

Granting Freedom To Staff

Written by Steve Marr
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A question I deal with frequently is how much freedom to give staff and how to make sure that staff does not misuse this freedom. King David wrote after hearing from the Lord, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *otherwise* they will not come near to you." (Psalm 32:8-9, NIV)

The first responsibility of management is to instruct staff in policies, procedures, and service standards. Too frequently we release staff without giving them the proper training and guidance. Then, we become upset when they fail to perform. David understood that he needed instruction from the Lord; he needed God as his counselor. Likewise we need to be counselors for our staff.

The Lord also advised David not to be like a horse or mule that lacks understanding. The analogy reminds us that even a horse or a mule needs instruction and training to be useful. They need the bit and the bridle so the horse will follow the instructions of the rider.

At times I have managed people who simply didn't get the message. They needed to be managed very tightly. In fact, sometimes I thought some needed to be reined like a horse in order to manage them closely. I don't want to sound disrespectful but some people simply don't respond any other way. You had to yank on the reins to get them to follow through to do their job correctly. In most instances I tried to avoid hiring such people. However, there were times I needed to dismiss those who simply wouldn't follow instructions. The good part is that when a person listens to management, they don't need to be micromanaged every day. They can handle significant freedom.

This connects to a spiritual lesson as well. When we follow God's precepts and are obedient to His Word, we don't have to be disciplined as much.

Ideally, with good management, instruction, and counsel; the person will respond effectively and

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follow directions. The more we see their follow-through, the more we are able to release responsibility without the need to micromanage their performance at work.

King David received helpful information for himself and us. Apply it to managing staff and you will be able to give your staff more freedom.

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