

Top Eleven Things You Need to Know to Work Successfully with the Boss

Over the years I have asked my executive assistants, when they have left my employment to share with me a list of things that, from their perspective, would help their replacement and I work together better, sooner. One I got from Mary Ann Nolan, who worked for our company from Boston for several years in the mid-90's was very interesting. I actually published it in my 2009 book, *Why Should the Boss Listen to You?* (2009, Jossie Bass).

From Mary Ann Nolan:

1. Prepare work product in final form. It should be your best, most complete effort.
2. Look at situations from a perspective other than the one the boss has – this leads to interesting, productive discussions that ultimately benefit the client with new ideas and approaches.
3. Think, write, and speak in numbers, bullets, and series.
4. Bring your stories, experiences, and personal history to work – often they reflect an approach or strategy you're trying to explain to a client.
5. Recognize, acknowledge, and learn from your mistakes, missteps, gaffes, and goofs – then move on.
6. Be options driven. Bosses need options from which to fashion solutions.
7. Be prepared to explain – succinctly and convincingly – your suggestions, proposals, and recommendations. Speak like someone you'd like to listen to.
8. Remain one step ahead and fifteen minutes early.
9. Anticipate issues, problems, concerns, and opportunities; prepare the boss before he or the client asks; have a plan.
10. Recognize that not every event is a crisis; respond as if every event were a crisis.
11. Speaking for the sake of speaking is unmemorable – say important things.