THINK productive

Managing Upwards

Build trust, communicate clearly, and contribute upwards with confidence.

Why does managing upwards feel like the skill nobody actually teaches you?

Managing upwards is one of the most important skills in modern work, and one of the least talked about. If you've ever felt stuck, unheard or unsure how to challenge someone more senior, you're not alone.

This isn't about controlling or fixing someone above you. It's about building a stronger, more collaborative relationship so your voice, your ideas and your team's needs are genuinely part of the picture. Through relationship mapping, personality insights and strategic thinking, you'll leave with a personalised action plan for managing upwards with more confidence and clarity, whatever your role.

A fully customisable session

We recommend:

In-person or online | 3hrs | Up to 20 people

What you'll learn & do

This workshop empowers your teams to:

- Understand what managing upwards really means, and why it matters
- Assess and improve your key senior relationships honestly
- Adapt your approach to different communication and personality styles
- Strengthen trust, visibility and strategic alignment with senior stakeholders
- Explore how AI can help you prepare clearer, more strategic upward communication

94% of participants would recommend our workshops

Who is this workshop for?

- Managers and project leads working with senior stakeholders
- Anyone wanting more clarity, confidence and collaboration in senior relationships
- Teams preparing for broader responsibility or stepping into strategic roles
- Anyone building a leadership development programme who wants this as a core module

What this workshop offers

- **Focused on you, not "fixing" your boss.** Builds what you can do to strengthen the relationship, not a session that assumes the problem is your manager.
- **Learning that lasts.** Every participant gets access to the Productivity Ninja® Academy.
- **A format that fits.** 3 hours, in person or live online, for up to 20 people.
- **AI as an ally.** Practical ways AI can help you prepare for high-stakes conversations and refine upward communication, without losing authenticity.
- **Built to stick.** Add an Impact Clinic 1 and 3 months later to keep new habits alive.

What you'll do

You'll start by mapping the senior relationships that actually shape your work, being honest about what's working and what isn't. From there, you'll explore how to adapt your communication style to different personalities, building trust and visibility rather than just hoping things improve on their own.

You'll practise strategic thinking, connecting your day-to-day work to the bigger picture your senior stakeholders actually care about. You'll also look at where AI can help you prepare for difficult upward conversations, and where it shouldn't be used, keeping trust and authenticity intact. You'll leave with a personalised action plan for real relationships at work, not generic advice about "managing your boss."

What happens when managing upwards works

When people manage upwards with intention, everything changes:

- Ideas and concerns get heard, instead of staying unsaid
- Senior leaders make better decisions, because they're working with fuller information
- Trust builds both ways, instead of relying on hierarchy alone
- Second-guessing drops, replaced by real alignment
- People stop feeling stuck and start feeling like an active part of the picture

Boots UK

"Think Productive have helped me leave a legacy here. Their team really do walk the talk, they fully embody their brand."

L&D Manager

Benefits & results

The most immediate benefit is clarity: participants leave with an honest picture of their key senior relationships and a concrete plan to strengthen them. But the deeper shift is confidence. Once someone knows how to manage upwards well, they stop second-guessing themselves and start contributing as an active part of decisions, not just receiving them.

What your organisation gets

Better decisions at senior level, because leaders are working with fuller information. Stronger trust and alignment across levels, and less friction from people who feel unheard or unsure how to raise things.

NatureScot

“I will look at personality types and how I communicate.”

Christine Moodie

Why it matters

Nobody’s ever really taught how to manage a relationship with someone more senior, so most people either stay silent or wing it.

– Ideas and concerns go unheard because raising them upwards feels risky or unclear how to do well

– Without understanding a senior stakeholder’s communication style, the same message keeps landing badly

– Left unaddressed, people quietly disengage from decisions instead of contributing to them

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Your workshop. Your way.

We recommend a **3 hour** workshop for a team of up to **20 people**, but like all our workshops, it can also be tailored to your exact needs.

Available options:

Formats

In-person | Online

Group size

Recommended: up to 20 | Keynote length: Unlimited

Duration

Recommended: 3hrs | Keynote length: 90 mins-2hrs