

## Empowering Others

Your team can offer valuable assistance in achieving your goals and objectives, but only when they are given the opportunity to do so. Many managers are reluctant to offer more power to the team because it is risky and diminishes their control. But it is also motivational and offers more opportunities for growth and advancement.

So how can you empower people and reduce the risk associated with it? Here are some ideas:

1. **Tell people what their responsibilities are.** Unless people are absolutely clear on what the expectations are for their performance, there's always the risk that they will misunderstand what your expectations are. Agree those responsibilities and get them to tell you what their level of performance should be. That way, they own more of the results

2. **Give them authority equal to their responsibilities.** If you want them to carry out specific responsibilities, allow them the authority to make decisions commensurate with that level. Always having to ask permission for trivia will only decrease drive and morale

3. **Set standards of excellence.** They will follow your example. If that example shows you cutting corners, willing to accept mediocrity or bypassing rules when it doesn't suit you, they won't believe your lip-service to commitment to excellence

4. **Provide people with training that will enable them meet these standards.** Coach and train them relentlessly to achieve the best. No back-up assistance to achieve success will result in excuses and reasons for average performance

5. **Give them knowledge and information.** Open communication is a pre-requisite for empowerment. Without it, you are practicing 'mushroom management' .... keeping them in the dark and feeding them manure!

6. **Provide feedback on performance.** Unless they know how they are doing, how will they know they're on the right track? Allow them to see how they are progressing and to take responsibility for improvement

7. **Recognise them for their achievements.** There has to be something they can aspire to, even if it's only praise and thank you's. Without some kind of recognition, what's the point of empowerment?

8. **Trust them.** Giving them responsibility means letting go of some of the apron strings and attachment to methodologies. Discuss outcomes, set the ball in motion and let them get on with it

9. **Give them permission to fail.** If they don't take risks, they will never grow. Offer the safety net for failure, but encourage decision-making and you'll see the growth in their performance

10. **Treat them with dignity and respect.** Many managers still say they need to micromanage or the job won't get done. That's more of a reflection on the manager than on the individual they are trying to empower. Respect breeds respect, so allow people the space and opportunity to show how capable they are. They may surprise you.

Empowerment isn't an abdication of responsibility on your behalf; it's a recognition of how important your team members are and allows them to show their potential and willingness. By offering this level of connection, you prove the value of each team member and morale can only go one way...upwards!