



Make Your Boss Your BFF

GET THE PERSON IN THE CORNER OFFICE INTO YOUR CORNER, THEN WATCH YOUR CAREER TAKE OFF. YOU'LL NEVER COMPLAIN ABOUT NEPOTISM AGAIN! *by Daniel Bortz*

BUDDYING UP WITH the boss can pay off, literally. In a study of executives done at Georgetown University, nine in 10 acknowledged that favoritism occurs in larger organizations, and 23% of them said they had personally practiced favoritism in making promotion decisions. Read: Getting more familiar with the person who signs off on your raises can help you make sure they're bigger. Follow these tips to cozy up without crossing the line.

BREAK THE ICE

Start by trying to engage the boss in small talk when riding the elevator or meeting at the water cooler. And if you know he is going to happy hour, be there. "Take advantage of any opportunity to rub shoulders outside work," says career consultant Donald Asher, author of *Who Gets Promoted, Who Doesn't, and Why*.

To find common ground, Asher suggests posing open-ended questions like "How about them

Spurs?" Use the person's response to gauge his level of interest. Does he talk at length about the season? Depending on your relative positions, you might ask the boss to lunch to discuss your ideas on a particular project—and who will make the playoffs.

KEEP UP ON FACEBOOK

"Friending" the boss on Facebook can help you cement the relationship, says Nancy Rothbard, a Wharton School professor who studies social media in the workplace. But first make sure your boss is willing to connect with subordinates—you're good if other direct reports are in her circle.

Once you're in, occasionally "like" and comment on posts about shared interests. "It authentically reinforces your offline interactions," Rothbard says. Just save communication for off-work hours so you don't look as though you're slacking off.

LEVERAGE YOUR FRIENDSHIP

When the relationship is established, your boss may be naturally more inclined to advance your causes. But be strategic in your asks. "You don't want your boss to think you're a user," says Asher. Chatting about weekend plans? You might slip in a mention of your desire to attend a senior staff meeting. "If you have a good relationship, your boss will go out of his way to get you in," says Richard Klimoski, a management and psych professor at George Mason University.

DON'T LET YOUR NOSE GET BROWN

Your peers may grow jealous of your rapport with the boss. Keep them on your good side by continuing to collaborate well and publicly praising peers for achievements, says Jennifer McClure, president of leadership strategy firm Unbridled Talent. "Befriend your boss," she says, "but don't put a target on your back." **M**