

## You're Not the Boss of ME! Making Friends With People and Processes

The old days of managing-by-coercive-authority are rapidly disappearing. Successful organizations (especially rapidly *growing* ones) are becoming increasingly complex, requiring managers to lead *across* the traditional department and divisional boundaries. This new environment calls for managers with special skills: *...who excel at collaborating and at leveraging informal sources of power, and who relish the high energy and creative exchange of ideas that characterize such teamwork.*<sup>1</sup>

### **Informal Power—What's THAT???**

Informal power comes from personal influence and respect. It is the substance of *real* leadership in the organization of today. It is the leadership that you must exert when you are dealing with people who don't report to you. (To be honest, it is also central to the leadership you must exert when you are dealing with your own direct reports—people who *do* report to you!)

### **Who ARE These People?**

The individuals I am referring to are workers who are connected with the organizational processes that support your work and the work of your team. They might be in accounting, marketing, customer service, parts, shipping—anywhere your work intersects with the other departments or divisions in your organization. You find them by mapping your work and seeing where people are involved at key “choke” points where you must relinquish direct control and rely on others to perform key functions. Strictly speaking, they are not *formal* members of your team because they don't report to you. But you rely on them to support the work that your team does, and so they are *informal* cohorts whose productivity is just as important to your success as the work of any other team member.

### **Why Should I Do What YOU Say?**

Because they are not your subordinates, you have no direct authority over them. Without that leverage (i.e. *I'm in charge of you...*) you must develop a relationship of *influence* with them that is based on mutual respect, common values, collaborative support, and universally-embraced organizational vision. That means the other person does what you want them to do because:

1. They respect you (as you do them...)
2. They hold the same values as you do (excellence, customer service, safety, profitability...)
3. You support them and their interests (i.e. you do what *they* need you to do for *them*.)
4. You both embrace the organization's vision with equal passion.

### **Build Influence By Building Rapport**

You begin building influence by cultivating a friendly collegial relationship with these key individuals in other departments. Put aside any stereotypes about them that the “grapevine” has created, and treat them as human beings who are valued colleagues. Think of them as honorary members of your own team—they function in that capacity already! So take time to get to know them as people, and find their preferences for recognition and appreciation (I'll have some suggestions for this a bit later in this guide).

**The Personal Trainer** is a resource for growing leaders produced by Dr. Jim Dyke, the Founder and Director of **Corporate Leadership Initiatives, Inc.**—an organization dedicated to equipping men and women with skills and principles pertinent to the role and life of a transformational leader of the 21st century. This is a specially-designed tool for personal reflection and discussion that will help you and your team apply the ideas and principles presented in the matching edition of the newsletter **Leadership Tracks**. Log on to **www.CLInonline.com** to discover more ways **Corporate Leadership Initiatives, Inc.** can bring its resources and expertise to your organization and help your people become better leaders and better followers. Copyright 2020 James R. Dyke — all rights reserved.

## Bond With Their Boss

Get their supervisor in on this process as well. Their boss plays just as important a role as they do—and you never want to position yourself as going over the head of another colleague! Ask for a time when the three of you can meet to talk about your needs and theirs. Position your discussion as a collaborative effort to support the *organization's* key vision, interests, values, and goals. In other words, don't make the conversation about what *you* want or what *they* want—focus on *what the client or customer needs*. Then you can all drill down to some specifics that will help you all work together for maximum impact.

## Get To The Point: The Process

Make this conversation a learning experience for *you*. Make the point that you are there to learn as much as you can about the support process that this worker and supervisor are facilitating. So...

1. Have them describe the details of the process itself.
2. Find out what they need from you and your team in order to make their job easier and more efficient.
3. Ask about any problems or obstacles they face in doing their work, and how you can help by addressing those problems or preventing them altogether.
4. Determine a realistic expectation for their work and their support.
5. Negotiate comfortable lead times and do-able deadlines.
6. Make sure you communicate your commitment to work with them and to support their interests and needs.
7. When you can, find out about the worker's preferences for expressions of appreciation and recognition. You will want to tap into these later on, and even connect them with your co-worker's personal interests or hobbies.

Now... take this information back to your team!

## Connect the Dots

Fill in the details of your project planning with your newfound information. Add the deadlines to your PERT or GANTT charts with accurate allowances for scheduling and completion. Bring your team up to speed with what they will need to do to work collaboratively and effectively with the people in the other department. Keep your eye on things to give needed support and to make sure that everything works according to plan. When it all comes together successfully, be ready to express appreciation and recognition appropriately. (That's the finishing touch!) If you've done your homework, you'll be able to express your appreciation in a way that really "connects" meaningfully with your informal team members from the other division.

## We'll Help

Use the form in this learning guide to help you apply the concepts and record your insights. We've filled out a copy with sample information, so you will know better how to use it. (You have our permission to photocopy it and use it with your team).

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> *Hiring Smart for Competitive Advantage*, Harvard Business Press, 2006, p.3.

# PROCESS PLANNING FORM

**OUTCOME** What end result do I want?

*Vendor Checks Cut*

**PROCESS REQUIREMENTS** What do they need from me?

*Payment Request Form Z100 filled out accurately  
Hand in form by Monday noon - get check by Friday noon  
Signed authorization required for amounts over \$10,000  
Heads up if we have more requests than usual*

**PERSON** Who is doing the actual work, and what are good ways to say "thanks"?

*Diane in Finance—  
She is a scrap-booker - gift cards for supplies are good  
Likes decorator candles  
Written notes good*

**SUPERVISOR** Who is the Manager in charge, and how should we say "thanks?"

*Chet—  
Verbally—in private and at division meetings  
Notes to Finance V.P. - Chet's boss*

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**SUPERVISOR** Who is the Manager in charge, and how should we say “thanks?”