

Power and dependency



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Section B: The Power-Dependency Relationship In order to understand power, one must understand that it comes from dependency. Power and dependence have a causal relationship in that power creates dependence and vice versa. In addition, power and dependence are positively correlated because the degree of power A has over B is equal to the degree of dependence A has on B (Molm, 1990). Therefore, the more power A has over B, the more dependent B will be on A. “ Dependence increases when the resource [one controls] is important, scarce, and non-substitutable (Robbins & Judge, 2013)”.

To illustrate this point, consider the following: 1. Importance - If A places great value on a resource B controls, then A's dependence on B increases. For example in the given scenario, Employee 1 places great value on receiving a large bonus that will be used to go on a much needed vacation. Since the bonus depends on the performance review rating given by the manager, Employee 1's dependence on the manager increases. This can also be demonstrated in Employee 3's case. The sales team places high importance on increasing sales. Employee 3 used referent power to convince the team to try the new idea and was selected to lead the team.

The sales team is now dependent on Employee 3 to be their leader and generate increased sales. 2. Scarcity - If A has sole control over a resource that B considers valuable or important then B will be solely dependent on A. For instance, Employee 2 is the only CPA in the company and as a result is the only employee able to prepare financial statements. CPA's are scarce in the company therefore the accounting manager's dependence on Employee

2 increases. The manager is solely dependent on Employee 2 to complete this vital task for the company.

Another example can be seen in Employee 1's case. Employee 1's manager has sole control over the performance review rating which means that he or she is solely dependent on the manager. 3. Non-Substitutability – The less alternatives there are for a resource which A controls and B requires, the more B will be dependent on A for that resource. The Accounting Manager over Employee 2 has Legitimate Power to approve the shortened workweek and that power cannot be substituted by any other employee in the company. As a result, Employee 2 is solely dependent on the manager to approve the schedule.