

Personal power essay sample



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Personal power is based on the characteristics of an individual rather than from the position the individual has in an organization. There are many ways managers try to develop their personal power to become more effective managers. Three main characteristics of personal power are expertise, rational persuasion and reference. A manager trying to be more effective would definitely try to develop these characteristics to be able to use their power more effectively.

Expert power is having the power, knowledge, and experience of judgment that subordinates need. A person with expert power is able to control an individual's behavior through knowledge. A subordinate is more apt to obey without question a supervisor or manager that has expert power due to the fact the subordinate is able to trust the knowledge and expertise of the manager. A subordinate would be less apt to obey a manager that does not have as much knowledge. Expert power is an advantage to the manager, as the manager does not have to be too concerned with the employee the employee understands the assignment and trust the manager's expertise. If the subordinate knows the manager is very knowledgeable of the assignment, the employee is apt to do a better job on the assignment.

Rational persuasion is another characteristic of personal power. "Rational persuasion is the ability to control another's behavior because through the individual's efforts, the person accepts the desirability of an offered goal and a reasonable way of achieving it" (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2005, p. 273). In order for a manager to use rational persuasion, the manager must have established trust with the employee.

Here are a few suggestions for a manager building trust with employees. A manager must always honor social contracts with employees whether the contracts are implied or explicit. This is a sure way for the manager to gain the trust of the employee. A manager should also respect the employees and the uniqueness of the employees, as well as try to prevent harm to the employees. Once a manager has the trust of the employees, the manager is able to exercise rational persuasion effectively.

Referent power is another characteristic of personal power. Referent power is defined as the ability to control another person's behavior due to the fact the person wants to identify with the source of power. Managers with referent power usually have a great deal of charisma. Subordinates want to please the manager and may take on characteristics of the manager. The subordinates usually like the managers with referent power and obey the manager, not for what the subordinate will get in return. A manager's referent power can be enhanced when the manager taps into the moral arenas and give the subordinates a sense of a loftier future.

It is the manager's responsibility to develop personal power. Unlike positional power, personal power is what is within the individual and can be taken to any organization. Personal power is a part of the individual and the characteristics are a part of the person. Office politics does affect power in the office. "The very nature of office politics is strategy, which differs from gaining advantage, whereas gossip can be a purely social activity" (Personnel Today 2006). Politics and power are essential on today's business world.

References:

" How to? (managing office politics)." Personnel Today (Oct 17, 2006): NA.

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