How to wield power for higher staff productivity

Use of coercive power results in staff resistance that might hurt company profit. PHOTO | FOTOSEARCH

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IN SUMMARY

Inside organisations, employees can quickly name the leaders who might force their power over others.

Such a scenario clearly utilises legitimate power. But if you could only implement two types of leadership power in your company, which of the five options would you choose?

Research shows us that expert power and referent power lead to employee commitment. Legitimate power and reward power results in employee compliance with your goals. Then coercive power builds employee resistance against you. Clearly employee commitment leads to better company performance than mere staff compliance.

Bosses should avoid employee resistance, obviously, at all costs. So, as a leader in your company, lead through referent power and expert power that build employee commitment that yields higher firm profits.

How do you improve your referent and expert power? Researcher Florence Stone shows us practical steps: Believe in your team members’ ability to succeed. Exercise patience with your employees. Give staff time to learn. Provide direction and structure. Teach employees new skills in small easy to master steps. Ask employees meaningful questions that challenge them to think...

Focus on objective results. Then never forget to acknowledge good performance.

Want to rate your own boss’ power? You may take an assessment adapted by Dr Andrew Dubrin based on Journal of Psychology methodology by searching on Google.

Now, if we look at examples from the public space, write down which of the five leadership powers you believe the following leaders primarily utilised or utilise.

President Uhuru Kenyatta
Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga
Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai
President John Magufuli
Safaricom CEO Bob Collymore
Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump

Answers: both President Kenyatta and Mr Odinga utilise referent power as the source of their power. They both do well interpersonaly with voters and have high likability ratings.

The late Maathai wielded vast expert power. President Magufuli of Tanzania exerts his legitimate power to bring in sweeping changes. Mr Collymore arguably uses his power of giving rewards to motivate his employees.
Finally, Mr Trump famously threatens to sue detractors, which highlights negative coercive power usage.

Discuss and debate Kenyan power with other Business Daily readers through #KenyaPower on Twitter.

Stay tuned for the next USIU-Business Daily Public Lecture on professional writing on Saturday, September 24 at 2pm.

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