



onlyPulpandPaperJobs.com

Their schedule, not yours

By Paperitalo Staff

Did you ever have four or five things you need to tell a subordinate, or perhaps even a boss? How did you handle this? Dump them all on them to reduce your “to do” list or did you take another path?

Effective managers understand being effective. Big surprise, eh? More importantly, being effective does not necessarily mean wiping your to do list clean as fast as possible, especially when it comes to managing other people, superiors or subordinates. And yes, you can manage your superiors—effective managers are equally proficient at managing their superiors as they are at managing their subordinates.

Once you understand your superiors and subordinates, that is what motivates and de-motivates them, you are in control. Now you can really get things accomplished, as long as you don't let your drive to wipe items off your to do list usurp your management expertise.

Where to start? First, you need to recognize that giving more than two assignments to an individual at a time assures that none will be done in a satisfactory manner, and it is likely that one or two will be missed completely. You may feel great about having them off your to do list—temporarily—but they will be back. For they will be done shoddily or not at all.

It will take more work in the short term to manage in the manner described here, but in the long term, you will have more time, for you will not be doing things over and over.

And it takes skill—your message, timing and cadence need to be perfected to the level of a ballerina (well, almost anyway). If you wake up one morning and suddenly have four tasks for a subordinate, feed them to them (if you have a choice not dictated by immediate business needs) from most unpleasant to most pleasant. But think about the timing before you do anything. How long should you wait between tasks before assigning the next one? And, of course, define what success means for each task, and get buy-in for accomplishing that level of success at a date the subordinate agrees upon. Make them set the date, but then negotiate. For if you think the date is too close to do an effective job, move it out. If they have set it as the twelfth of never, help them (do not dictate) that they move it to a more realistic goal. The key is they make the first move and you either bless or change.

With your superiors, turn the order around. Give them the tasks (actually ask them to do the tasks) in the order of the most pleasant to the least pleasant for them. What you want to set up here is a condition whereby they feel like they owe you by the time it comes to the nasty one. Timing and cadence are still as important as in the other case, it is only the order that changes.

Yes, you are going to at first fumble with this way of managing, but practice and you will get better. And, you'll achieve much more than you ever thought possible in the past.

For safety this week, even in the throes of responding to an incident, there is a rank to the things that need to be done from first to last. Perhaps a good safety meeting topic?

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##