

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

THE PROPER USE OF AUTHORITY

The proper use of authority will help you influence the people whose cooperation is needed to accomplish the tasks to be completed for the achievement of your organizational goals. The following ten points will help you use authority properly:

1. **Develop trust.** It's not automatically given; it must be earned. Be a person of integrity. Say what you are going to do and do what you say. Treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.
2. **Openly communicate more than you have to or need to.** Make it your top priority. Communication, like nature, abhors a vacuum. In the absence of communication, people will create their own messages, typically in the form of rumor, innuendo, and gossip.
3. **Be as specific as possible in the words and phrases you use.** Most conflicts and controversies are caused by people not understanding one another. When you use specific, easy to understand words and phrases, you increase the likelihood of being understood.
4. **Supply whatever background information and reasons people need to understand changes.** General George S. Patton is quoted as saying, "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and why, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." When you introduce change, make sure people understand why the changes are being made.
5. **Be absolutely honest with all employees.** If you lie, or sugar-coat the truth, your credibility will be destroyed and, remember, the truth will always find you out.
6. **Actively share information.** One of the strongest motivators for people is to be "in on things." Hoarding information doesn't give you power, sharing it does.
7. **Talk to an employee as one adult to another (the way you would like your boss to talk with you).** Even if employees act like children, resist the temptation to treat them like children. People will live up or down to your expectations. When you treat people like adults, they are more likely to act in a mature way. When you are condescending toward people or treat them with disdain, they will feel it and resent you for it.
8. **Always solicit employee ideas, suggestions, and reactions.** Everybody wants to feel important. Everybody can feel important when somebody understands and believes in them. It doesn't take much effort to make people feel important. Little things, done deliberately, at the right time, can make a big difference. Soliciting ideas, suggestions, and reactions will not only make people feel important, you might be surprised at what you learn.
9. **Follow through, always - no exceptions.** As a manager or supervisor, you are on stage all the time. If you don't follow through, or if you drop the ball, you can expect your employees to do the same thing.
10. **Recognize the job of a manager is to remove roadblocks, irritants, and frustrations - not put them there.** You need your employees more than they need you. When you remove roadblocks, irritants, and frustrations, you help your employees become successful and you will be successful also.