



BarkerGilmore

How to Lead People Who Were Once Your Peers

GC AdvantageSM Webinar

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Questions & Answers



Submit questions to panelists at any time throughout the presentation via the **Q&A feature**.

Featured Speakers



Marla Persky

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Former Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary for Boehringer Ingelheim USA



Tim Murphy

Corporate Vice President and
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Hollister Incorporated



The dynamics completely change. People start to watch you more than ever before. It combines the challenges of any promotion with the additional challenge of people having to recalibrate their relationship with you.

- Robert Sutton, a professor of management science and engineering at Stanford University and the author of [Good Boss, Bad Boss](#) and [The No Asshole Rule](#).

Tips & Approaches



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- Tread lightly at first
 - Establish your authority
 - Distance yourself
 - Deal with any disappointed competitor(s)
 - Make use of your advantages
 - Look beyond your team

Tread Lightly at First

- As with any change, people will naturally require a period of adjustment, and that is usually accomplished by some obvious leadership and honesty from the front.
- Proceed cautiously.
- Be open-minded and approachable.
- Meet with the people on your team as soon as possible.

Establish Your Authority

- New Leader Assimilation
- Get them engaged
- Show authority through competence
- Share information on a nice to know, not a need to know basis
- You were promoted because you are qualified to do the job, present yourself with confidence and resilience and lay the groundwork for how you want to be seen and heard
- Be consistent in your leadership style with your team

Distance Yourself

- The old adage that it is “lonely at the top” is true. To maintain your authority and manage effectively, you must pull away.
- Once you gain the power to fire your friends, the dynamics of the relationship change forever. You can be friendly and warm. You can be humane. You can be respectful. In the end, however, you truly cannot be their best friend or their “buddy”.
- Do not stop having lunch with your friends, but don’t go out with them exclusively or it will be perceived as favoritism by the others in your group.

Deal with any Disappointed Competitor(s)

- Deal with any resentment from people who did not get the job you are now in, do not try to ignore it.
- In your 1-on-1 conversations with your former colleagues, bring the subject up. Get to the kernel of their resentment.
- Be interested in their careers and find ways to enable them to take on challenging/rewarding new projects or roles. What can be done to make them the successful candidate next time?
- One thing you will have to give up is being liked by everyone. Your goal is to be respected, not universally loved.
- Communicate honestly, be empathetic, and do not take things personally.

Make Use of Your Advantages

- Put Your Insider Knowledge to Good Use
 - By having been a part of the team you are now in charge of, you have valuable insight. You are likely familiar with the weakness and strengths of your former peers. You know where the skeletons lie.
 - You are also in an excellent position to nurture aspects of your peers' under-utilized talents. Use this insider knowledge to your company's success. You know about what they complained. You know what they wished was done differently. Now is your chance to make those changes and create new opportunities.
 - Utilize your insider's knowledge to empower the people you now lead. If they complained about being removed from essential decisions, enable them to now participate. If they felt under-appreciated, show them how valued they are. Use this to its full potential.

Look Beyond Your New Team

- During this type of transition, it is easy to become overly focused on your former peers.
- You have others in the department who don't report to you. Do not overlook communicating with and establishing expectations more broadly in the department.
- You will have new peers with whom you must develop a relationship. There will be challenges there too and you need to be aware of the relationship reshaping that needs to happen.
- You have a new boss – don't expect them to focus on the same things as did your former boss (CEO doesn't care about the same things at the same level of detail as did the former GC).
- You must develop credibility with new counterparts and build a connection with your new boss.

Best Demonstrated Practices

- Meet with the people on your team as soon as possible. You need to meet with everyone as a group (level set) and then again as individuals. Be open and honest with everyone. Communication is your best ally.
- Consider what you liked and didn't like about your previous supervisor. Do what you can to make everyone's job better than before you became leader. Use your experience to improve the workplace.
- Be consistent in giving everyone positive and constructive feedback.
- Acknowledge how you will depend upon them and the contributions they are making.

Thank you for attending.



Please let us know how BarkerGilmore can help you succeed.

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