

IDEAS FOR SUCCESS

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Empowered or Impaired

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Few things are as annoying as being ready to take action on achieving a goal and then having everything put on hold. It often happens that when someone wants something done, you're ready, but they won't give you the green light to do it or else they want to endlessly scrutinize the process in hopes of making the perfect decision. It's the old "Hurry up and wait!" scenario and it's maddening. Why do others do that to us? Why do we do that to others? Some say it is "analysis paralysis," others blame it on micromanaging. Whatever the case, it is easy to feel more impaired than empowered.

Before you get the idea that I advocate rushing into decisions and hastily taking action, I realize there is wisdom in being deliberate in one's thought process. Nevertheless, just as there has to be forethought, eventually there has to be action. This is an especially significant truth for those who lead or supervise others, are a part of a team, or part of a collective decision-making body. If we want others to enthusiastically work well along with us, we must accept the fact that those people will need to feel empowered to do the task before them.

Take a moment and consider what empowers or impairs you and others on your team as we

look at ways to be empowered and empower others.

- 1. Seek to clarify goals.** What are we attempting to accomplish? Sometimes, we are impaired by unclear objectives. No doubt you have tried to follow others who appeared to be without direction.
- 2. Give some credit.** You want others to give you an opportunity to prove yourself—others want that same opportunity. Extend others a little credit and allow them to prove themselves. Ask for the same for yourself.
- 3. Delegate to empower.** Don't just pass your excess work along to others—delegate tasks that give others the opportunity to shine. If you want to empower others, they have to be positioned to take action of some kind. Stretch your comfort zone. There is no need to control everything.
- 4. Don't hold back key details.** Some people are afraid to give too much information to others lest they lose some kind of advantage. Empowering others is a selfless act and

demands a generous attitude. You may remember others who kept key facts to themselves and left you to fend for yourself. Irritating wasn't it?

- 5. Set your team member free.** If you are serious about empowering your team member, this is the point where you release others to succeed. Define the boundaries and give them your blessings to do what has been defined. This will mean they will not be hindered by having to return for approval on every issue. To not do this is can be demoralizing and will kill enthusiasm.

The benefits of being empowered rather than impaired are obvious. The point is not to throw caution to the wind. If you have good team members and a clear plan of action, you might just be surprised by what you and others can accomplish when truly empowered.

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