

Transform Your Organization with Facilitative Leadership

By Glenn Brome

Glenn is a leadership expert, professional speaker and author who pulls from his solid background as a leader in motivating people to achieve superior results. To purchase the book "Facilitative Leadership" or to book Glenn as a speaker visit www.GlennBrome.com.

Copyright © 2006 by Glenn Brome Excerpt from the Facilitative Leader (Outskirts Press) provided by Glenn Brome.

Linkage
Unleash your full potential.

This excerpt of the book "Facilitative Leadership" is provided by Glenn Brome.

So, facilitative leadership: is leading by committee ... not!

It is not about getting everyone together and asking, "What do you and you think?" Everything cannot be decided via committee! Especially if your work involves things like law enforcement or the military. The front lines are not the place to take a 'straw poll'. Even as I say this, and even in those aforementioned operations, there are times when a leader can, and should get people together to talk about how to improve the operation; by genuinely asking for input from all levels. That is what facilitative leadership is about.

For this process to work, the leader must be successful at creating an atmosphere where people not only feel comfortable contributing ideas and suggestions, but where the leader actually acts on that input.

Acting on input does not mean doing everything the group tells you to do. It does mean making it clear to the group that their input is valued by defining how that input will be used. Many times a leader will give the impression that if the team members give honest input, they will be given their 'marching orders'. This is why the leader must clarify prior to asking for input how that input will be used. For instance, let the group know if you are:

Just asking for ideas and you (the leader) will make the final decision

Asking for ideas and you (the leader) will discuss options with the group again prior to making the final decision.

Requesting input so final decision will be made together as a team

Requiring input and the team will make the final decision after reviewing it with you.

Giving input to the team and the team will tell you what the final decision is.

These are just examples of how to explain your intentions when involving direct reports in the decision-making process. The added advantage of this clarity is that it is another critical step in building respect, trust and rapport.

This model is the strategic outgrowth of the changing role of leadership.

Back in the day, and hopefully this does not mean last week for you ... the leader stood in the middle of everything and directed the team with one-way communication. Essentially that leader would say, "jump" and the followers would need to know how high.

As this leader progresses she/he allows for two-way communication, but the leader is still in the middle directing the activities of the group.

Continuing this progression, the leader steps out of the middle - and becomes a part of the team. This also allows for better communication - actually between team members. The leader is still responsible but does not 'push' her/his people, they tend to 'pull', to get people to follow them - not to push and micro-manage them.

As the leader progresses even further, they can actually step away from the day-to-day aspects of the area. This affords even more communication between the members of the team. Again, you cannot do this until you have helped the team members interact with each other on a 'level

playing field'. This is why you should be familiar with the elements in this book that can help you build those essential skills for your subordinates - so you can be free to work on the more strategic elements of your job, instead of the tactical.

The skill required for this process is critical because the typical leader's area of span and control is not retracting, it's expanding! So you will be required to 'run' multiple departments, and that cannot be done effectively if you are 'stuck' in the middle of one trying to direct everything.

Now, keep in mind, when you step away do not disengage! Because you cannot expect what you don't inspect'. So, as you have allowed for the skills of your teams to be sufficient enough for you to 'step away', you must be accessible and continue to coach and hold everyone accountable.

Facilitative leaders also have courage. Courage is exemplified by that leader that has the ability to not fold under pressure. Take this situation; you have been coaching a direct report on leading an important project. 'fast forward': the project does not reach its target. Your boss calls you in and asks, "what the h_ _ _ happened?!" Most people in that situation would start to explain about how they have been coaching a member of their team, blah. Blah, blah ... wrong answer! A facilitative leader would have the courage to say something like, "I am responsible, and I will make sure, that doesn't happen again..." now that takes courage. You don't 'turn the person in' to the boss. You are ultimately responsible for your group's output, so act like it!

Now, you do have some conversations with that direct report about what happened. Clearly there were some miscues during the 'coaching' process that need to be revisited. Keep in mind, during these 'discussions' that it is and was a two-way street. It is the employee's responsibility to accomplish the goals and it is your responsibility to be sure your people are on-track.

Another essential ability a facilitative leader possesses is their capacity to 'take counsel'. They have the ability to listen to multiple points of view, including those who typically do not agree with them. This is a powerful trait because you tend to have more complete input, thus making better decisions. To do this, a leader must be able to capture the key kernels of information. They have to be able to maintain bridges between people and create an atmosphere where people share information with each other - largely because they have earned respect, even from people who usually do not see things the same way.

When one has mastered these skills they are recognized as a facilitative leader.

Linkage

Linkage is a global organizational development company that specializes in leadership development. We provide clients around the globe with integrated solutions that include strategic consulting services, customized leadership development and training experiences, tailored assessment services, and benchmark research. Linkage's mission is to connect high-performing leaders and organizations to the futures they want to create.

With a relentless commitment to learning, Linkage also offers conferences, institutes, summits, open-enrollment workshops, and distance learning programs on leading-edge topics in leadership, management, human resources, and organizational development. More than 200,000 leaders and managers have attended Linkage programs since 1988.

Linkage
Burlington, MA
781.402.5555
info@linkageinc.com