

# When bad edicts come down

You want to earn the trust of your staff, but that's hard when you're forced to carry out changes that neither you nor your team agree with. Here's how to placate both your employees and your boss:

**Use direct quotes.** Say your boss announces a policy on sick leave that actually encourages employees to cheat. You express your reservations privately to your boss to no avail. Now your team raises the same objections to you.

Prepare by telling your boss how you will communicate the new policy to your disgruntled employees. Get the boss's permission to quote him verbatim. That way, you can tell the workers, "The boss weighed everything and said ..."

**Set a timetable.** Work with your boss to establish a time frame for unpopular changes. Strive to make the least palatable changes temporary—with a definite end point. Your employees may perceive you as an ally if you can assure them you negotiated a shorter duration for the change.

**Extract concessions.** In return for playing the "good soldier," ask your boss to throw you a bone to pass along to your crew. Example: If you must oversee the installation of new software that your staff has already told you they hate, get your boss to agree to invest in faster Internet access, larger monitors or other enhancements that your staff has requested.

**Find a silver lining.** Level with your team about the need for change. Acknowledge the negatives, but conclude by emphasizing any hidden blessings, including long-term benefits to those who persevere.