

What Your Leader Expects of You

This article includes a one-page preview that quickly summarizes the key ideas and provides an overview of how the concepts work in practice along with suggestions for further reading.

The success of an executive team depends heavily on the relationships the boss has with his or her direct reports. Yet the leadership literature has had little to say about what is expected in those relationships--on either side. Larry Bossidy, formerly the chairman and CEO of Honeywell, and before that of AlliedSignal, shares what he calls "the CEO compact," detailing the behaviors a leader should look for in subordinates and what they should be able to expect in return. A CEO's best people, he says, know when a situation calls for them to get involved. They generate ideas--remembering that some of the best ones may sound crazy at first. They are willing to collaborate, putting the long-term good of the company above short-term goals of their divisions. They step up to lead initiatives, even if the outcome is uncertain. They develop leaders among their people, especially through direct involvement in performance appraisals. They stay current on world events and anticipate how those events may affect the company and its competition. They drive their own growth by exposing themselves to new people and ideas and by accepting demanding assignments. And they sustain these behaviors in bad times as well as good. On the other side of the compact, the boss should provide clarity of direction; set goals and objectives; give frequent, specific, and immediate feedback; be decisive and timely; demonstrate honesty and candor; and offer an equitable compensation plan. Executives who aren't lucky enough to have such a boss can create a compact with their own subordinates, Bossidy says, and demonstrate by example. The result will be to improve team and company performance and accelerate individual growth.

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