

Workshop:

MANAGING UP: PRO TIPS FOR INFLUENCING DOMINANT PERSONALITIES & CLOSING THE POWER DISTANCE

Presented By:

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WHAT DOES “MANAGING UP” MEAN TO YOU?



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Managing Up

What Everyone Should Know About Managing Up

by Dana Rousmaniere

January 24, 2015



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Why Managing Up Is The Most Critical Career Skill In 2025

By Melody Wilding, LMSW, . ⓘ Step into your power position – where confid... ▾

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NOW PLAYING: HOW BRANDS CAN UTILIZE

WHY IS MANAGING UP DIFFICULT?

Power Asymmetry

Keltner et al. (2003):
Power leads to reduced perspective-taking and increased dominance behaviour.

Information Asymmetry

Bazerman & Moore (2008):
When individuals have different access to information, assumptions and misjudgements thrive.

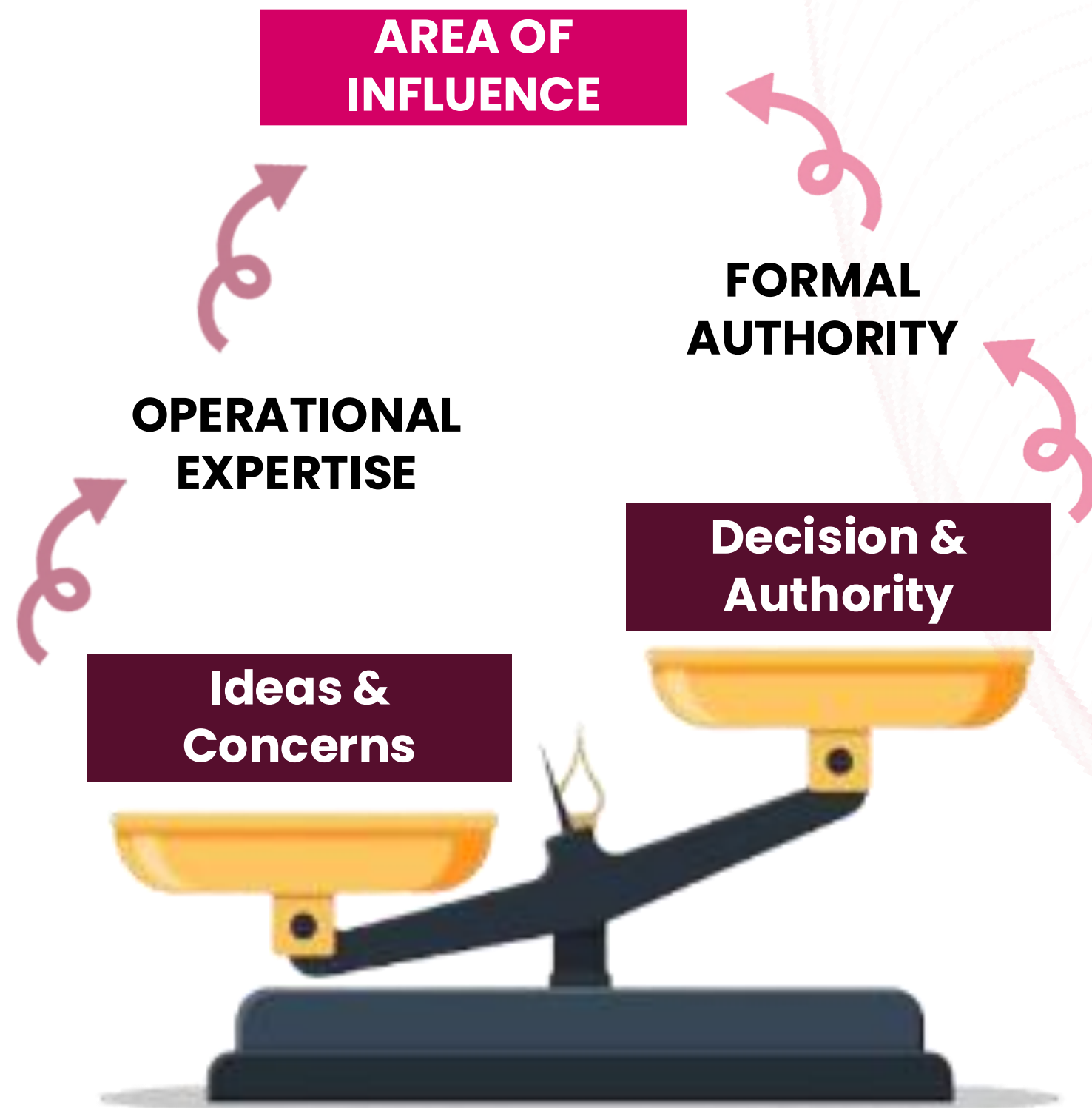
Goal & Interest Misalignment

Goal Conflict Theory (Deutsch, 1973):
People working toward different or incompatible objectives often clash in day-to-day interactions.

Cognitive & Psychological State

Big Five Personality Traits & Dark Triad:
High neuroticism → emotional reactivity
Low agreeableness → defensiveness, resistance
Narcissism → entitlement, blame-shifting
Subconscious Bias

LEVERAGING ON POWER GAPS



Power gaps happen when **one person** (usually a manager or senior leader) **has much more control**, influence, or access to resources than the other. This imbalance can make open communication, teamwork, and trust harder.

“When power differences are left unaddressed, employees may self-censor, avoid dissent or withhold valuable insights – leading to poor team learning and decision-making.”

Detert, J. R., & Edmondson, A. C. (2011). Implicit voice theories: Taken-for-granted rules of self-censorship at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3), 461–488.

KNOWING WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

Sets strategic direction and long-term vision



Translate strategy into action, realising vision

Has higher title and authority



Hold trust and relationships with operations

Final authority on approvals, priorities, decisions



Practical control over tasks, execution & outcome

Access to top management and board rooms



Access to ground truth and closest to the frontline

Greater visibility in high-level meetings



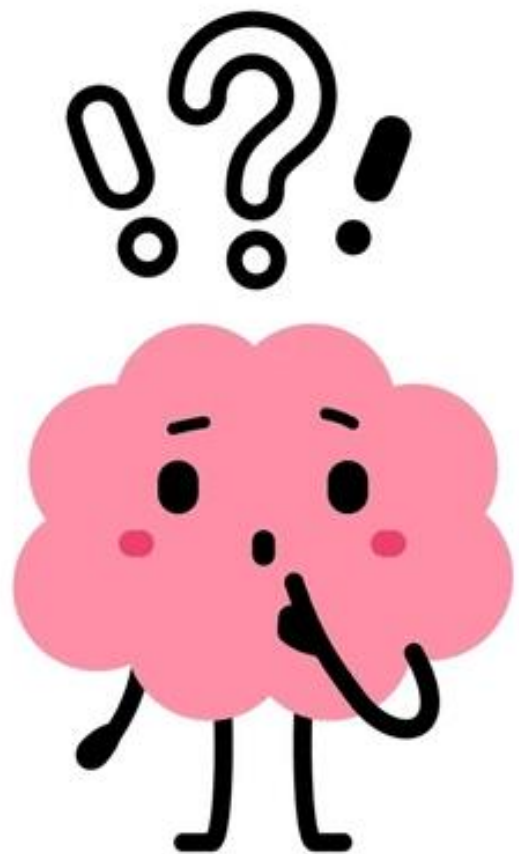
Owns the information / context leaders often miss

LET'S DO A QUICK QUIZ!

IS THIS MANAGING UP?

When a critical issue arises, you quickly and strategically attempt to manage it at your level first before informing your leaders about the situation at hand.

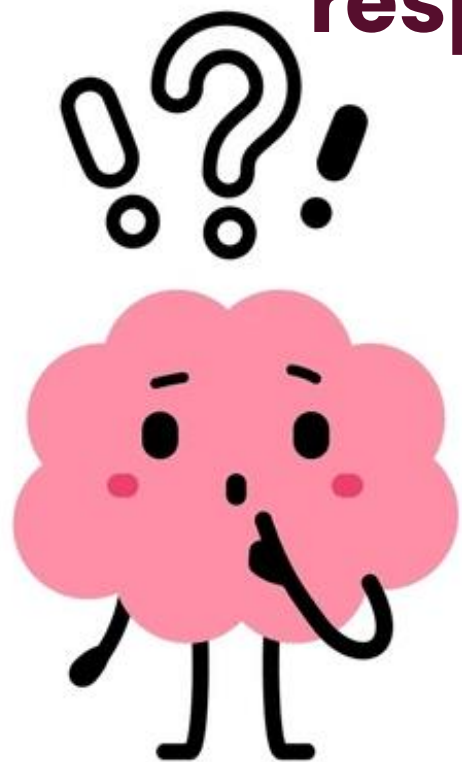
After all, this is your responsibility and there's no need to alarm the leaders unless it is absolutely necessary.



IS THIS MANAGING UP?

Your client often makes last-minute requests outside of the project scope. You have instructed your team to accommodate as much as possible. However, the client became upset when one of their unreasonable requests were not met. They have sent you a scathing email highlighting their unhappiness.

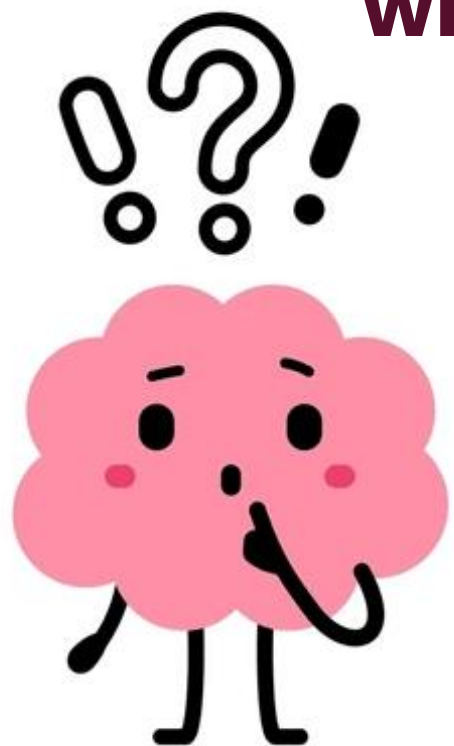
At the next meeting, your leader asks you how's the project and you responded with "all good, we are on time and has not missed any deliverable".



IS THIS MANAGING UP?

Since the start of the tariff war and escalating geo-political conflicts, your team faced major challenges to execute projects and deliver the targets. As a result, the team has worked long hours and undertaken extra initiatives in an attempt to move the needle.

During the board meeting, there was a suggestion for your team to undertake a big market exercise to find opportunities. You responded with “that’s a great suggestion, I will instruct the team to do the necessary”.



TIPS & TRICKS TO MANAGING UP



Changing the **COMPANY CULTURE** at ANY level

MANAGE UP WITH OUR “GAINS” MODEL

G	Goals First	Know what they care about most and align your work to advance those priorities.
A	Anticipate Needs	Think ahead so you can identify their needs and offer solutions before being asked.
I	Inform Regularly	Keep them in the loop with regular updates, so they're never left guessing.
N	Name Risks Early	Surface challenges or concerns before they escalate, giving time to address them.
S	Strengthen Trust	Two-way conversations that create visibility and build a reliable working relationship.

TIPS & TRICKS TO MANAGE UP

USE STRATEGIC HUMILITY

Strategic humility means showing openness without minimizing your own insight.

Power holders are more receptive when approached with respectful curiosity – it diffuses status threat.

Use language that invites dialogue, not debate:

“My views are anchored in operations, I wonder if you’d be able to give me some insights from your strategic lens...”

ILLUSTRATE COMPETENCE BEFORE ASK

Demonstrating competence early activates positive stereotypes and increases upward receptivity.

Before sharing or asking, open with relevant success, insight, or efforts:

When I was working project A, we identify X and Y as risks – could I have Z to help manage it better this time?

This primes the leader’s brain to view you as competent and credible, making your request harder to dismiss.

BUILD INFLUENCE EQUITY

Credibility and trust accumulate over time through proactive contribution, making later influence attempts feel earned rather than opportunistic.

Influence is not a one-time act - it’s a long game. Build “influence equity” by offering value consistently.

This creates a reservoir of goodwill (referent power) and psychological bankability, so when you do make a request, they’re already inclined to listen and say yes.

THANK YOU!

"Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it."

– Nelson Mandela

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