

## Valuing your staff

If you are a manager and leader, you need people to manage and lead. People often tend to lump these two activities together as one job description. A big mistake. Although they are inter linked, they are separate functions and need to be treated as such or your efficiency in both will suffer.

As a manager you need to manage people and get the best out of the. You have a job to do and results count. Since you can't do everything yourself, you need people to work with you. The old fashioned way was to give instructions and make sure they were followed. This is a simplistic approach to managing people. It works, but it is only as good as the manager is. And no manager is ever perfect or knows everything. Or even has the best ideas. In fact you may often have bad ideas that backfire on you. Do you think Bill Gates never screwed up? When Microsoft introduced Internet Explorer, their whole focus was not on being better than the competition, Netscape Navigator, but on removing them from the scene. The result was allegations of unethical business practices, anti trust actions and the legacy of being a ruthless and often unprincipled company. Bill Gates is one of the world's great successes, but perhaps if he had not been so certain he was right and had listened to his staff, he would not have made that and other mistakes.

The problem that all successful managers' face is their successful track record makes them rely too much on their own judgment. In a competitive world, there are other people doing what you are and striving for the maximum success. And how you compare with them is judged not just on the high number of successes but also on the low number of failures. Having the right people on your team and keeping them engaged as partners in your efforts will allow them to contribute their thoughts and not just their efforts. You don't have to accept all they say, but having more minds to contribute to your planning and execution will increase your efficiency and success.

Making people feel valued is to make them want to give their best. When people feel that they are not just doing a job but following a vocation and growing as individuals, they push themselves to contribute. That's where your leadership comes in. You have a team of people who have to mesh together and produce. But if they feel they are just cogs in a machine, they will act like cogs - doing their jobs and nothing more. With no incentive and no hope, why bother to do more? And that does not really help you. Giving people the freedom to think, disagree, and try out new things makes them feel that their contribution is valued and creates a desire to add value. Sure it is may be a waste of time and drag you into complications you know are a waste of time, but it is the way for a leader to make a team grow, both in terms of actual results and also in achieving their potential.

Having ten people in your team who produce their monthly target without fail is safe. Having ten people who produce 90% for 6 months (lower creativity) and 120% for the other six (higher creativity) may be unsettling but at the end of the year you have 110%. It maybe a bumpy ride, but the final results make it worth while.