

# 4 phrases your boss LOVES to hear

**TRACEY PARSONS**  
Special to QMI Agency

Managing up is a challenge all professionals face at one time or another. After all, everyone answers to someone. And learning effective ways to advance the relationship is a skill all professionals can use every day.

Managers are not only responsible for your role and responsibilities and to a degree your career; they are also responsible for their duties as well. If you really want to make your boss a fan, think of ways to work these four phrases into your workweek:

## “Here’s a potential solution”

Bosses hear a lot of problems. And more often than not, they are expected to come up with the solution. The thing is; if it isn’t their problem, they are not going to actively seek out solutions. Therefore, when you come to the boss with a problem, immediately follow it up with a proposed solution.

This accomplishes two things. First, it shows your manager that you are solution-oriented. You took the time to examine the problem and think about ways to address

it. Secondly, your solutions are essentially saving the boss time and energy and those are both gifts to your manager. This approach is a huge win for you and the boss.

## “Here’s an idea”

You should be a student of your company. You should be very familiar with the company goals, mission and vision. You should also have a very good understanding of the company’s challenges. When you know these challenges, you should spend some time each week working on ideas to solve those challenges.

When you go to your manager to say you have an idea to impact the company’s bottom line, everyone wins. Bosses should love to hear ideas on how to make things more efficient and more profitable. Be looking for these ideas whenever you have down time at work.

## “Let me show you”

A picture is worth 1,000 words, and we are deep in the “show me” era. In these time-strapped days, it is so much easier to show someone something than it is to tell them. When pitching something to a boss or sharing an idea or

even solving a problem, show him/her what you are talking about. Sketch it out, give them a flow chart, something visual and talk them through it. If you can, make a quick prototype. It is so much easier than using just your words when the chances are good that the boss is distracted.

Think about it: When you show people what you are saying, you have captured two of their senses, hearing, and seeing. If you give them something to hold — even better (three senses). This gets their attention and allows them to truly evaluate what you are trying to do for the boss or the company.

Always try to show people what you are talking about. It allows them to react to your idea in a more connected way.

## “I could use a little mentoring”

Bosses are not solely responsible for your career. This is your responsibility. If you need new challenges or want new opportunities, it is up to you to scope those out and present them to the boss. If you don’t know how to do something or think that you could build out your skills even further, it is up to you to ask for mentorship.



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As the protégé, you must take the active role in carving out time for the relationship. When you seek mentorship from your boss, know that it may not be the boss that becomes your mentor. Your boss may not even be the right mentor, however, they can be the one who facilitates an introduction. When you ask for this type of guidance, your

boss knows that you own your experience and will work to support you.

Building a solid relationship with your boss is key to getting where you want to go with your career. These relationships will follow you throughout your career. These bosses will likely one day be the people you call on to be a reference. And when it comes time to be a reference

for you, you want them to say that you were solution-oriented, respectful of their time and full of an entrepreneurial spirit. And that is a glowing reference, trust me. When I am hiring, these are precisely the things I want to hear.

— Tracey Parsons is the CEO of CredHive. Check out CredHive on Twitter @CredHive.

## Do you rely on opinions, advice or career expertise?

**LISA TAYLOR**  
Special to QMI Agency

As I place my order at a local coffee shop I notice a 20-something man who is seeking career advice from a 40-something woman. The conversation has become quite heated and everyone in line can feel the man’s frustration and the woman’s pessimism.

Everyone of working age has valuable experiences and views about careers, especially their own. However,

there is a significant difference between providing an opinion, giving advice and lending career expertise.

Opinions are the domain of the expert. They can be insightful and helpful, so long as the recipient can translate what within the opinion is relevant and valuable to their own situation.

Advice is the currency of the mentor. It builds on opinion and experience to provide suggestions or concrete actions the other person should take. Questions are

asked and answered.

Expertise is the value of the coach. Providing career expertise means understanding the “why” behind the questions that are asked and those that go unasked.

Expertise is about sharing the “how” — what are the steps a person can take to find the unique solution that fits their specific circumstance. Questions are met with different questions and tools are provided to explore a variety of options.

We are currently living

through an era where people are making significant career change in their 40s, 50s and 60s. While there are all kinds of opinions about the market and this type of change — and there are lots of people ready to provide advice — the smart Legacy Career® seeker will search out true expertise.

Whether it is in the form of a professional program, like those offered at Challenge Factory, or informally within your network, you should rely on assistance from people who start the conversa-

tion focused on you — on your needs, passions and talents. You should feel challenged and be left with concrete steps you can take to move forward.

“I hope this has been helpful. There’s no point giving you false hope if what you are pursuing is destined to fail.” The coffee shop woman says to the man in closing.

He responds, “If none of my ideas are going to work and you think I should find a job that pays now, even if I don’t love it, where do you think I

should apply?”

She replies, “I wish I knew, but it has been 20 years since I was applying for my first job. Today it’s all about your network and if you don’t already know someone I am not sure how you get in. I am glad I am not you.”

— Lisa Taylor is president of Challenge Factory, a company that provides innovative talent and career programs targeting new graduates, mid-career professionals and Boomers. Visit [www.challengefactory.ca](http://www.challengefactory.ca)