

~~Make yourself
indispensable~~

Empower independent employees

“My people won’t make a move without asking me first.”

Is that you?

If so, you’re not doing your job as a manager. You’re much too busy trying to do everybody else’s job.

You’re paid to make decisions, and you’re responsible for the outcomes. But, that doesn’t mean you can’t and shouldn’t involve the people you work with in the decision-making process.

“How do you think we should handle it?” can be one of the most important things you ever say to an employee.

But, after you ask, you often need to stand aside and let them carry out the plan.

Maybe you'd like to think the whole company would fall apart if you weren't there, but you can't afford such self-indulgence. Trying to make yourself indispensable is just plain bad management.

Coach workers so well that they become confident enough to carry out plans without you and capable enough to do the job well.

When you let them take the lead, three good things happen.

1. You show your respect for your employee.
2. You show that you don't think you have to do it all.
3. You open yourself up to the possibility that they'll do the job better than you could have.

Your workers are often a lot closer to the problem than you are. They may have a much better sense of how to solve it. Give them a shot. You won't lose face; you'll gain respect.

How do you create an independent workforce? Here are the three primary guidelines:

Hire employees for independence, not subservience: You don't want a good follower. You want a potential leader, someone who makes the calls (and even questions your call at times).

Foster independence: Provide knowledge, information, and, most of all, trust. If you coach your

employees well, you won't have to correct them later.

Get out of the way: Give them room to work, to make decisions, and to accept consequences.

“You may be wasting one of your most valuable resources—your employees’ talents. The better the manager you are, the less control you need over your workers.”