

Leading Up: Do Your Job Exceptionally Well

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Is your position such that you report to someone else? Then you lead up. Even if your title is school principal, who do you report to? Then you lead up. Even some day, if you become a superintendent, you will lead up to a school board.

Leading up, leading across and leading down are the foundations of John

Maxwell's book *The 360° Leader: Developing your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*. In your school leadership role, you may be the principal and need to lead down to others in your building. You also have colleagues in the district (other principals) and need to lead across and support others. There are also members of the team that reside in the district office that you lead up to, which is the focus of this article.

In our newest professional development offering, "The Team: Building Leadership Success that Improves Student Learning," we use *The 360° Leader* workbook and discuss roles as being a #1 and a #2. The irony here is that while your job description may list you as the principal, or #1, you also find yourself in a #2 position as well. So, this article is for everyone in school leadership!

One tip in the book reviews the notion that one way you can make the load for your boss (#1) lighter is to do your job exceptionally well. Before you dream of advancement or long to be the boss, master your role first.

Here are three things to consider as you do your job:

1. **Review your job description and make sure you are hitting the mark.** Is the job description accurate, or has the position evolved since the last update?

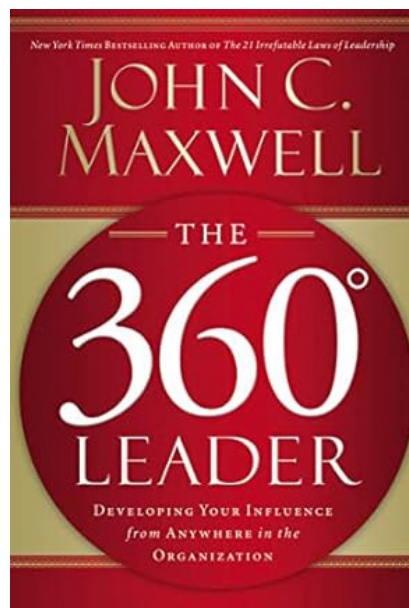
If you are confused or concerned about the primary responsibilities, have a conversation with your boss and secure a clear understanding of what is expected via the job description.

2. **During the same conversation in #1, discuss areas that are expectations of your role that are not listed in your job description.** The last time I checked, the actual job of a school leader, regardless of your title, defies an easy job description and some bullet points. How many times in the past month did you tell yourself on your drive home, "Well, this wasn't a part of my job description!" Leave nothing to chance and have an open conversation with your boss about such gray areas.

3. **Avoid destination disease.** Someday, you may be honored with a position as a #1. Until then, work hard in your lane and let your good work speak for itself. It isn't hard to quickly discern when someone is looking for the next position and not focusing intently on their current job. These folks usually have opinions on current leadership decisions and strategy and somehow seem to know "better." Be a good #2 and do your job exceptionally well, and I believe the future will take care of itself.

Hall of Fame baseball player Willie Mays said, "It isn't hard to be good from time to time in sports. What's tough is being good every day."

In summary, be a great #2, be great at leading up, do your job exceptionally well and the future will take care of itself. ■



REFERENCE:

Maxwell, J. C. (2005). *The 360° leader: developing your influence from anywhere in the organization*. Nashville, Nelson Business.