

Fulcrum Search Science Inc.

Empowering - Giving Responsibility



The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a person's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher. - Aldous Huxley

The staff of an organization should be regarded as an asset to protect and develop, rather than a liability to decrease as much as possible. If you are in a supervisory position, you will find that you get the best results when you treat people as partners, increasing their level of authority as their skills and responsibilities increase. Here is what you can do:

1. Realize that you are not knowledgeable about everything, and that there is always an opportunity to learn from others - especially about the specifics of their particular jobs. Giving or sharing power is an act of generosity, courage, and leadership.
2. Assess each individual's willingness to be empowered. Each person has a different level of need. The best employees see the additional power as a vote of confidence and become increasingly motivated.
3. Avoid failure by assessing the person's ability to exercise the new power. Make sure that he is properly trained beforehand.
4. Make sure that people know the limits of their authority. When they show confidence and ability within those limits, consider increasing their power.
5. Give people a chance to find their own ways to attain objectives.
6. Don't fix other people's mistakes without first giving them a chance to do it themselves. They will learn to be responsible for their own decisions if they have an opportunity to learn from their own errors.
7. Monitor your management systems (decision-making, information flow, selection authority, accountability) frequently to make sure they encourage staff performance rather than present obstacles to it.
8. Increase the skills and confidence of your work group by making training an ongoing activity.
9. Follow this golden rule: treat other people as you would like to be treated. Develop personal relationships with your staff that are based on respect and trust.
10. If people are reluctant to assume new responsibilities, be patient. Try to make it clear to them that they, as well as you and the organization, will benefit from their increased effort and skills.
11. Be consistently supportive of your colleagues. As you win their trust, your people will be more willing to take on new challenges.

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