

Understanding Your Manager

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Wow, what a topic to write about! You don't have enough on your plate just trying to get your work done; now you are supposed to understand your manager! I have got to be kidding right? You probably think your manager should understand you! If you think that, you are absolutely correct; your manager does need to understand you. He or she needs to understand your strengths and weaknesses and when you need help. They need to know if you are the right person to get the job done quickly, safely and right the first time. So why do I say that you need to understand your manager?

Most of us work in an environment where we work with other individuals to get the job done, that job is to keep the aircraft in tiptop flightworthy condition. In all the years I have been in the business of aviation I have seen all kinds of managers. Every one of them has a style and if you can understand that style, it can help you understand where your manager is coming from and help you do a better job. In the long run this will help you to anticipate what your manager expects from you.

Some styles tend to focus on people, while others gravitate toward a specific project or product. The style used by your manager is one that he or she has developed over time, and are comfortable with. As a matter of fact, chances are if you asked them what their style is, they would probably reply "style, what style? I am just doing my job." The management style that ends up working best for an individual depends on their people skills, knowledge, and resources available to them. These tie in with another subject that I will save for another editorial, risk analysis. A good style usually motivates people to do their best work. See if you can find your manager's style below:

Participatory Style – The manager using this style gives employees tasks to complete from start to finish. For a project in which that is not possible, the manager communicates to each employee how his or her part relates to the overall project. People who understand their roles in the bigger picture are often more motivated to complete their tasks right the first time. Finally, the manager rewards motivation and accomplishments.

Directing Style - Some situations, such as those under a tight deadline or that involve numerous employees, call for a top-down management approach. In the directing style, the manager outlines five key goals for their employees: what, how, when, where, and why. The manager is specific about what their people need to do, how they should do it, where they should do it, why they're doing it, and when it must be finished.

Teamwork Style - Managing by teamwork is the best style if the manager is trying to expedite a project or optimize processes for completing that project. This style motivates people by pooling their knowledge, and often the results far exceed expectations. Teams may be able to solve problems more quickly than a single person could. Coordinated efforts and solid communication among the team are key to success.

What kinds of management style do you see where you work, one of the above, two of the above, or all three? Does your manager have a style not listed? If so, without using any names, how about sharing it with your fellow readers? We would like to hear from you.