

**Managing Your Boss Café Overview**

The Managing Your Boss Café is a short blended learning experience oriented around the concepts and skills found in the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic. The Managing Your Boss topic will help managers:

* *Overcome misconceptions about the meaning of "managing your boss"*
* *Develop a better understanding of their boss’s work style and motivators*
* *Build a partnership with their boss*
* *Communicate effectively with their boss*
* *Manage a difficult boss*

The learning experience has three components:

*60 to 90 minutes 60 minutes Ongoing*

Part 1: Pre-work (self-paced, individual)

Before the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Review the following online lessons from the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic:
* What Is Managing Your Boss?
* Know Your Boss—and Yourself
* Build a Partnership
* Communicate Effectively with Your Boss
* Manage a Difficult Boss
* Complete the online assessment from the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic
* Complete and have available the “Worksheet for Monitoring Your Relationship with Your Boss” from the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic
* Complete and have available the “Worksheet for Clarifying Team Goals” from the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic

Part 2: Café session (live, group)

The Café session represents the core element of the learning experience. The session provides an opportunity for managers to:

* Exchange ideas and questions with others
* Discuss the context of how concepts and skills apply in the workplace
* Practice and begin application of those concepts and skills
* Build momentum and support for applying the concepts and skills in the workplace

The Café session focuses specifically on the following concepts and tasks from the Managing Your Boss topic:

* Accommodate your boss’s work style
* Understand your boss’s expectations
* Build a partnership with your boss
* Communicate effectively with your boss

Facilitating the Café session as outlined should take approximately 60 minutes. If the facilitator prefers a shorter session or wishes to spend more time on a specific concept or activity, he or she may want to cover only those concepts and activities that are most relevant to the group.

| SECTION | ACTIVITY | TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | * Show icebreaker question while participants are arriving to the session (THINK OF A PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYEE-MANAGER RELATIONSHIP YOU’VE EXPERIENCED OR OBSERVED. WHAT IS ONE CHARACTERISTIC THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ITS EFFECTIVENESS?) * Introduce facilitators. * Review tips for using technology during the session. * Debrief icebreaker question. * Set context: “Managing your boss” may sound to some as manipulative, but it is really about developing a productive partnership that helps you and your manager accomplish the goals most important to both. This session will explore some key practices that will help you strengthen your relationship with your manager in ways that benefit you, your team, and your boss. * Review session objectives. | 8 minutes |
| **Skill focus:**  **Understand your boss** | * Facilitate practice activity: Complete a “What would you do?” scenario about accommodating a boss’s work style. Participants:   + Discuss strategies for building a better relationship with their boss by accommodating their boss’s work style   + Brainstorm ways to adapt one’s style to accommodate a boss’s work style   + Share real-life experiences of adapting to a boss’s work style and describe the results * Facilitate debrief activity: Clarify your boss’s expectations. Participants will already have completed questions 1-3 in the tool “Worksheet for Monitoring Your Relationship with Your Boss.” During the session, participants:   + Indicate what they and/or their bosses do to ensure that expectations are clear   + Identify actions that could help any employee who is not fully clear about a boss’s expectations better understand his or her boss’s expectations | 19 minutes |
| **Skill focus:**  **Build a partnership** | * Facilitate practice activity: Clarify business priorities. Participants:   + Review their responses to the tool “Worksheet for Clarifying Team Goals.”   + Share an aspect of clarifying business priorities that they manage well with their boss, and one aspect where they have an opportunity to improve their partnership   + Discuss approaches that could improve their understanding and alignment with their bosses’ business priorities | 11 minutes |
| **Skill focus:**  **Communicate effectively** | * Facilitate practice activity: Complete a “What would you do?” scenario about how to listen to and ask questions of their boss. Participants:   + Review a scenario in which where there were missed opportunities for an employee to use communicate effectively   + Discuss effective listening and questioning skills that contribute to effective communication with a boss   + Discuss how effective communication skills can strengthen a relationship with their boss * Facilitate practice activity: Disagree respectfully with a boss. Participants:   + Share experiences they have experienced or observed where a disagreement between an employee and their boss was disrespectful and the impact on their mutual relationship   + Identify what aspects of communication make an employee-boss disagreement destructive   + Consider specific practices that would allow employees to disagree productively with their boss * Facilitate private reflection activity: How can you strengthen your relationships with your boss? Participants:   + Reflect on relationship with their current managers   + Make notes about specific actions they could take to strengthen their relationship with their boss. | 19 minutes |
| **Applying what you’ve learned** | * Review session objectives and skill areas discussed. * Review directions for completing the On-the-Job section of the online Harvard ManageMentor topic, including the action plan. * Close the session. | 3 minutes |

Part 3: Application (self-paced, individual)

After the live Café session, participants are expected to complete the following assignments:

* Complete the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic. The section provides learners with an opportunity to choose a skill to focus on and create an action plan for applying and developing the skill. Note: If your organization does not include the On-the-Job section in your configuration of Harvard ManageMentor, ask participants to think of two things they can do over the next 90 days to further apply and develop their skills in this area.
* Execute their action plan over a specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days).
* After the specified time frame (e.g., 60 or 90 days), access the online On-the-Job section in the Harvard ManageMentor Managing Your Boss topic to update the action plan and reflect on the experience.