

How do I get my opinions to count when the boss asks but never listens?

Question: "The executive I support always asks for my opinions regarding changes to office setup, administrative support staff duties, logistics for meetings, etc., which I honestly give. These requests for my opinions occur repeatedly (5-6 times over a few weeks). He then ignores my comments and does what he wants, stating "let's try it my way" which when translated is "we are doing it my way." This is extremely frustrating. I've now resorted to not offering my opinions, which he interprets as non-interest on my part. This is being reflected in my annual review with negative comments and affects my compensation." —*Eunice*

Comments

I would suggest that you create a paper trail through email. Each time you are asked your opinion send your response. Print them out record the outcome and include them in YOUR self evaluation. This may be an eye opening experience to your boss.

Posted by: Anon | February 29, 2008 at 02:16 PM

I don't want to sound harse but maybe your ideas could use some improvement? Meaning maybe there is a larger picture that he has more information on and knows why your idea may not work. By him asking you it sounds like to me he likes your opinion and way of thinking or he would have stopped asking by now. By just refusing to give an opinion is definitely not that right response. You will only hurt your relationship with your boss which does not help you or your review. My suggestion is to ask for the honest opinion, say " I wanted to be able to better understand why my idea will not work to in the future be able to give you better opinions". If you are comfortable with this person you may want to just get the pink elephant out of the room and tell how you feel right now. If he knows you like a relationship where opinions are asked of you but it bothers you that no one listens and you just want advise on how to improve. Clearing the air works wonders vs just refusing, trust me. Good luck, it will take some guts to be the one to start the conversation.

Posted by: Jocelyn | February 29, 2008 at 02:25 PM

Hi,

I have been there several times.

In my opinion, it takes a very confident in position boss to be able to take your opinion's and validate them. Manager's have an extreme responsibility in ensuring that all facets of their accountability are carried out thoroughly. That means any opinion's that you might have simple or not might be disregarded by poor management and lack of confidence.

I have strategized, where I am able to let my boss know (on a boss's good day), that I was not feeling part of a

team.

I mention to her during an informal meeting of some sort, if he/she is not feeling that I am contributing enough? And pose it as, that your contribution's to processes have not been recognized and used, perhaps you can begin the conversation this way. Whatever your opinion is, make sure you are confident in its carry through.

Posted by: Maren | February 29, 2008 at 02:35 PM

Is it really that much of a problem if the boss does not take your suggestions? I would continue to offer them. If they are used, fine. If not, that is also fine. But at least you are giving your opinion when asked. If he asks for opinions and you refuse to give them, I can honestly see where that SHOULD be negatively reflected in a review. Go ahead and give them, but don't worry about whether they are chosen or not.

Posted by: Mark | March 03, 2008 at 12:33 PM

Is he asking only you for an opinion or is he polling the whole office? Are these key matters that greatly affect your position or just minor changes? Base your response on the importance of the issue. A quick response may be all he's looking for. When he asks your opinion regarding changes that are of higher importance, take the opportunity to engage in a brainstorming session with him. Answer his questions with questions to get feedback on what direction he may be going and ask why he feels that way. When you offer your opinion, indicate how and why you came to that decision (it will save time/money or eliminate waste). If he still goes a different direction, he will at least know you gave it some real thought. Above all, try not to take it too personally. As indicated above, he wouldn't continue to ask if he didn't value your opinions.

Posted by: | March 03, 2008 at 12:45 PM

All of the comments are good. You should keep track of what your responses have been when you are asked, you should ask if there is a way to improve your communication, and you shouldn't be upset if the boss does whatever he wants to anyhow. You don't want to do anything which might result in a negative performance review, so keep on giving opinions. Two more thoughts about this: One, your boss may not be interested in any of your opinions but asks anyway so he can say to his boss that he has solicited input from his staff. Two, you might want to use the following approach when he asks: "You may have already thought of this", and then give your opinion. He may be more amenable to your suggestions if he thinks he's already thought of them. A bit manipulative, but I have found it to work with men who don't value women as highly as they should.

Posted by: Anon | March 03, 2008 at 12:50 PM

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Posted by: Anon | March 03, 2008 at 12:51 PM

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Posted by: Anon | March 03, 2008 at 12:51 PM

Excellent suggestions! I agree with the paper trail and brainstorming/mind map. If possible ask several clarifying questions to ensure you understand what your boss wants. Then email three options and specify your "best option" recommendation. If one of "his way" resolutions does not work or you feel your recommendation would have been better then follow up and suggest trying your idea on an interim basis. I wish you well and don't give up.

Posted by: CS | March 07, 2008 at 01:09 PM