

Influence Scenarios

In the scenarios provided, we examine three situations where individuals at various levels within a company may feel a lack of power and an inability to affect their circumstances and/or their team.

As you review each scenario, consider how you would advise each person to increase their influence and assist them in attaining their work objectives. Take notes of your thoughts.

SCENARIO 1

An executive is experiencing challenges in moving the organization forward due to the need to focus on managing day-to-day issues and tasks.

John is now the CEO, which is the pinnacle of his career. He is extremely happy about this recent promotion. It is a well-deserved recognition for his hard work managing different departments. He gained valuable experience and knowledge by working in various roles. John is known for being a great manager with innovative ideas and an entrepreneurial spirit. He is excited to bring these qualities to his new role and drive the company's progress.

After a few months, John's enthusiasm has diminished. Instead of leading change and implementing innovative ideas, he is faced with numerous restrictions. He is required to comply with government regulations, negotiate with union officials, abide by labor statutes, meet the demands of a corporate board for increased accountability, and satisfy shareholders who expect immediate results.

He is currently focused on handling the details and does not have time for long-term or strategic planning. He is primarily dealing with immediate issues to maintain the company's current state, rather than igniting inspiration within individuals and improving the company's performance.

The operational focus has disconnected him from the daily activities in the company. He feels isolated and believes that he is only being fed information that aligns with his preferences. He has to withhold certain information from the team, leading to distrust among some members. The saying "It's lonely at the top" now holds true for him.

Now there are rumors circulating that suggest he may face termination. In response, he has implemented stricter controls and limited access even further. He has embarked on a negative trajectory that is becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

Questions:

What steps can John take to regain influence?

Your Answer:

SCENARIO 2

A Front-Line Supervisor feels that company rules and regulations are overseeing his team, rather than himself.

Tim became a supervisor less than a year ago. He was initially happy about his promotion. However, things took a negative turn quickly. He had hoped that this position would lead to upward growth in his company, but it now seems like a dead end.

He often finds himself in a difficult position, trying to balance his team's needs and the expectations of his superiors. Unfortunately, he only seems to get attention when something goes wrong, leaving nobody completely satisfied.

The company has strict controls and policies that limit his ability to customize his responses to meet his team's needs. Essentially, there is a standardized approach to doing things: the company's way.

In order to manage, Tim has become more stringent and has implemented additional rules to ensure tasks are completed correctly. Due to receiving only negative attention when something goes wrong, he has adopted a similar approach in his interactions with his team and often forgets to acknowledge their achievements.

The team has been negatively affected by the increased rigidity and focus on rules and regulations, leading to feelings of being unappreciated and resentful. As a result, productivity has been declining.

Questions:

What would be your advice for Jim?

Your Answer:

SCENARIO 3

The Communications Specialist had hoped that her job would allow her to be closely involved with her organization's activities, but instead she feels disconnected and excluded.

Cath has been with the organization for two years working as a Press Officer. Her career plan was to use this position to gain visibility within the company, understand the industry and business, and transition into a general management role. However, she currently feels isolated and neglected.

Her area of influence is limited and her knowledge of strategic business matters is also limited. Her authority is restricted to making decisions that only affect her. She receives information about new directions and projects through widely distributed memos and through conversations with her boss.

Professional development opportunities have not been offered to her, and she is given assignments to work on independently. She delivers the finished product to her boss, the VP of Operations, who only pays attention to her when a new project is decided.

She has her own office and works independently most of the time, which has limited her chances to build relationships with her co-workers and network. Additionally, a communications consultant has been brought in a few times to assist with projects that she is fully capable of handling.

This motivated her to protect her territory and she delved deeper into her work, distancing herself even more from the general business operations. The job she believed would lead to greater opportunities is actually redirecting her away from her career objectives.

Questions:

What is the recommended course of action for Cath?

Your Answer:
