

# Five sources of leader power essay



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(a) Explain FIVE (5) sources in which leader power has been identified.

Include specific examples of each source of power to support your answer.

(15 marks) Power is a measure of a person's ability to control the environment around them, including the behavior of other persons.

Power is not exclusive to leaders and managers; subordinates also possess a degree of power. The five sources of leader power that has been identified are legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, referent power and expert power. The meaning of legitimate power means that the leader has the right or the authority to tell others what to do and employees are obligated to obey with legitimate orders from the leader. For example: whenever the boss asked his employee to do something, the employee must obey it as long as it's under the laws. When a staff person lacks of the authority to give an order to a particular manager that means that the staff has no legitimate power over the manager. The second power, reward power relies on the promise of or the ability to deliver a reward in return for desired behavior.

The challenge for leaders is to understand what is of value to each follower, and when and how to deliver rewards in meaningful, sustainable, and practical ways. For example, a manager works hard to get recognition from the boss but if the company dictates that everyone receive the same recognition then a leader's power decreases because he or she is unable to give the recognition that the manager wants. Coercive power is the power that comes from a person's authority to punish. From the perspective of followers, it's one of the most obvious types of power a leader has. However good leaders use coercive power only as a last resort: In today's

sophisticated and complex workplace, excessive use of coercive power unleashes unpredictable and destabilizing forces which can ultimately undermine the leader using it. For instance, a manager has less coercive power if, say, a union contract limits his or her ability to punish.

A manager implements an absenteeism policy that administers disciplinary actions to offending the employees. The fourth power is referent power. The leader with this power has personal characteristics that appeal to others and people comply due to admiration, personal liking, a desire for approval, or a desire to be like the leader. For example, young, friendly and ambitious managers emulate the work habits and personal styles of a successful executive. An executive who is disliked and incapable, and unskilled has little referent power.

Last but not least, expert power is where followers do what they're asked because they respect the leader's knowledge and expertise and, because of such, trust him or her to give the best guidance. People comply because they believe in, can learn from, or can otherwise gain from the expertise. For instance, a marketing manager gives some tips to her employees how to market the products well and the employees will listen to his or her tips because of her efficiency on that area.