

# LMI Journal



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## Empower Team Players with Delegation

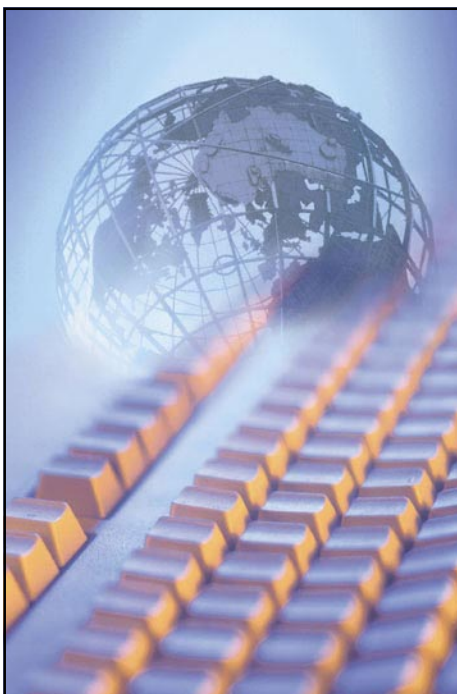
By Paul J. Meyer

Empowerment is the force that makes teamwork effective. An empowered team is significantly more productive than a group of individuals working under strict guidelines. As the people in your work group become aware that you are willing to empower them, they are more committed to the tasks you delegate.

Effective delegation is a people development and time management tool; for maximum benefits, match activities with the appropriate people according to the needs of the group and the skills and abilities of individual team members. Delegation, properly carried out, develops employees into team players. When employees are empowered, accountability and responsibility rise to a higher level.

Empowering team members through delegation involves transferring not only the responsibility for performing tasks, but also the authority, resources, rewards, and knowledge necessary to perform them. In some situations, standardization and inflexibility are essential. However, in giving assignments, recognize when teamwork and flexibility are the better approach. Em-

powering people requires you as a leader to become teacher, coach, colleague, and mentor, not just boss. Followers and peers in some cases even exceed your abilities, ideas, and expectations. Consider such a result as evidence of your personal success as a leader.



Empowerment and delegation involve inherent risk. Learn to take appropriate risks when the promised productivity payoff justifies it. When you delegate, remember that you are still accountable for results. You are responsible to upper management and to the organization as a whole for achieving results. You cannot excuse mistakes by saying, "I delegated that to someone else." Occasionally, you may need to take responsibility for mistakes made by those who report to you. But overall, you can confidently accept the risks of delegation when you choose your employees well, train them carefully, and prepare them adequately for accepting appropriate responsibility.

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### Levels of Delegation

Monitor delegation regularly and measure the progress of the work group to keep it on track, to stay in touch, and to avoid wasted time and effort. To reap the benefits of delegation and

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also avoid the pitfalls, define the following degrees of freedom according to the situation: • Act and report routinely • Act and report immediately • Seek approval, then act • Wait until told.

### Communication and Delegation

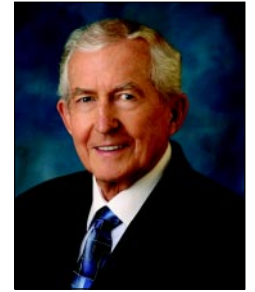
Successful delegation requires planning, careful introduction and training, commitment of all team members, and effective follow-up. Effective delegation always involves adequate communication. People accept responsibility and act when they know what you expect. Talk informally with a person before actually turning over responsibility. You might say, “I’m considering handling some procedures in a different manner in order to reach long-range departmental goals. I’d like your reaction regarding who could best handle this, perhaps even you.” This nonthreatening approach allows the person to express fears or enthusiasm about the idea of accepting delegated responsibility. You also receive their insight and ideas about how to address the project most efficiently.

Gradually turn over the responsibility. You might say something like this: “I’d like you to handle this portion of the work. Of course, I’ll work with you until the whole process goes smoothly.” The groundwork is laid for you to move gradually out of the picture. As the worker develops confidence and efficiency, move further aside by setting specific checkpoints for the employee to report on results. Provide assurance that you are available for questions whenever needed. Gradually move to more informal supervision by telling the worker to let you know whenever some problem arises. Moving up to a higher level of delegation provides more time for you and empowers the team member for increased productivity.

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Any time you delegate a responsibility, also delegate appropriate authority to act. In addition to communicating with the individual who will be assuming the duty and authority, announce the change to others who are affected that the function has been delegated and that you expect appropriate cooperation and collaboration. When you delegate responsibility to employees, you must back their

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– Paul J. Meyer



actions. If an error is made, use it as an opportunity for private coaching. Along with authority goes accountability, and the one to whom you delegate authority must be accountable to you for results. But since you are still accountable to the organization as a whole, you will want to be sure that you give adequate training and support. Delegate increasing authority and responsibility levels, and you achieve the productivity benefits of empowerment.

In many ways, empowerment embodies principles effective managers and leaders have practiced for years. Two new driving forces in business, increased diversity and high-speed change, magnify the need for empowerment. Empowering people is now indispensable for effective personal productivity and maximum team success.

## Empowered Environment

Here are several actions you can use regularly to set the stage for an empowered delegation environment:

- Think and talk in terms of “we,” not just “me.”
- Recognize that mistakes are part of the learning process.
- Replace the word “failure” with other words in your vocabulary like learning experience or test.
- Know your personal strengths and limits.
- Set healthy boundaries for your personal time and involvement based on your personal goals.
- Rotate leadership responsibility when appropriate.
- Include all contributors’ names on reports, memos, and other communication.
- Constantly communicate and repeat your reason for working together.
- Be available for others; at the same time, encourage resourcefulness and creativity. Effective delegation gives the message: “Do whatever it takes; you have the talent!”

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# Next-Level Growth



David Byrd  
President, LMI

There is a basic, initial question that I always ask leaders about their organizations; “What do you want to accomplish with this organization within the next five to ten years?” In most of the cases, I get the same answer; “I want to take this company to the next level!” However, when I ask leaders to explain how they plan to do that, I find a lot of confusion about the requirements and dynamics of next-level growth.

Next-level growth requires more than working harder, doing more, cutting expenses, or increasing sales. Next-level growth requires that an organization actually transforms

itself to a higher level of performance which would have been impossible prior to the transformation. The following is an outline of the dynamics of next level growth:

Every organization in the world has two things in common... a **Present** and a **Future**. Everything in between is defined as **Process**. Every organization has a **Process**. The quality of the **Process** determines the quality of the **Performance** of the organization, and in turn, the quality of the **Performance** of the organization determines the quality of the **Future** of the organization. When leaders decide to take-it-to-the-next-level, they must begin with **Process**.

There have been many attempts by various disciplines to create transformation through process, MBO, ISO, TQM just to name a few. These attempts have resulted in better process but not transformation. The basic reason for this failure is because all these disciplines eliminate the transformation factor... **People**.

The common denominator of every organization in the world is people. Every day people show up for work and bring with them their own unique personalities, value systems, and behaviors. The only proven discipline of next-level growth is Leadership Development at every level of the organization, from the CEO to the receptionist. When people choose to change, organizations can then transform themselves into next-level growth performance.

If you have any questions about how Effective Leadership Development can positively affect your business, give us a call for a free assessment evaluation.

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*“Next-level growth requires that an organization actually transform itself to a higher level of performance which would have been impossible prior to the transformation.”*

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Until Next Time,

David Byrd  
President, Leadership Management Institute™

# Sharing Power with Team Members

The best use of authority and power is to use them to motivate team members and help them grow. Your authority gives you the right to work with people in ways that will enhance their contribution to the organization as a whole, while your power enlists their cooperation. As you help team members identify their own personal goals, you can demonstrate to them that increasing their productivity will enable them to move closer to their personal objectives.

Authority and power work best when you establish a personal relationship with team members. A personal relationship allows you to know and understand team member goals and interests, abilities, and dreams. You can never order people to grow, to become more productive, or to change attitudes – and some people have no interest in improving themselves. Your authority, however, gives you the right to discuss these issues with them.

The dynamic qualities you develop through the judicious use of authority and power attracts the interest of your team members; they listen to what you suggest and follow your leadership. The ultimate goal of sharing power with team members is to move toward empowerment – that is, delegating power and authority to team members.

Team members are influenced not only by your authority and power, but also by the informal power exercised by individuals in the organization who might be called “informal leaders.” Sometimes these leaders command the respect of co-workers by virtue of seniority; sometimes the recognized superiority of their personal productivity attracts others to them. Alternatively, it may be a magnetic personality that serves to single out a group leader. Know who the informal group leaders are in your part of the organization. Analyze their talents and the qualities that have propelled them to the forefront. Build a positive relationship with them, based on confidence in their ability and the development of mutual respect. They will help you manage the department smoothly and efficiently.

Informal group leaders are often excellent prospects for future advancement. Delegate additional responsibility to them, train them, and reward their success. When you can delegate the power and authority to them to do your job, you are available for promotion. Some informal leaders are not interested in organizational advancement; they can be useful right where they are. Ask for their opinions about

subjects that affect the general work situation. Share some of your plans and goals; help them understand how these goals will be good for the entire team. When the time comes to present some new goal to all team members, these informal leaders will support you, and their support makes it easy to persuade team members to follow your lead.

On the other hand, the influence of informal group leaders can be both negative and destructive. Try to discover the reason for their dissatisfaction and hostility. Maybe they are underemployed or in the wrong job; perhaps they feel that their achievements have been overlooked or improperly rewarded. If, through motivation, training, or coaching, you can salvage these leaders, they will add to the effectiveness of your department. Your interest in them and willingness to help them may combine to make them your loyal supporters, and their influence can become a positive force among your team. If, however, you cannot effect any change in the attitudes of such people, you may simply have to dismiss them before they make further negative inroads on general morale. When it becomes necessary to use your authority, you must do it fairly and firmly.

Certainly, autocratic leadership gets things done more quickly, largely because it allows neither time nor opportunity for discussion. But because dictatorial leadership styles do nothing to enhance the power of the leader or develop the potential of the team member, they are best used in situations where other techniques have failed to produce results. And, at various times, further compromise is impossible. If these conditions exist, effective leaders who have developed appropriate use of authority and power should have little difficulty in “pushing the envelope” in order to obtain needed compliance with directives.

Once you establish a relationship of trust with your team members, you enjoy the increased power of their respect – not merely an increased measure of respect, but increased power as well. When you help team members to grow and improve, and when you show interest in their achievements, your enhanced authority and power give you the ability to build a team spirit that carries your part of the organization over, around, or through all sorts of obstacles. Every member of the team is eager to participate and enjoys contributing to the achievement of the work group’s goals.



# Instilling a System of Accountability

Definite, clearly communicated expectations form the basis of accountability. Employees should be educated about company policies and expected to honor them. The first step in educating employees is to provide a written employee manual. If your organization does not have one, consider producing one in your department or division. Address the problems you encounter most often. Make the policies clear and concise. Use plain language to state requirements and corresponding consequences for infractions.

As you plan policy, discuss the provisions with the person you report to and with the personnel department; discuss them with group leaders in your work force or, if yours is a small work group, with all your team members at a group meeting. Consider incorporating their suggestions. When you have drafted the policy, ask the person you report to for additional suggestions for improvement. Distribute the policy in its final form to all team members at a group meeting; explain it and answer any questions. Even if employees are not in total agreement with the policy, they are more likely to respect it if you give them an opportunity to express themselves and you answer their questions.

The second step of accountability is to enforce expectations consistently. If employees discover that one portion of the company handbook is generally ignored, they tend to ignore the rest of it as well. Company standards should be established to meet specific organizational goals. Any standard that meets that test is important enough to be enforced.

Procedures for dealing with infractions should be defined and described in the handbook, and employees should know, within broad limits, what to expect in case of a violation. Consequences should correspond to the seriousness of the offense, and may become more strict with repeated offenses. These actions are common in many organizations:

- ◆ An informal, private conversation to discuss the infraction and make sure the employee understands the expectations of your organization
- ◆ A second, more formal interview in which the employee is asked for a commitment to correct the problem within

a prescribed period of time

- ◆ A request to correct the problem written to the employee and placed in the personnel file
- ◆ A transfer to a position more commensurate with the employee's demonstrated ability and attitude
- ◆ A poor performance rating
- ◆ A passover for a raise or promotion, or a denial of special privileges
- ◆ Suspension from work without pay in order to consider the employee's position and commitment
- ◆ Termination of employment

Enforce expectations consistently. The certainty of consequences is more important than the severity. It is obviously true that people are not equal in all respects and that you cannot always treat unequal people equally. But the one case in which you must always treat everyone equally is in the enforcing of your organization's expectations.

Problems and actions taken should be recorded on the employee's information sheet that you keep for your own use – not for a permanent personnel file. Offenses, warnings, and corrective actions with the date upon which they occurred are important parts of this record. Because discipline is “training,” consider this sheet a record of the employee's training for productivity. This sheet can also be helpful to you as you prepare for

conducting the individual's performance review. Only repeated serious disciplinary problems should ever become a permanent record.

When employees know what is expected of them, have a general idea of the consequences, and can depend upon consistency in enforcement, they most likely will try to live up to established performance and behavior expectations. Since people are human, however, a team member will occasionally fail to meet organizational standards. Your job is to check facts and take appropriate action. When team members know they will be held accountable for their action, and getting the job done, they generally will do it. Your job is to make sure it happens. That is accountability.



# Redesign Attitudes with Displacement

While the most common type of affirmation is one borrowed from another source, the most powerful affirmation is one you have composed for yourself and that is specifically tailored to your goals, your plans, and your personality. While a borrowed affirmation may be better phrased or more poetic than an affirmation you compose for yourself, it may lack the element of relevance to your own personal situation. Unless the affirmation relates directly to your goals and your personal sense of values, it lacks the power to inspire change in your personality or your life.

Some people are skeptical. They cannot believe that anything they say – even repeatedly – affects what they think or do, yet such people may practice negative affirmation. For example, some people say repeatedly, “I just can’t speak before a group.” This is negative affirmation, and what is affirmed inevitably happens. Because they think failure and live by it, if they do muster up courage to attempt a speech, they botch the job. Conversely, people who say, “I can speak effectively,” believe that they can. They affirm to themselves, “I can speak before a group because I believe in what I say.” When they believe in themselves so firmly that they begin to expect to speak effectively, they do. Of course, just saying something doesn’t make it so. Affirmation is more sophisticated than that. It works because it sparks action – action that makes the expectation come alive.

Affirmation works according to the law of displacement. No matter how many negative thoughts and ideas are stored in your subconscious mind, you can displace or eliminate negative thoughts – at least for the moment – by consciously feeding your mind a positive thought. That positive thought is also stored in your subconscious mind. Many negative thoughts and ideas from the past will also remain in your memory subject to recall. If, however, positive affirmations are used with repetition, repetition, repetition, you soon begin to form new, positive thought habits. The new habits turn off old, negative thought patterns and, in effect, displace them.



The process of displacement may be illustrated with a simple experiment often demonstrated for beginning students in physics. If you drop stones into a bucketful of water, they displace an equal volume of water. When the bucket is filled with stones, very little water is left. It has been displaced. In similar fashion, a positive thought fed into your subconscious mind by repeating an affirmation displaces a negative thought. When you continue to feed positive thoughts into your mind by the repetition of affirmations, you eventually displace practically all negative thoughts, doubts, fears, and indecision.

The trick to displacing the water in the bucket – or the negative thoughts in your mind – lies in spaced repetition. Just as more and more water is displaced

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by the continued dropping in of stones, in the same way, more and more negative thoughts and habits are displaced by the constant repetition, repetition, repetition of positive ideas.

Affirmation also works for you in a manner similar to the process known in chemistry as osmosis, the flow or absorption of a solution through a semipermeable membrane. Repeated exposure to ideas results in mental osmosis or absorption of ideas through repeated exposure. It works like this:

- 1st Exposure: “I reject it because it conflicts with my preconceived ideas.”
- 2nd Exposure: “Well, I understand it, but I can’t accept it.”
- 3rd Exposure: “I agree with the idea but have reservations about its use.”
- 4th Exposure: “You know, that idea expresses exactly what I have been thinking.”
- 5th Exposure: “I used that idea today – it’s terrific!”
- 6th Exposure: “I gave that idea to a friend yesterday. In the truest sense of the word, the idea now belongs to me.”

When you understand the processes of displacement and mental absorption of ideas, you will trust in the power of affirmation to work for you.

# Examining the Time of an Effective Leader

The time of a leader, productively spent, is a valuable commodity. Initially, the leader is hired for particular knowledge or expertise in the field – accounting, engineering, marketing, etc. However, as the leader moves up in the organization, a larger and larger percentage of time must be spent managing rather than pursuing operating tasks. The Ideal Time Structure chart below suggests an appropriate division of time for those at various levels in the organization.

IDEAL TIME STRUCTURE		
Chief Executive Officer	90%	10%
Executive Manager	Managing	
Middle Manager		Operating
First Line Supervisor	30%	70%

As a leader earns more responsibility, careful judgment must be used regarding hands-on activities and projects versus those the leader turns over through empowerment. The degree of required control depends on the particular area of responsibility.

Investment of the leader's time in many instances is perfectly appropriate and even necessary. Like the conscientious parent who constantly faces the dilemma of encouraging children to take initiative, while still providing appropriate safety guards, the effective team leader faces the need to balance managing and operating. The two extremes, excessive empowerment and crippling control, can be avoided by applying sensitivity and balance – often a tricky task. Recognize the requirement to free adequate time for managing high payoff activities, yet never completely lose touch with operational activities. Direct involvement and support from leaders communicate to team members that their work is valued and significant to the overall organization.

Directing the activity of a group of people involves choosing what to do, then planning and using all the



available knowledge about how to do it. Increased productivity in group efforts hinges on improving “how” to do an appropriate “what.” Directing people and operations becomes progressively more efficient when you give adequate attention to evaluating current procedures, planning for improvement, and communicating with team members.

Deadlines and other outside pressures often tempt leaders to make shortsighted, snap decisions that may haunt their organizations later. Achieving the highest levels of efficiency in directing the activity of others, however, involves digging for options and information, not falling for the trap of using what has always been used or being satisfied with partial information. Instead of making a snap decision, make a temporary one. Then follow up with thorough planning and full communication to reach a final decision for future action in similar cases. This satisfies the need for immediate action and leadership direction and also

preserves the opportunity to implement the best solution when more time is available. This is especially important when the issue involves numerous people or complex issues. Productive decision making requires evaluation of the broad picture.

The next time you face planning a complex activity under time pressure, try this strategy. Commit yourself to an intermediate plan and communicate to others that you are seeking a more comprehensive long-term solution. Seek input from others. You will be amazed at the momentum you generate, and the satisfactory results you achieve in the long run. You also refine your skill at balancing your time between managing and operating.

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*“Directing people and operations becomes progressively more efficient when you give adequate attention to evaluating current procedures, planning for improvement, and communicating with team members.”*

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# Bridging the Gap Between Potential and Performance

Since 1966, Leadership Management Institute™ has been bridging the gap between potential and performance by helping organizations and individuals evaluate their strengths and opportunities through implementation of the unique and proven LMI Process™.

The LMI Process™ ...

- Develops leaders who, in turn, empower their people to use their untapped talents and abilities.
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