

## Because I Said So!

"Because I said so" has never worked.

30 years ago when your boss told you to do something, you did it (at least I did). And no, we didn't like it then either. Let's face it, times have changed. Generation X and Y are used to having more control over what they do and when they do it than any other generation of workers before them. They've also been trained to work in a more collaborative environment and are used to receiving frequent and regular feedback and recognition for what they do.

Like many of you, I've had the unpleasant experience of working in organizations where people are treated like pawns to be pushed around a resource grid. It's not very fun or very fulfilling. The days of top-down or command-and-control management style are quickly coming to an end. Assigning work has evolved into a collaborative process between the organizational layers and among peers.

As project leaders, it's critical for us to embrace the reality that those doing the work should have control over it. The experts are really those at the grass roots and their manager is their leader—not their drill sergeant. Today's project leader is expected to look into the future and plan how to overcome obstacles, facilitate better communication—not micromanage process.

One of the challenges faced by savvy and intuitive leaders who recognize this is the limitation of the tools they use. Traditional project management methodologies rely on the "old school" concepts of command-and-control management techniques that were developed in the beginning of the industrial age to manage the assembly line. Organizations that are content with a workforce that is simply putting in time to get their paycheck may be content with these archaic approaches to "managing" their people, however, if organizations want to achieve maximum productivity and empower their employees to maximize their potential, they must embrace this paradigm shift in management philosophy.

I have had many opportunities over the years to participate as a project leader and as a project team member. Random assignments that are arbitrarily pushed down the pipeline at me or my team were annoying and aggravating. As a team member, those times when I was given the opportunity to participate in the project plan and contribute to the setting of goals and milestones were satisfying and rewarding. As a project leader, as I have shared that philosophy with my project teams, I have found that they take ownership, are engaged, and regularly outperform my expectations.

It really isn't rocket science. My grandma used to say, "Treat others as you would want to be treated yourself." That's always been good advice.