



Empower Your Employees to Make Decisions and Watch Customer And Employee Satisfaction Surge!

Last month I shared with you several lessons critical to sustained leadership success. One of those lessons was to empower your team to make decisions.

According to last month's Red Ladder poll, 33% of respondents indicated that empowering employees to make decisions was the improvement that would make the biggest difference in their organization's ability to retain talent.

Yet so many managers find it difficult to delegate some level of decision making to employees for numerous reasons, primarily fear. Fear of losing control, fear of looking bad if the decision backfires, fear that someone else might get the credit and recognition, and fear that employees might mismanage corporate resources like time and money to name just a few. The bottom line is that it all boils down to fear.

So how do you overcome your fear and empower employees to make decisions? The best way is to do this is by helping them develop a competence in decision-making by providing them with a framework and guidelines for using it.

Here is a simple three step approach for making decisions.

- 1. Identify the problem.** As Stephen Covey says you have to begin with the end in mind. In this case, you have to clearly identify and define the problem. Once you are clear then you can brainstorm alternative solutions.
- 2. Determine a Course of Action.** To do this, you first need to evaluate the potential solutions, select the one that will best solves the problem while also maximizing the use of resources, and finally, develop an action plan including timeline, budget and communication plan, to actually implement the solution.
- 3. Evaluate effectiveness.** You do this by first measuring results and fine tuning the action plan by making appropriate adjustments. And finally, go back to identify the key learnings uncovered during the process. This gives everyone an opportunity to look at what worked well, what didn't go as planned and what you would do differently next time. This also gives everyone an opportunity to celebrate the success of both the process and outcomes. And finally, this allows you and your organization to begin developing some best practices around how problems are solved and decisions are made.

Since you can't be available all the time the key is to empower your team to make decisions. Be clear on the kinds of decisions they can make without you and to provide the tools they need to make good decisions. Remember, start small and build on

successes. Give employees decisions that involve low levels of risk no matter what decision is made.

Training your employees to make better decisions not only eases your workload but will translate into happier employees and more satisfied customers. This is a win-win all around. Now all you have to do is let go of your fear. What are you waiting for?

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