROTECTED.