

The 5 Essential Distinctions for Managing Up for Results

Does influencing the “C” team or those above you make you worried and anxious? Are you concerned you won’t make a good impression? Do you need to be known as someone who regularly has the attention of your senior team? In today’s business world, it is essential to influence those above you in order to procure resources for your projects, make sure your “back is covered,” and to demonstrate your “executive presence” to manage your career.

Today’s business world is different than the one that existed before. The proliferation of information and the speed of change have profoundly altered the business landscape. The question of how to influence my manager, the “C” team, or another key player, shows up in every coaching interaction I have today. It is a skill that you must develop to further your career. Over time, I have discovered five core distinctions leaders need to develop and become aware of to successfully navigate the terrain of important people in their organizations.

Can you...

- **Move skillfully from a *collaborative* point of view to a *competitive* one?**

Most of the time we need to act competitively outside the company, and collaboratively inside our organization.

Unfortunately, this is not always true, so we need to develop and fine-tune our sense for when to act from each point of view, to maximize our ROR (Return on Relationships).

- **Develop *calmness* under *pressure* like the Navy Seals?**

There is always the next customer, CEO, or colleague who will test our mettle, try our patience, or challenge our blind spots, and we will need to be able to respond clearly, calmly, and authoritatively. Our faster-paced, information-loaded universe requires it. The Navy Seals were the first to recognize this requirement, given that they needed more capable Seals who could respond successfully and competently to high-pressure situations, including terrorists. Using significant neuroscience research, they developed a potent four-step process that can enable anyone to respond more

successfully to pressure.

- ***Observe and attend before imagining possibilities?***

Business is about action. Time to market matters. Those above us want more than problem identification, they also want solutions. We are trained and rewarded for providing them with solutions. What we have found is that by slowing down just a bit, carefully observing what we are seeing now, and testing our assumptions and conclusions that we eventually come up with better ideas and possibilities. By looking at what we see right now, we are positioned for greater insight and innovation.

- ***Identify core anxieties in self and others, and use that knowledge skillfully to influence outcomes?***

Dr. Brene Brown talks about her research on vulnerability and how it supports our leadership effectiveness. Dr. David Rock discusses his SCARF model and how it represents the five core anxieties and how they can limit our impact. Through working deliberately with their concepts, we can learn to manage our fears, work proactively and intentionally with the fears of others, and develop our ability to act with both courage and compassion.

- ***Manage knowledge gaps into interactive assets?***

People in business are comfortable with experts. I asked a client recently when he talked about disrespecting some peers, as well as those above him in his organization, why he worked so hard with me (and listened so attentively). I was curious why he listened to me; he stated simply that I was an expert. On the other hand, none of us can be an expert in all of the areas of business with which we intersect. There is just too much information to know, so we all have knowledge gaps. We still need to develop our expertise to garner respect, but by being curious, by practicing deep listening, and being authentic, we can foster deep conversations that will augment connections with others, build their trust in us, and enhance our knowledge base.

What we and our clients have found repeatedly is that by learning and

actively practicing these five distinctions for managing up, you can take control of your ability to influence up successfully, regardless of the role, level, or temperament of the leaders and executives with whom you work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patrick Reilly is the President of Resources In Action. Patrick is a successful entrepreneur and executive consultant with 25+years' experience helping leaders solve current business problems while supporting them to become better leaders tomorrow. He specializes in helping leaders in managing up, supporting leaders in transition and in aiding leaders who are abrasive. His work is strategic, developmental and focused on improving performance. See more of his work at www.resourcesinaction.com