

Be a Spark for Success— “Manage Up”

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself.” One way to interpret this advice from Eleanor Roosevelt is as a call for leaders to lead by example. It can also serve as a reminder to every employee that contributing to a business’s success is a shared responsibility. Each employee has a unique perspective on what is happening in the workplace. This information can be helpful in identifying challenges before they turn into problems as well as making the most of opportunities in a timely way.

“Managing up” is a common but often misunderstood concept. Some assume it is an approach to working with—or around—ineffective leaders’ shortcomings or blind spots. Harvard Business Review has published a series of articles that offers a different perspective on managing up, calling it “a way to be the most effective employee you can be, creating value for your boss—and your company”. The articles describe the usefulness of respectfully sharing feedback across organizational hierarchies, and the importance of each employee taking ownership in an organization’s reputation and success. Employees at every level can positively influence the work culture by relating in ways that support the company’s goals and mission, while those in leadership positions can promote healthy information sharing by providing the time, openness and encouragement for such conversations to take place.

Johari’s Window

Effectively and respectfully managing up requires emotional intelligence—being aware of and managing your own feelings and relating to how your colleagues may be feeling. One model for how to put emotional intelligence into action is the Johari’s Window. The Johari’s Window is a technique developed by two psychologists to help raise self-awareness as well as to mindfully cultivate and navigate relationships with others.

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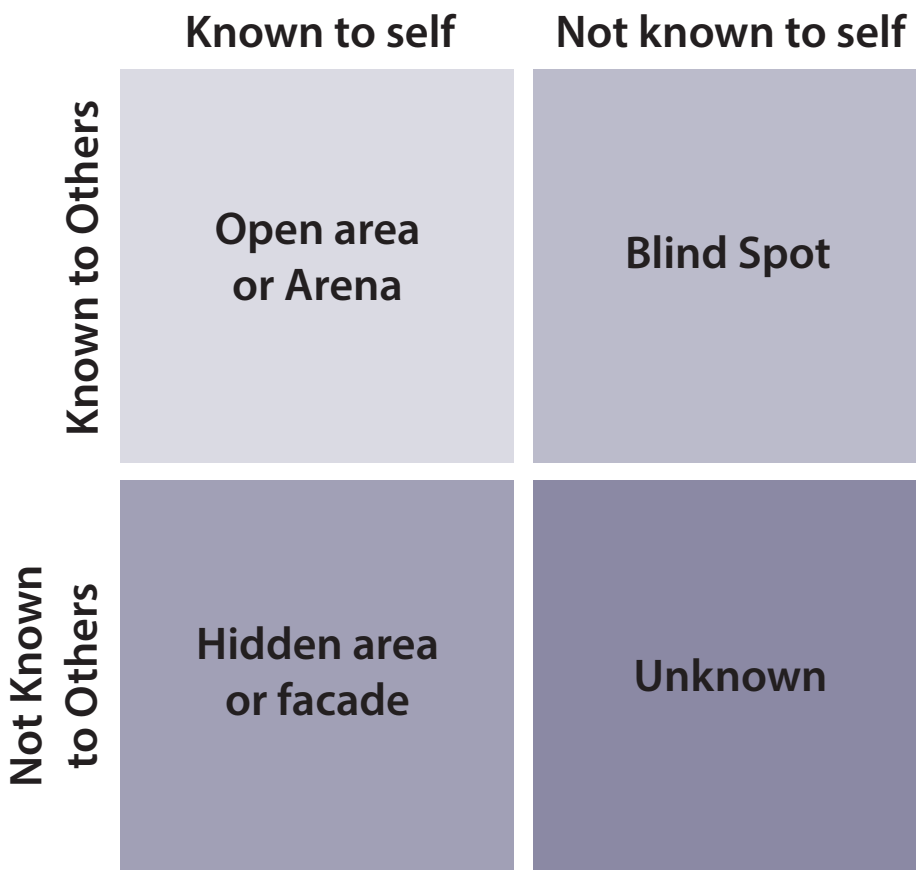
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Johari's Window contains four "panes" or quadrants, including:

- those aspects of ourselves that we are aware of, and that others know to be true about us;
- those traits we are unaware of but that others see, also known as our "blind spots";
- parts of who we are that we know about but choose or try to keep hidden from others, and
- those aspects of ourselves that neither we nor those around us are awareness of.



The Johari Window Model

Harnessing our emotional intelligence in the workplace includes growing our transparency—in other words making larger the Johari's Window quadrant that contains those aspects of ourselves that we are aware of and that others also know about us. Appropriately sharing information about ourselves and giving rather than withholding valuable input and feedback can simultaneously increase how well we are known and shrink the "hidden" parts of ourselves. Doing so promotes trust and open communication on the job. We can show up more genuinely and let others see who we are and what we have to bring to the workplace. At the same time actively seeking out and applying feedback to our own "blind spots" can reduce the potentially negative effect those behaviors and attitudes may have on those around us.



Encourage a Work Culture where "Managing Up" is Positive

Effectively managing up requires the intention to create value for your boss and the organization. To be done right, managing up needs to be approached mindfully and with respect for the greater good—for you, your colleagues and the business. It requires tact and emotional intelligence—knowing when and how to share information about yourself as well as a commitment to solicit, apply and share constructive feedback. A byproduct of self-disclosure and genuinely listening to and applying feedback on the job is that employees with the greatest emotional intelligence report they are happier, more productive, and even earn more than those with less well developed "people skills."

