

Power of Collaboration

October 23, 2019

By Peter Germann
Germann Consulting Group

Less control provides more power. I’m going to say that again – Less control provides more power. Most of the people I coach believe in the power of collaboration. We have learned, and now know, that a group of people working together, focused on the same challenge, is infinitely more powerful than one person trying to solve it on his or her own.

And while we truly know this, I see many senior leaders who can’t help but spend a lot of time sharing their own thoughts and opinions. It’s natural because they have expertise, knowledge and experience. But in that moment, when we want to give our opinion again, a strong leader will quell that inner narrative, pull back and instead ask a question. A **really** good leader will make sure the question is authentic, and not just a way of covertly stating what they believe or know to be true.



If the goal of a strong leader is to build an open, dynamic organizational culture, we must create a safe and trustworthy environment that encourages people to speak their mind, offer suggestions, and give un-edited input. We, as leaders, need to **give up power and control, delegate and trust people more. For me, that often comes in the form of asking questions.**

Think about the last time you were in a strategy meeting. Did you hear a lot of “needs” from some people immediately followed by reasons why “it is not possible” from others? One type of leader might be tempted to share his opinion on what every person is saying, while a more collaborative leader who trusts the wisdom of the room might listen for a while and then say, “What could we do?” “How could we make things happen?”

Eventually, you might just get an attitude shift that allows people to come up with ways to work smarter or contribute time, skill or passion towards solving those challenges. Instead of a reflex reaction from the table, you may see new ideas on how to generate income, make better use of time and resources, and take advantage of other successes. It is very likely that holding back your opinion will actually help overcome blockages and move the team forward. You may even find that when people feel they provided input in the strategic decision, that they are much more likely to commit to the outcomes and doing the work that it will take to get there. By allowing each member to contribute to the conversation from their own perspective, and gain from the perspective of others, we discover the solutions are within the group and the power of collaboration.