

Leadership Skills: Managing Up for Program Directors

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1

Learning Objectives:

- Session will focus on “managing up” strategies to communicate priorities, align program needs with division/institutional goals, and influencing decision-making in ways that support program success

2



3

What is managing up?

- Harvard Business Review: proactively building a productive, mutually beneficial relationship with your boss by understanding their priorities, tailoring communication, and aligning your work with their goals and the company's overall strategy, all to create shared value
- Simple breakdown: involves intentionally collaborating with one's superior to achieve optimal outcomes for oneself, the boss, and the organization

4

Why is managing up important?

- Allows for mutual understanding of shared goals
- Clarifies priorities
- Allows for alignment
- Allows for anticipation of challenges and opportunities
- Creates win-win situations

5

Managing Up

Stakeholders

Priority
Alignment

Relationships

Spheres of
Influence

30,000 ft
View

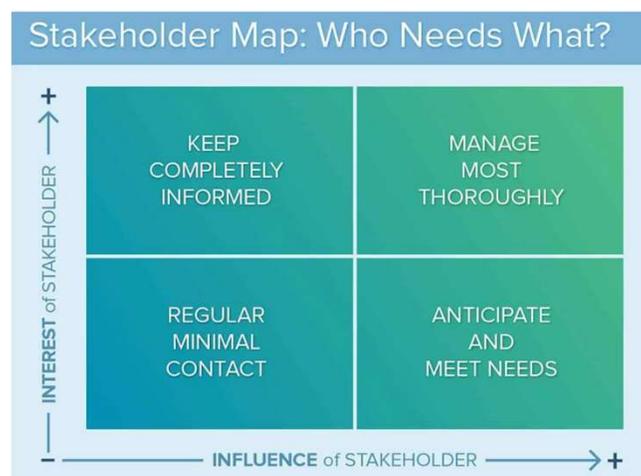
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Stakeholders

- Identify stakeholders (examples)
 - Fellows
 - Faculty
 - Chair
 - Institutional GME/DIO
 - Public/Patients
- Allows for understanding other's "why"
- Finding areas of alignment moves towards common goals
- Avoids unnecessary conflict
- Assists with achieving "wins"

7

Stakeholder Mapping



8

Organizational Culture vs. Organizational Politics



Culture= Shared values, beliefs, and norms defining an organization's personality and environment; it's "way of doing things"



Politics= Unwritten rules, actions, and tactics to gain power or advantage; sometimes detrimental to the organization



Key to be aware of both aspects to effectively manage up

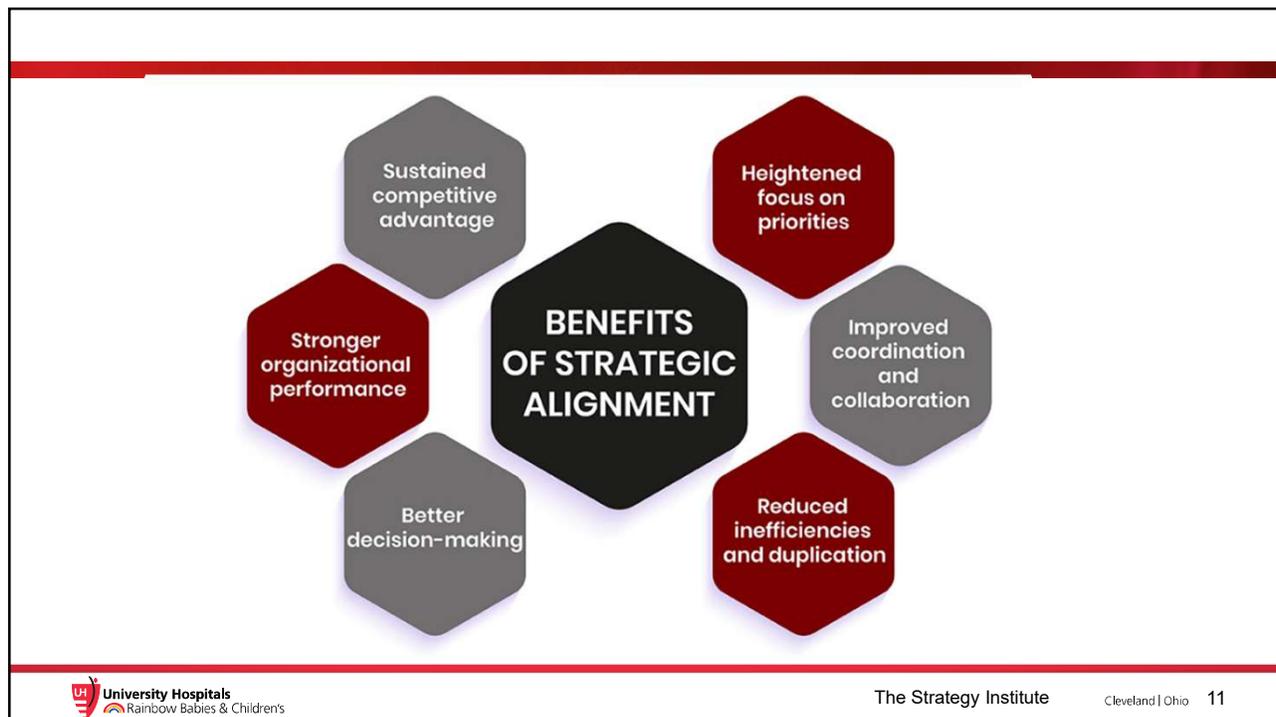
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Aligning priorities

- Identify priorities of program/division
 - Various tools can be used such as 2x2 priority matrix
- Be able to clearly articulate the priorities and rank in order of necessity and urgency
- Understand mission, goals and priorities of stakeholders



10



11

Let's practice:

- ✓ Identify 3 major priorities for your program in 2026
- 👥 Identify 3 major priorities for your stakeholders
- 🔍 Find at least 1 area of alignment

University Hospitals
Rainbow Babies & Children's

Cleveland | Ohio 12

12

Non-negotiables of managing up:



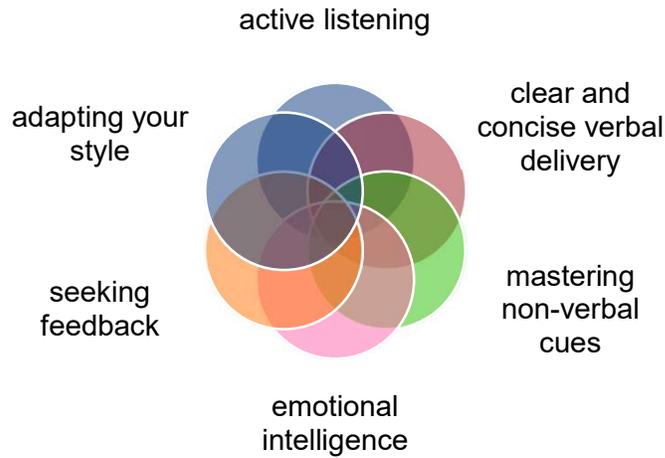
MASTERING EFFECTIVE
COMMUNICATION



RELATIONSHIP
BUILDING

13

Effective communication skills



14

Relationships

- Crucial to success in any area
- What you know is important BUT the relationships you make can drive change
- Allows for better understanding of the who/what/how of organizations
- Fosters communication, collaboration, innovation
- Two Tenets for Success:
 - Listening
 - Nurturing



15

Relationship management tips

- Understand work style, goals, and pressures of supervisors
- Understand metrics by which supervisors are measured
 - What does success look like for them?
- Tailor communications and feedback in alignment with style of supervisor/stakeholder
- Tell the story and articulate the why and results
 - Don't assume that they are starting with the same knowledge that you are or recall specific details from prior conversations

16

Relationship management tips

- Identify ways to create value that benefit goals of both you/your team and your supervisor
- Deliver results that support the mission
 - can be small or large, but need to show forward motion and adequately address challenge areas
- Maintain visibility
 - use one-on-ones effectively and respectfully
 - be organized (meeting agenda, prioritize topics, provide follow-up)

17

Spheres of Influence

- **“Refers to the people, groups, and entities that an individual can affect or inspire, often indirectly, to take action or change their perspective”**
- What is said when you're not in the room
- Critical to have a “voice” in organizational direction and decisions
- Dependent on relationships that have been built
- Moves initiatives forward



18

Influence in action

- Communicate strategy, wins, challenges, and progress effectively
- Show how your work affects bottom line or organizational mission
- This should be a story that is understandable enough that it can be shared without you in the room
 - For example, can your chair describe how your work supports the mission of the department with specific examples?

19

Keep a 30,000-foot view

- Keep the broad picture in mind
- What is the direction of organizational movement?
- Anticipate changes, challenges, and opportunities



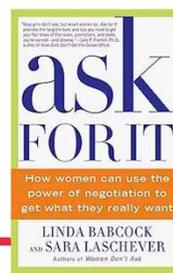
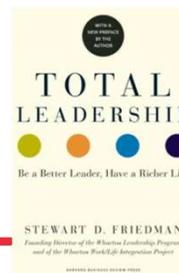
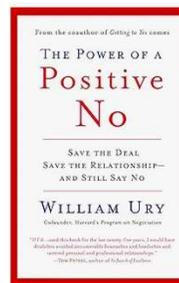
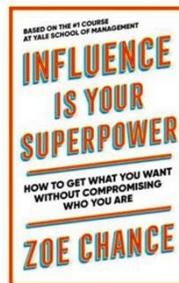
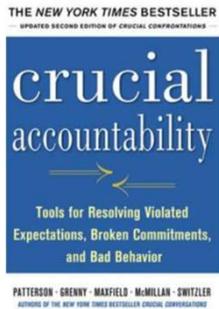
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Take Aways

- Effectively managing up is a crucial leadership skill
- Identify stakeholder priorities, interest, and influence
- Cultivate bi-directional relationships
- Align strategic priorities
- Build spheres of influence (the “secret sauce”)
- Keep 30,000-foot view in mind to anticipate the winds of change

21

Helpful resources



22