

Developing Management Skills

Chapter 5: Gaining Power and Influence

Odes to Power

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. – *Lord Acton*

Power has only one duty – to secure the social welfare of the People. – *Benjamin Disraeli*


Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. – *Mao Tse-Tung*

I hope our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us, that the less we use our power the greater it will be. – *Thomas Jefferson*

Power? It's like a Dead Sea fruit. When you achieve it, there is nothing there. – *Harold MacMillan*

Power is given only to those who dare to lower themselves and pick it up. – *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

Power is the great aphrodisiac. – *Henry Kissinger*



Power: the capacity to influence behavior.

- The effective use of power and politics is a critical managerial skill.
- A manager's power comes from helping others accomplish their tasks.
- This usually requires political clout.

A Negative View of Power

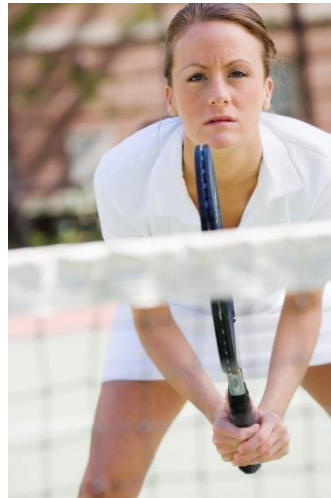
Power has become a four-letter word.



A Positive View of Power

- Power can lead to great good
- It is the means through which managers accomplish work
- It is the lack of power that can lead to unhappiness

“Power has such a bad name that many good people persuade themselves they want nothing to do with it. . . . To say a leader is preoccupied with power is like saying that a tennis player is preoccupied with making shots her opponent cannot return”



- J.W. Gardner

Table 5.1 Indicators of a Manager's Upward and Outward Power

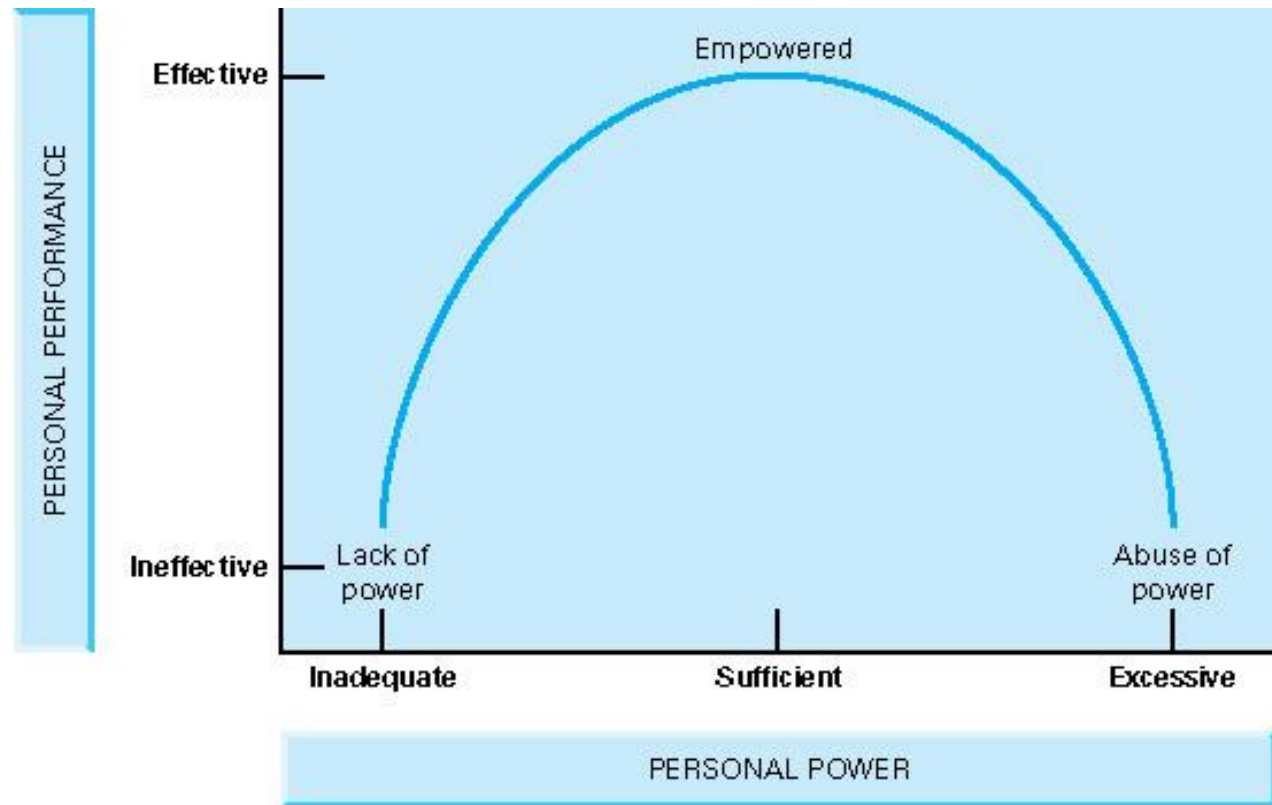
Powerful managers can

- Intercede favorably on behalf of someone in trouble.
- Get a desirable placement for a talented subordinate.
- Get approval for expenditures beyond the budget.
- Get items on and off the agenda at policy meetings.
- Get fast access to top decision makers.
- Maintain regular, frequent contact with top decision makers.
- Acquire early information about decisions and policy shifts.

Characteristics that Derail Manager's Careers

- Insensitive to others
- Cold, aloof, and arrogant
- Betraying others trust
- Unable to delegate to others or to build a team
- Overly dependent on others

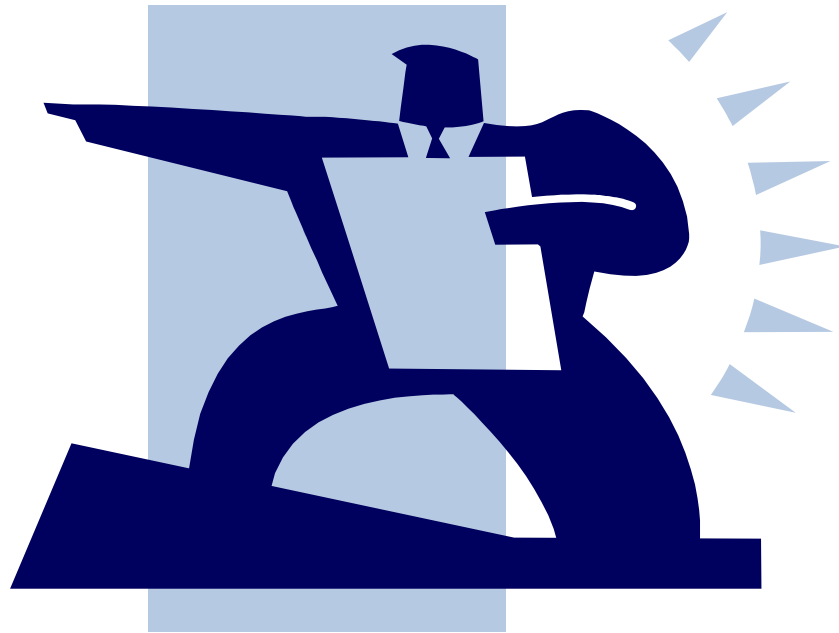
Personal Power: Stepping Stone or Stumbling Block




Current Trends

- Organizations are now flatter
- Technology has helped decentralized the flow of information
- Organizational boundaries have become blurred
- Increase in smaller firms

These trends have contributed to the use of empowerment, where power is based on managers' abilities to perform, not their formal position.





Human Capital: an individual's abilities and competencies.

Social Capital: a person's social connections within and outside an organization.

Types of Power

High social capital (which is related to position power) puts employees in a better position to capitalize on human capital (which is related to personal power).

Sources of Personal Power

- Expertise
- Personal Attraction
- Effort
- Legitimacy

Expertise

Work related knowledge; comes from education, self-directed learning, and experience.



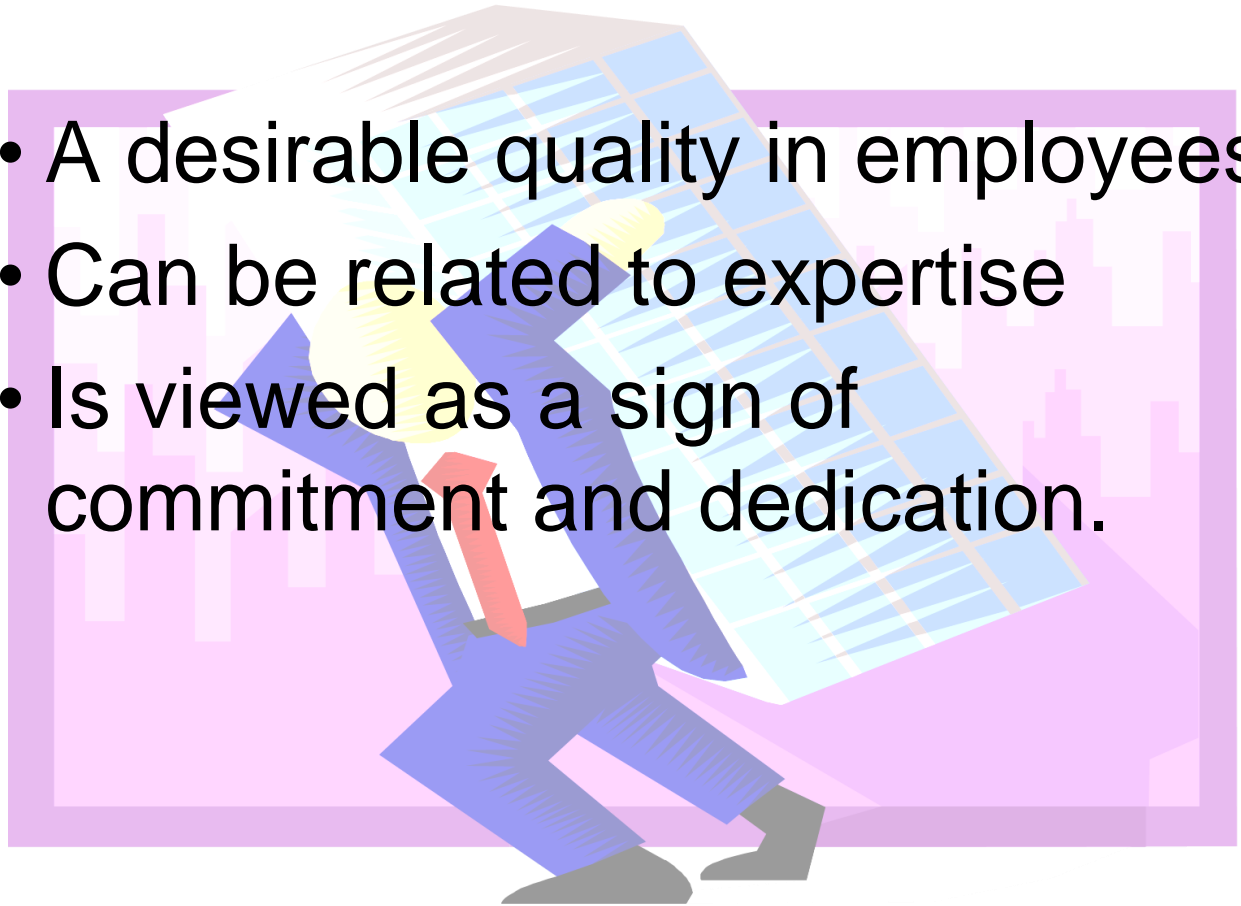
Personal Attraction

Based on charisma, agreeable behavior and physical characteristics.



Effort

- A desirable quality in employees
- Can be related to expertise
- Is viewed as a sign of commitment and dedication.



Legitimacy

Taking action congruent with the prevailing value system.

Sources of Position Power

- Centrality
- Flexibility
- Visibility
- Relevance

Centrality

Access to information in a communication network. Power is accrued via horizontal and vertical relationships of one's location in the network.

Flexibility

Freedom to exercise judgment; flexibility is determined by the type of work assignments, the life cycle of the position and the reward structure.

Visibility

Interacting with influential people in the organization such as senior officials, decision makers, and informal leaders.

Relevance

Working on the central objectives and issues in an organization. Relevancy is impacted by the employee's department and the activities they perform.

Transforming Power into Influence

- Power is a necessary precondition of influence
- Influential people have power, but not all powerful people have influence

The Three R's Model

- **Retribution:** Force others to do what you say (coercion & intimidation)
- **Reciprocity:** Help other want to do what you say (bargaining & ingratiation)
- **Reason:** Show others that it makes sense to do what you say (facts & appeal to values)

When to Use Retribution

- Unequal power (in influencer's favor)
- Commitment and quality not important
- Tight time constraints
- Serious violations
- Specific, unambiguous requests
- Resistance to request is likely

When to Use Reciprocity

- Parties are mutually dependent
- Each party has valued resources
- Adequate time for negotiating
- Established exchange norms exist
- Commitment to goals not critical
- Needs are specific and short-term

When to Use Reason

- Adequate time for extensive discussion
- Common goals
- Parties share mutual respect
- Parties share ongoing relationship

Exercising Upward Influence or Managing the “boss”

Issue Selling: convincing your boss that a particular issue is so important it requires his or her attention.

Neutralizing Retribution Strategies

- Use countervailing power to shift dependence to interdependence
- Confront the exploiting individual directly
- Actively resist

Neutralizing Reciprocity Strategies

- Examine the intent of any gift or favor-giving activity
- Confront individuals who are using manipulative bargaining tactics
- Refuse to bargain with individuals who use high-pressure tactics

Neutralizing Reason Strategies

- Explain the adverse effects of compliance on performance
- Defend your personal rights
- Firmly refuse to comply with the request

Behavioral Guidelines

- Enhance personal power by improving your expertise, personal attraction, effort and legitimacy
- Increase position power by improving your centrality, flexibility, visibility, and relevance

Behavioral Guidelines

- Use reason, reciprocity, and retribution strategies appropriately and, when necessary, neutralize their use upon you
- Learn to sell issues to your superiors