

Human Performance

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Human Performance: **Empowerment**

Many leaders are afraid to empower their team members for they fear they will lose control. This fear can be minimised if the simple seven rules of empowerment are followed. The following seven essential ingredients for empowerment are...

- 1. Clear, agreed, measurable outcomes**
- 2. Commitment from the individual**
- 3. Support**
- 4. Regular review**
- 5. Two-way trust**
- 6. Individual competence**
- 7. Consistency**

To work effectively, empowerment requires the above seven essential ingredients. You cannot force someone to take ownership of a task – they must willingly take the opportunities that effective empowerment presents to them. A person who does not have the required skills should also not be given responsibility - but they should be offered training and development to enable them to demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary skills.

As a leader, you can let your staff know that you expect them to work towards a position where they take on greater responsibility and become more autonomous in their work. However, true empowerment is about giving an individual complete control for all decisions related to the completion of a task or achievement of a result. This is different from what we may call task by task or gopher delegation. You will be aware of many examples of this – “fetch me a spanner, push the button, stir the gravy”. Clearly you cannot be empowered to stir gravy or push a button – there are no decisions to be made for a start. True empowerment requires more ownership of the task and the decisions which must be made.

Empowerment takes time – it is in some ways like growing a plant. As your staff develop into new roles and responsibilities, you will need patience. Like a gardener you must resist the temptation of pulling up the plant to inspect the roots to see if it is growing! You may see newly developed roots – but of course you’ll probably kill the plant!

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