

# When your boss procrastinates

If your boss's favorite phrases are "let me mull that over," "this isn't the best time for that" and "I'll get to that later," then you may need to take unilateral action to produce results. Otherwise, you might grow frustrated by all the delays and lack of follow-through.

Try these techniques to handle a boss who procrastinates:

**No answer = yes.** If your boss keeps postponing making a key personnel move or a strategic decision, make it yourself while blazing a paper trail. Send memos that describe actions you propose, and give a deadline for feedback if the boss objects. That way, you can assume consent if you don't get a response.

"I was getting fed up with how long it was taking us to hire a support person," says a manager at a 40-employee manufacturing firm.

"So I decided on the candidate I wanted and sent my notoriously indecisive boss a memo confirming whom I intended to hire on Friday, with the offer of employment spelled out. When I saw my boss in the hall, I said, 'Did you read my memo?' He muttered 'yeah' and walked off. That was all I needed to proceed."

**Offer a choice.** After you identify your boss's preferred mode of communication (e-mail, memo, voice mail, etc.), send him a menu of options. Your goal is to get a response to your specific request. For example, if you're awaiting your performance review, propose two dates and times and ask, "Which one's better?"