

Title:

Pass Them The Crown To Build The Empire

Word Count:

570

Summary:

Stop for a moment... and imagine how you would feel as an employee under this situation:

You have been working for ACME for ten years now. You do the same thing everyday. You're tied at the desk pounding a decrepit keyboard; half the keys don't work. When you're not nursing carpal tunnel syndrome, you're sipping stale coffee at the greasy counter. Worse, you don't really know anyone that you work with. Socializing involves a casual hello... with the doorman's Doberman.

One...

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Article Body:

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One day you receive a memo stating that the dress code had been changed. Everyone must wear long pants with closed shoes. There is no explanation, and since you usually wear a sexy skirt with strappy sandals, you assume that it had something to do with you.

Would this sit well with you? Would it have been better that you and your colleagues were consulted first?

Now think about this scenario.

You've conducted time-motion studies at the factory for about eight months now. Since day one you toyed with ideas to optimize work-flow efficiency. A simple modification will cut costs 30% and increase output 20%. A brilliant idea worthy of an 80% raise!

You finally befriend the manager and broach your great idea. He points at the suggestion box. He adds that the supervisor browses suggestions once a week. So you whip up a nicely structured essay and plunk it into the box. Three months later, no one acts upon your ideas. No one has raised the issue. You retreat to your cubicle and sulk at the dancing-baby screen saver.

What's the problem?

Employees naturally expect that managers consider personal feedback as decisions are made involving work environment. After all, they are the frontliners and have a better feel of the immediate situation.

In order to motivate employees and supercharge performance, companies can implement "participative-style management" :

1. Never reprimand someone for their input- no matter how misguided. Look into the positive intention behind the suggestions. You will build confidence and motivation by acknowledging opinions. 3M is world renowned for paying cash prizes for crazy ideas. The idea for the Post-It came from rank and file. It catapulted the company to the Fortune 500.
2. Never rush employees to come up with flawless decisions. Provide them with appropriate tools and resources. Empower them to delegate responsibilities so they can focus on action planning.
3. Respect decisions once they have been made. Once you've authorized a committee to reach decisions, let the decision stand. Exercising veto powers to flex the ego will destroy motivation. Override staff decisions only if doing so will cause irreparable damage.
4. Impose clear standards of expectation. Inform empowered committees the core issues and what is desired.
5. Reward group members who strive to make informed decisions based on all available information. They will rise as future managers who will nurture organizational growth.

Occasionally, employees feel that too much involvement can spell disaster. Their

mindset is that managers should decide, and employees simply follow. Some complain that taking on ad-hoc managerial roles breaches the scope of their job description!

Enlighten the employee. Remember that the objective is to make the employee feel that his opinion is valuable AND have him relish the pleasure of executing his ideas. Ultimately he gains confidence as he discovers how capable he is of making his own decisions. Your firm ultimately benefits as new talent is cultivated for the future pool of managers.