Here is how you can bond with your boss

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Take up some of the same hobbies and interests as your manager then disclose and discuss them with your boss. PHOTO | FOTOSEARCH | NMG

An employee’s ability to build workplace relationships stands as a critical predictor of career success often more than even office competency. Inasmuch, following last week’s Business Talk article in the Business Daily titled “Disclosures that can wreck office relations”, several readers inquired about how to build bonds with their bosses as well as what and how to disclose.

As stated last week, bosses should refrain from much personal disclosure to subordinates. However, regarding employee disclosures upwards to managers, such interaction should be fostered. Research by Kerry Gibson, Dana Harari, and Jennifer Marr shows that disclosure upward does not psychologically hurt a work relationship.
Social and health science research across Sub-Sahara shows that Africans dislike personal disclosure in general, even within our own families. However, some disclosure of personal triumphs and failures exists as critical to building affective emotional bonds with others, including one’s boss. So in trying to build work bonds, remember the following eight office political action steps.

First and most obvious, build good working relationships, especially with your boss. Disclosure and building personal bonds remain acceptable methods. People tend to like those who they view as similar to themselves. So, take up some of the same hobbies and interests as your manager then disclose and discuss them with your boss.

Second, learn the organisation, its culture, and its power players. The more you learn about the people influencing politics and policies in your company, the more you will understand their root values and motivations and how to interact with them effectively.

Third, become a loyal and honest team player. Sometimes the most loyal and honest workers get overlooked, but overtime, start to stand out for their reliability and predictability.

Fourth, gain recognition for what you do and how you do it. Find an industry association to give you an award, give a speech at a forum, conduct specialist trainings, or write company newsletters highlighting your achievements. Good work often must get broadcasted in order for superiors to notice.

Fifth, build favour banks with coworkers and superiors. Such reciprocity builds loyalty and assures support when times get tough.

Sixth, create or join coalitions of other employees whereby each coalition member watches out for the interests of one another.

Seventh, become indispensable within the organisation. Control the flow of certain information, read the most on industry trends, improve your skills through additional training or education, or learn how to do a particularly difficult task that no one else likes to do but the organisation needs. Make each action about making you unique in the firm and therefore non-substitutable with other staff.

Eighth, build your professional network. Use Linked-in, play golf, join a members club, attend conferences, send helpful articles to contacts, etc. Therefore, become the go-to person anytime a colleague needs a connection within the industry.

Invariably, some of us will not be comfortable implementing each of the eight action steps and will instead just focus on a few. However, watch out. Organisations tend to dislike internal political players and often take steps to mitigate office politics.

Office politics gets in the way of real performance, fair promotions, and equitable rewards. Ironically, managers should get rid of high office politics employees, but in order to rise to
managerial levels and survive as a boss, one must play the very politics that they later will despise. So play politics, but do not let other people find out.

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