



# The Advisory Alliance 60-Second Email™

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## ***Four Easy Ways to Empower Your People***

*November 30, 2010*

*In this month's 60-Second Email™, we suggest some specific, easy ways for leaders to empower their people.*

"Empowers" is one of those words mediocre consultants just love. You can drive a bus through the breadth of its all-encompassing definition:

"Mary/Bob Leader, as your trusted consultant, I can unequivocally state that you need to empower your people more."

The consultant beams, and reflects silently: "Most impressive. Can I take the afternoon off now?"

"Empowers" is right up there with "leverage" and your daily horoscope: we all have a vague sense of what they imply, but if you examine them more closely, it gets pretty ugly real fast. Like making sausage, it's the details that are messy.

[Side note: The next time someone tells you to "leverage" something, stop them immediately and ask them for specific details. Pin them down to something a tad more concrete.]

True, empowering your directs and even your peers (and even your boss, sometimes) is good to do, and it is important.

But how do you do it? How do you go about "empowering" your people?

Here are four specific recommendations:



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1. Get out of their way.

There are likely some people working for you who could do more, if you just let them. I know, they may not do as good a job as you could, but it's more than worth it to let them do it anyway. Surely you can remember when someone had faith in you, and let you initiate something before you were perfectly ready to take it on. And to be clear, I said "Get out of their way"; I didn't say "Abandon them."

2. Develop their skills and capabilities.

Okay, this is for those of your directs who, if you did get out of their way, they'd still be standing there, not knowing what to do. In this case, they're truly not ready. So build their skill sets. Take a look at where they currently are in terms of their capabilities, and where they should be. What are they lacking that you think they should have? Then develop it. And don't tell them to go just read a book. Give them mini-assignments that help them build the needed skill/capability. And stay close to them so you can coach them frequently: "The way you did this was great; tell me how you went about it, and why you chose to do it that way." And "That wasn't so great; why do you think you didn't succeed like you and I expected? What do you need to do differently next time?"

3. Build their confidence.

I firmly believe you can't motivate someone; true, long-term motivation has got to come from within. Full stop, though: you can encourage those who have doubts about their capabilities. We've all been there: it's your first time taking on something, and you're not sure if you can pull it off. It's amazing the impact a trusted colleague, mentor, or senior leader has when he/she is there to provide confidence in our abilities. And I'm not talking about blind confidence; I'm talking about informed confidence, the kind that we know is based on logic and evidence of our past accomplishments. Getting the right "push" from someone we respect, can make the difference between hesitating to start, and starting down an unknown but potentially rewarding path.



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4. Hold them accountable.

By getting them to deliver on time and with the expected quality, you help them experience success and help them personally understand what it means to be a professional. To the extent you provide them the both expectations and the guard rails for superior performance, they are more likely to achieve it.

Great leaders do empower. And when they do it, they are deliberate, specific, and purposeful...something many a mediocre consultant should take note of and "leverage".

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How do you empower your people? What have you done or seen that truly works? Share your insights and examples with other readers on our [blog](#).

You can access all of our 60-Second Emails (TM), including the most recent issue, *Are You Paying the Price for Your Slow Burn?*, via this [link](#).

Until next month,

*David*

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