



# Clarify the relationship with your boss

## The challenge

Subordinates naturally tend to adapt to the relationship style of their superior. After all, he's the boss, right? Yet, this basically comes down to resigning yourself to a type of relationship you have not chosen, and which might not even be what your boss wants! Indeed, your perception of the boss's expectations is based on your conception of his role as leader, and he might not share these views. So, discussing this topic openly together can often make the relationship more effective.

## Four topics to discuss

### What are the boss's **OBJECTIVES**?

Your boss has a mission and is counting on you to help him achieve it. However, you may not know what that mission involves precisely, and it is hazardous to jump to conclusions.

- Is the primary objective to develop, restructure, rationalize or consolidate the status quo?
- To what should you pay special attention? What are the challenges to surmount or risks to manage?
- How will your boss know that he has fulfilled his mission?

### What are the boss's **EXPECTATIONS**?

All of your boss's expectations won't be apparent from your job description alone. You must identify them and help him to make adaptations if necessary.

- What concrete results does your boss expect from you in the short and medium term?
- According to what criteria will you measure success? Are they clear enough to be incontestable?
- What does your boss expect from you other than these tangible results? What would constitute excellence in his eyes?

### What type of **SUPPORT** do you expect?

To reach your objectives, you must negotiate for the critical resources you need. However, your boss is very often the one who has the power and influence required to get those resources.

- What financial and human resources do you need? How does the current situation need to change?
- How involved do you expect your boss to be? On what topics?
- What are your personal development needs? Could your boss help you in that area?

### What relationship **STYLE** do you want to establish?

Many difficulties in hierarchical relationships are linked to the frustration caused by differences in personal style. Clarifying your respective expectations on this topic can help to minimize misunderstandings.

- How does your boss prefer to communicate with you (orally or in writing, frequency, precision, etc.)?
- What type of reporting does he expect? Does he want feedback on results, methods, ambiance? How much detail does he want?
- Does he prefer informal or structured discussions? Scheduled meetings or case by case?