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## Management and Human Resources



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## Five Essential Strategies for Managing Up

by the Authors of [I Didn't See it Coming](#)

The game you once played on the school playground is now the game you play daily in the corporate jungle.

Remember tetherball? There's a tall metal pole planted firmly in the ground with a long cord attached at the top. At the other end of the cord the ball is tied. No matter how hard you hit the ball, which direction it's headed or how fast it's going, the ball remains attached to the pole. The same goes for your relationship with your boss--and you can guess which one of you is the pole and which one is the ball.

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For as long as you're in the game, you're firmly attached to your boss, to his history, reputation, politics, choices, and to some extent his future. How closely you entwine yourself with your boss will affect your reputation and will have a major influence on what you can accomplish on the job and where your career goes.

There are five laws that you absolutely must follow if you have any hope of creating, maintaining, and managing any productive relationship with your boss:

**Never outshine the master:** You're making a big mistake if you're outsmarting, outwitting, or outmaneuvering your boss. Always do your best, but do it in a way that complements your boss' strengths.

**Make your boss look good:** Engaging in a smart game of professional flattery positions you as a person who is not only ambitious, but also supports company objectives.

**I didn't see it coming**  
The Only Book You'll Ever Need to Avoid Being Blindsided in Business

[I Didn't See it Coming](#)  
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**Exceed expectations:** If your achievements make your boss look great, she won't see you as a competitor but as an indispensable member of the team.

**Bring solutions, not problems:** The smartest way to succeed and get promoted is to be the person that your boss looks to first when there is something that needs to be done, managed, or fixed.

**Protect your boss' back:** First, keep confidential any professional or personal issues that might reflect negatively on your boss. Second, stand in for your boss without hesitation if he is ever unavailable—but be sure to give him credit. Finally, never use your position to trade information.

[I Didn't See it Coming: The Only Book You'll Ever Need to Avoid Being Blindsided in Business](#) (Wiley; Hardcover \$24.95; 0-470-11645-5; 224 pages; May 2007).

**Nancy C. Widmann** (New York, NY) was the first woman president at CBS, Inc. She managed CBS Radio for eight years and was inducted into the Broadcasting Hall of Fame in 2005. She now serves as an executive coach for senior managers and frequently speaks on corporate politics.

**Elaine J. Eisenman, Ph.D.** (Wellesley, MA) is Dean of Executive Education at Babson College. She holds a doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology and has over 25 years of experience as a consultant, business executive, and board director for both public and privately held companies.

**Amy Dorn Kopelan** (New York, NY) moved upward for 20 years through the executive ranks of ABC Television and managed programming at Good Morning America for nine years. She is founder of COACH ME, Inc., which provides group coaching for mid-level managers in Fortune 500 companies.

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