

# Adapt to avoid letting boss' style drive you crazy

When my boss gives me a project, he never shares all the information that resides in his head. So I often fail to achieve his vision of the final results. Then I have to revisit tasks that have been completed.

He does this with other employees as well. For example, last week he asked several people to prepare PowerPoint presentations for a meeting. After everyone had completed their slides, he changed the format, so they all had to be redone. If I ask for information in advance, it's like pulling teeth to get him to give me the specifics in an orderly manner. I've started listing my questions with bullet points in an e-mail, so he can type answers under each.

"Mr. Visionary" says he wants me to think outside the box, but I believe that he expects me to read his mind. Can you give me some insights about how to work with this person?

You and your scattered boss illustrate a classic difference in thinking styles. Creative visionaries focus on the big picture and overlook the details. They get excited about new ideas and love change. Sound familiar? Organized implementers like to focus on specifics and outline steps. They plan ahead and despise last-minute changes. You seem to fall into this category.

Your manager's frustrating traits simply reflect the way his brain works. He doesn't impart details because he hasn't thought Marie G. McIntyre of them yet.

He can't give facts "in an orderly manner" because he's not a structured thinker. For you, however, organizing may be as natural as breathing.

Since Mr. Visionary is not likely to change, you're smart to focus on adapting. Your strategy of sending bullet-point e-mails is a great example of "managing the boss." To be sure his views haven't shifted, try including some checkpoints in your project schedules.

Visionaries and implementers often make a terrific team, because they view projects from complementary perspectives. But unfortunately, as you have noticed, they can also drive each other nuts.

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