



How Your Bossing Style Leads to Bad Employee Performance

By Peter Economy

Feel like your team is under performing? Growing frustrated with how results aren't meeting your expectations? Are your employees always missing deadlines, and simply falling short of producing the goals you hope to achieve for your projects or initiatives?

Watch out - before you blame one more employee for an under performing result, you should know that it might actually be your bossing style that is the problem, not your employees.

According to a new study conducted at University College London, researchers have determined that, when someone gives us an order, we simply feel less responsible for our actions, no matter how important they may individually be. The study notes: "Many good people get convinced to do something bad that they are unwilling to do because they actually feel less responsible for their own actions and painful consequences."

In the study, the researchers measured one's "sense of agency" in order to explore a change in perception when someone reacts with another person - either on orders, or of their own accord. Unsurprisingly, actions executed that were not the result of mandated orders from the boss were much more effective in real life than those taken by employees who were under the influence of some form of coercion by a superior.

Coercion was found by the researchers to lead to a small but significant increase in the perceived time interval between the original action and the outcome. Thus, it appeared to take longer to complete a task given to someone through an order. On a neurological level, coercion is actually found to reduce neural processing of one's own actions, and the potential impacts - both positive and negative - of their respective execution.

Long story short, when you issue orders and boss around your people, employee disengagement will increase and you'll get poorer results.

Instead of bossing your people around, tell them what needs to be done, and then allow them to decide for themselves the best way to do it. Avoid the temptation to micromanage, and instead coach and support your people. When you do that, the results can be simply dazzling.

While Peter Economy has spent the better part of two decades of his life slugging it out mano a mano in the management trenches, he is now a full-time ghostwriter and best-selling author of more than 85 books -- including *Managing for Dummies*, *Everything I Learned About Life I Learned in Dance Class*, and *User Story Mapping: Discover the Whole Story, Build the Right Product* -- with total sales in excess of two million copies. He has also served as associate editor for *Leader to Leader* for more than 12 years, where he has worked on projects with the likes of Jim Collins, Frances Hesselbein, Marshall Goldsmith, and many other top management and leadership thinkers.

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