



# Are You Using Authority Effectively?

**A**uthority comes with every leadership position. However, the power to use authority effectively must be earned. As leaders, we need to develop the characteristics that will earn us power and command respect.

## COACHING AS A MODEL

A good way to earn your people's respect is to be a coach to them. A coach has the best interests of both the team and the individual in mind. A coach wants the team to win and challenges and develops individuals toward that end. At times a coach is a teacher and maybe even a counselor, but it is always important that the coach's purpose is to advance *the team's* success. Be cautious about playing the role of parent. People tend to live up to our expectations. Challenge yourself and your team; hold each other accountable.

## A COACH PLANS & IMPARTS VISION

Be sure everyone on the team clearly knows the vision and how their individual role contributes. Establish a plan together. Empower and develop your people to make effective choices in carrying out the plan. Listen to team members to get their input, so that even better plans can be devised.

## TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE; DISCIPLINE IS DEVELOPMENT

Discipline implies teaching and instruction, not punishment. Discipline also presents an opportunity for development of your people. Help team members establish attitudes, skills



and habits to reach their goals. Teach and encourage them to assume responsibility for their part in goal achievement.

Win the respect of your team by how you handle a situation that requires discipline. Address issues quickly. Embrace positive discipline, don't avoid it.

When dealing with inadequate performance, consider these factors:

- Does the employee know what is expected and why?
- Do they know how to do the job? Have they received the proper training?
- Are the systems, processes, tools & environment conducive?
- Are the person and the job a good match?

Use the "Tell me about it" phrase. Without attacking the individual, hold the mirror up by describing the gap between

the desired performance and the current performance. Then ask, "Please tell me about it." The person will be compelled to focus on the issues. Resist agreeing if excuses are given. You might offer some small suggestions, but let the employee find a solution. Be sure to follow-up, at an agreed time, to determine how the solution worked. If it is working, offer the appropriate praise.

If the team member is not in the right position, help him or her feel as good as possible about moving into another situation. If someone has done something against company policy, termination is still a good development lesson. Whatever action you take, do it in a timely manner. Not addressing these situations only infects the individual and the rest of the team and causes you to lose their respect.

#### TIPS TO EARN THE POWER TO USE AUTHORITY EFFECTIVELY

- Live up to commitments and follow up as agreed
- Seek to develop people and bring the best out in them
- Use a coaching approach, rather than "constructive criticism"

- Make decisions in a timely manner
- Deal with problems quickly and fairly
- Balance coaching for improvement feedback with praise
- Always focus on behavior rather than personalities
- Praise in public – coach for improvement in private
- Be a good listener and communicator – provide ongoing feedback
- Be open to new ideas
- Care about team members as people first and the task second
- And, most important...treat everyone with dignity and respect!

To re-cap: Be the coach. Share your vision. Develop the team. You will command great respect. Your people will want to excel and you will have more power to use your authority effectively. **S**

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