

DAVID GOLDSMITH
with **LORRIE GOLDSMITH**

Paid to **THINK**

A leader's toolkit for redefining your future.

TOOL: ET EMPOWERING PROCESS (From CHAPTER 11)



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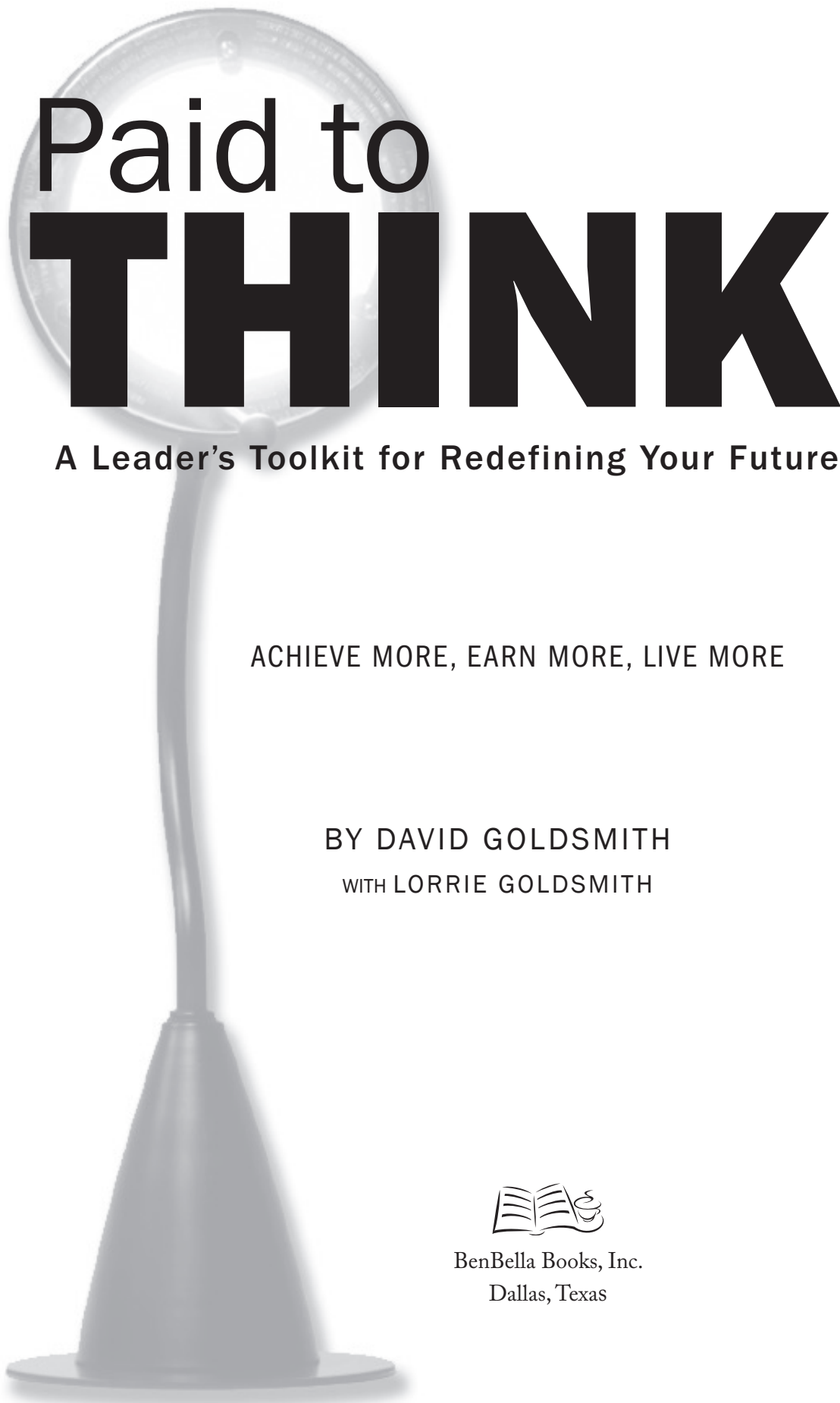
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Paid to **THINK**

A Leader's Toolkit for Redefining Your Future

ACHIEVE MORE, EARN MORE, LIVE MORE

BY DAVID GOLDSMITH

WITH LORRIE GOLDSMITH



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To my wife, Lorrie, my love of 26 years,
thank you for everything. There are no words to describe
what you mean to me.

∞ DAVID

To my sons, Adam and Jake,
I wish for you love, happiness, and experiences
that will enrich your lives as much as you have mine.

∞ DAD

From 50,000 feet, you can set up a digital tracking system linked to your primary vendor's order processing system so that you can view where the order is in production. The system also connects to the fleet management systems of major carriers so that your team does not have to look up where your shipment is in route—their digital dashboard supplies them with daily updates. All this is linked to your own scheduling system, which you tie to project CPM charts. Knowing where your marble is in route enables you to have trucks and manpower at the right location at the right time so that the marble is moved as quickly as possible to the job site and installed. The result is reduced inventory, improved product delivery, early warning tools for staffing needs, elimination of phone calls and e-mails, increased productivity by reduction of nonvalue added actions, and improved cash flow because of faster invoicing and collection.

When you realize the responsibility is yours to empower external stakeholders as well as internal staff members, you make greater strides in your working relationships with them. You begin to ask, Are our purchase orders easy to read? Do we give our vendors ample time to do their best work for us? Are we helping our vendor help us? and so on. You create infrastructure that allows vendors to tap into your organization through computer portals for the purpose of systemizing and expediting shipping and billing functions, or when you make it possible for clients to manage their accounts 24/7 from their home computers, you are empowering your external stakeholders to do their best job for you.

Since the process of empowering others (either in their everyday jobs or for specific projects) requires you to go beyond the simple transference of authority to them and then sitting back and hoping for the best, you need a way of ensuring that you have created and installed the appropriate 80% of the GPP. Certainly, you contribute to this aspect of empowering others just by performing all the activities of ET, which result in complete plans, improved products/services/internal improvements, reliable allies, appropriate technologies, up-to-date information about global happenings and competitive intelligence, and so on. But above and beyond all of that, you must specifically provide others with what I call “building the entire package” of tools, systems, structures, knowledge, skills, and guidance they need to be able to make good decisions when necessary and to carry out your plans, even if they don't share your 50,000-foot perspective.

The Enterprise Thinking (ET) Empowering Process

Regardless of whether you're an involved leader or one who prefers to be hands off, when you empower other people with responsibilities, the final outcome of their work still rests on your shoulders. I'm sure that there have been times in your

life when you passed the torch to another person expecting a certain outcome, and later you were disappointed in their performance. It happens to all leaders at one time or another. Whether someone misunderstood what you wanted and messed up a plan or they intentionally cheated you in a deal, if your trust in someone else didn't yield the results you wanted, it's up to you to take the steps needed to prevent a repeat of the situation in the future. And like all of us, when you know better, you do better.

That's why the ET Empowering Process can be such a reliable go-to tool for you. It consists of steps you can easily follow to ensure that you, in your role as the leader, take the right actions up front to produce optimal conditions that stand a better chance of producing the outcomes you want: a win-win for your entire organization. And it helps you to avoid taking nonproductive and even counterproductive measures, like those listed here:

- “Hugging and kissing” people to motivate them, improve morale, or instill confidence as a primary means of securing better results. Too much emphasis on this 20% of the GPP can sidetrack leaders away from producing the 80% of the GPP necessary to foster success.
- Ignoring the 80% of the GPP, resulting in leaders supplying an incomplete system that demands repeated intervention to avoid perpetual doubt, confusion, and mistakes. A sure sign that you have developed an incomplete system is when you continually receive the same, avoidable questions like, “How do I log into the intranet from home, again?” or “Do we have to dial 9 to get an outside line?” or “Do we remove the compound before or after the process is complete?”
- Walking away and letting employees struggle to find solutions. Some call it the sink-or-swim method, while others use the phrase, “feed them to the wolves.” Neither sounds pleasant, and surely there are better ways to be more helpful when people need assistance to move from point A to point B on their own.
- Smothering and negatively micromanaging. Smothering occurs when leaders fail to lay out a solid plan and when they overlook the task of providing tools that appropriately match the skill levels of executors. Your job is to remove some of the obvious obstacles to others' progress and replace them with the appropriate support that empowers people.
- Offloading dirty work that leaders don't want to do themselves. Remember, your job isn't just to assign busywork and tasks; it's to ensure that members of your organization are making value-added contributions to projects and processes that strengthen the whole organization.

Oftentimes, these misguided measures will mask the ineffectiveness of the leader and unfairly place blame on the people the measures have supposedly empowered. Yet everyone shows up to work day after day and tolerates the situation, usually because they need the paycheck. If you want to see improvement, you have to change yourself first by developing certain leadership skills and by using effective tools.

The best leaders are those who recognize the need to continually improve their skills. Just look at the person who oversees a committee or a group of volunteers where the followers don't receive a paycheck. These leaders are forced to gain buy-in and cooperation from people, often based on their sheer skills as a leader. If they want people to stick around and participate, they not only have to set direction and instruct people to execute on tactics, but they have to make sure that they're empowering people in ways that give them hope they can succeed and that eventually lead them to where they want to go. They have to give their volunteers the structure and supplies they need to perform their jobs, and they have to be available to guide and steer them should they stumble or veer off course. The people working typically aren't being reimbursed; instead, they've found some value in performing as a volunteer and it's up to the leader to ensure that the results they achieve are commensurate with what the leader brings to the environment.

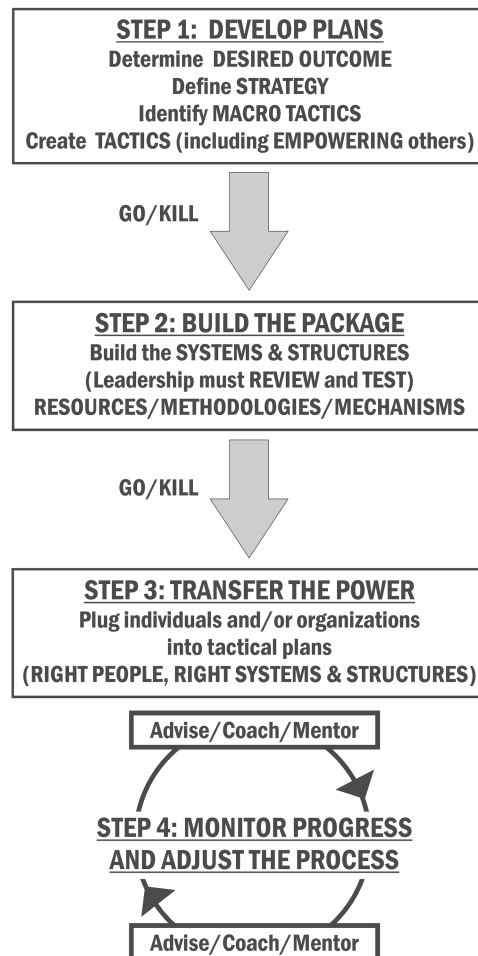
The “magic” these leaders use to build success among volunteers is actually a bundle of steps they've found to be effective in reaching their desired outcomes. The ET Empowering Process is also a bundle of steps designed to produce better results than you would have achieved otherwise. Not only will *you* have the direction that *you* need to integrate other people into your strategic and tactical plans, but your people will receive the direction and guidance they need to reach the outcomes you expect of them.

Below, you will see a diagram of the ET Empowering Process (Figure 11.1), consisting of four steps: (1) Develop Plans, (2) Build the Package, (3) Transfer the Power, (4) Monitor Progress and Adjust the Process. Through this process, you will make sure to:

- Tie empowering to the plans that you develop so that you are transferring power to the right people and so that those people truly fulfill a purpose. This process starts with developing plans so that you are able to align your people and resources with Strategy and focus them in the direction of reaching Desired Outcomes.
- Build a package of necessary “supplies” that your people need to do their best work for you. This includes building the systems and structures as well as providing tools, guidance, and support.
- Transfer power and responsibilities to the people you have determined to be the most appropriately skilled and knowledgeable to produce the highest returns.

- Keep everyone's momentum and progress on track by monitoring the progress of your people, offering your guidance, and adjusting the process so that everyone comes out a winner.

Enterprise Thinking Empowering Process



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Figure 11.1—Enterprise Thinking Empowering Process

Notice that in addition to the four steps, you have GO/KILL points between the first two steps that serve as your opportunity to decide whether proceeding forward is in the best interests of your organization. These points cause you to pause and assess whether the Empowerment Package you are building will or will not produce your Desired Outcome. If you find that it will not, you are always better off stopping—stopping altogether, stopping and going back to the previous step,

or stopping and starting over again. Taking the time to think through your actions early on—the Economics of Thinking—will pay off in the end.

So here are the four steps in detail.

Step 1: Develop Plans

 Go back to your CST Model to make sure that the Tactic of using executors is in alignment with your Desired Outcome and Strategy. For the person who is paid to think, Desired Outcome and Strategy are always the starting points for any activity, including the ET activity of empowering others. This is why it's important to start with developing your plans.

You also have to be thinking about the right people for the situation at hand. Let's say your Desired Outcome is to increase profits by 12%. Your Strategy is to grow by customer acquisition, with the Macro Tactic of securing 46 new clients over nine months. One Tactic is to empower your VP of HR to hire two new people to secure the clients and the other is, to pick up the production load. Another Tactic is to empower your VP of sales to develop a new sales model that is more technologically driven. Each decision you make ties the soon-to-be empowered people to your plans.

In some cases, you may actually specify the people who will be working with you at this early step. It is often advantageous to do so when you're hiring or selecting management, or when you need to know who the people are before you Build the Package (Step 2) for them. Most leaders, however, hire and select people in Step 3, which is where I have detailed for you how to hire and select them.





In either instance, use your ET tools to determine the best people, groups, or organizations to assist you in moving your organization forward. Perhaps you'll engage in Cyclonic Thinking as you consider your 360° awareness of your organization, update your awareness about global events, and revisit data from your competitive intelligence activities. If you will be developing a new product or establishing a new alliance, you can pour this information into your ET Development Funnel to determine the direction of your organization, unit, department, or group, depending, of course, on the details and needs of your situation.

I caution you to control any impulse you may have to jump to action before thinking through your plan—hmm, where have you heard that before? I recall a conversation I once had with the owner of a sales-based company who did not yet understand the Economics of Thinking and took the fast-shooter approach to addressing an issue he was having with his top saleswoman. He had previously promised all of his salespeople the full support of his marketing department, but he had never really followed through on that promise, prompting his number-one salesperson to hire her own marketing person and later approach him and ask for a higher commission rate to cover her increased expenses. His solution was to tell his

marketing department that they needed to “step up their game” and help out sales, but he never discussed any of the details with them. He didn’t give them a plan with tactics, and that’s because he didn’t think to tie their efforts to strategy. Without better direction and tools, the marketing department had been insufficiently empowered to play a pivotal role in the sales teams’ efforts. And although the owner blamed the marketing department, it was the leader’s fault that it remained a siloed and ineffectual department for the company.

These activities are part of laying a solid foundation under people so that when you empower them, they know what the Desired Outcome is that they are expected to reach.

Step 2: Build the Package

 Next, build an environment that breeds and supports success. The package is  your collection of systems and structures and other resources that empower  people to carry out their responsibilities. Leaders tend to overlook this step,  but it is a huge component of successfully empowering others.

If you are continually teaching new tools to your staff members and giving them opportunities to build skills and acquire knowledge, this step will only require you to provide any additional tools that are well matched to the specific situation. For example, if people already know how to use a CPM chart, then any detailed plan you give them containing one will be easier and faster for them to use. If, however, you are working with people who lack knowledge or have skill gaps, take the time early on to bring them up to speed or ensure that someone else does. This small measure pays off both in the short term when your group achieves its Desired Outcome, and in the long term by building intellectually advanced individuals who may one day become future leaders.

Look through any plans and make sure that they contain enough detail to act as a guide, but not so much detail that they bog people down. Keep in mind that the “road map” should suit the ability levels of the people who must follow it, and it must be a realistically achievable guide that ties directly to Strategy and Desired outcome. You may recall the point I made in Chapter 3 about how important it is to match your Tactics to the skill and knowledge levels of your executors. In that chapter, I made mention of how you would need different types of Tactics to prepare a novice cook in contrast to directing an experienced chef; the person who lacks cooking skills might need you to provide instructions on *how* to sauté vegetables whereas the experienced chef would only need to be told *to* sauté them. You want to choose the best tools for the situation, so if you had to teach a project to military engineers, for instance, you might decide to include Tactics like training videos and documents that outline key deliverables so that executors are equipped to proceed on their own, and if they need a review of instructions, the materials that you have

provided to them are available whenever necessary. The same concept applies, obviously, for any organization, whether you're supplying a CPM chart to educators for converting their math lessons to a new curriculum or linking admissions officers at your university to your recruitment staff using an advanced customer-contact software program and showing everyone involved how to use it.

As you may have already realized from these examples, the transfer of authority or responsibility doesn't always involve a plan. Sometimes, you're entrusting people with tasks that contribute to a larger project or that service your customers one at a time. In many situations, the Empowerment Package becomes the tools of the trade: the best carpet steamers for your cleaning staff, the hydraulic lift for your moving crew to reduce injuries and complete jobs faster, and iPads for your waiters so that you can update dinner specials quickly and easily.

Another point to consider whenever you are about to transfer authority and responsibility to others is that, as I mentioned in Chapter 10, people don't show up to work to screw up, so chances are, when there's a failure in execution, the cause stems from a poorly built Empowerment Package or lack thereof. On the leadership side, the inadequate or missing package is typically the result of poor planning, which causes leaders to overlook the 80% of the GPP or focus too much on the 20%.

My wife and I encountered one such flaw many years ago when we took our then-young sons to a restaurant in New York City. We'd visited the place before and enjoyed the food and service, so why not go back again? Well, if this second experience had been our first, there might not have been a second visit at all. We were greeted, seated, given drinks, and then . . . nothing. We watched and waited for our food as one family after another arrived, placed their orders, and ate their meals.

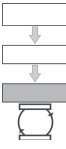
The waitress—who we later learned had years of experience waiting tables—apologized time and again. Then her manager stopped by our table to explain that she had discovered why our meal order had failed to process and corrected the problem.

Apparently, this was the waitress's first day working at this particular restaurant, and when she keyed her employee number into the computer system, it didn't take. That's because the manager had erred and not activated the waitress's key code. The waitress entered her customers' food orders just the same, because the system had no kick-back mechanism to alert users when their orders were denied. The flaw in the software meant that no one was able to detect that the order never transferred to the kitchen. Now that the manager had identified and rectified the problem, the meal order was being processed.

Although the empowering process had failed due to a technical glitch, management was still responsible, and this is why: First, the decision makers selected (quite possibly unknowingly) a computer system that did not work as it should, and second, the manager on duty did not jump in earlier to solve the challenge when table after table was complaining about not being served. This is how organizations lose by a nose.

It's important to address this issue of leadership responsibility, because leaders have both decision-making authority and purchasing power to which subordinate staff members don't necessarily have access. Therefore, blaming others is futile. The improvements must begin with you, and the first and best question to ask yourself is, Did I build the right GPP that will successfully empower my people to reach successful outcomes? If you build the Empowerment Package well, the answer to this question will be yes.

Step 3: Transfer the Power

 For leaders who have never used the ET Empowering Process, this third step will probably be the most familiar, because this step is usually a leader's starting point for empowering people. Notice how completing the first two steps of this process forced you to lay the groundwork for your people before you even brought them into the picture!

Now that the groundwork is set, you will select your people and transfer power to them. You may find that this is a time when you must develop a hiring (or selection) process that enables you to bring on the right people. This is the early part of transferring power.

Review your hiring process to ensure that its screening criteria will ultimately result in the selection of the right people for your organizational culture or special project. In the first phase of Southwest Airlines'¹¹⁹ process for hiring flight attendants, peers screen candidates based on their energy levels by requiring candidates to energetically proclaim why they want to work at Southwest. Picture yourself taking part in an interview with this airline company. How comfortable would you be if you had to stand up in front of a panel of employees and express your excitement about working for them? If the thought of this scenario makes you cringe, then their system would eliminate you, because your personality would not be in alignment with their corporate culture. The hiring process gives Southwest Airlines a slew of flight attendants who are predisposed to carrying out desired behaviors.

Disney sends¹²⁰ job candidates on a walking tour through a creative-looking building for the purpose of educating candidates about the employee experience at Disney. Those who take the tour are actually scrubbing themselves against broad criteria without knowing it. Every prospective employee is introduced to fundamental guidelines, such as no facial hair for men, and if they're still interested after the tour, they move on to additional phases of Disney's hiring process. You've surely done this yourself in many situations. Think of a time when you've walked into a nightclub, hotel, store, party, or office, immediately concluded, "This is not for me," and promptly left.

It almost sounds too obvious, but since I've seen many leaders make this mistake,

be sure that if you are selecting people from a pool of internal leaders or staffers, you know them well enough to detect whether they are right for the task at hand. You can't just make assumptions. You also have to ensure that if they don't have the skills today, they will be able to develop them in time to carry out the responsibilities that you have given them. You wouldn't tell a factory worker on his first day at work to oversee the quality control until you were sure that he knew what he should be looking for.

Be especially careful when you select other leaders to avoid finding yourself in delicate situations later that surface from making wrong choices. For instance, if you assume that you are surrounding yourself with leaders who have certain skills and you just let them proceed without taking necessary measures up front, their lack of skills could become evident at a most inopportune time. I recall a colleague of mine who was working on a promotional package and had hired a PR team, consisting of the PR company's owner and right-hand woman, to assist him. The PR group continually made recommendations that did not serve my friend well, and after nine months of trying to work with people who ultimately showed that they couldn't be trusted to make smart decisions, he had to part ways with them. He not only lost a lot of time where he could have been generating opportunities, he also lost the money he had invested in the firm and damaged the relationship he had with the PR owner prior to their working together.

Another perspective to consider is that just because you know how someone performs on the job, you don't necessarily have a true picture of who they are and what they're capable of achieving. The person who appears to be unproductive or unmotivated at work may spend their weekends managing their bowling league of twenty-four teams or building sophisticated surveillance technology that they sell online for additional money. Like I say, although you can't always know what assets people put to use in their off time, when you do know, it helps you to place the right people in the best positions for them (and you).

In addition, Step 3 is where you must make sure that everyone on board understands what is expected of them. Regardless of whether you are working with senior-level managers or a group of Girl Scouts, everyone involved needs to know the particular destination you have assigned to them, and they need your guidance and support at varying degrees to get there.

This brings to the forefront an issue that you may have faced, since it often perplexes leaders. Many have asked me if it's necessary for the people who will be empowered to be involved in decision making. That depends on your situation. I can understand if you're concerned that other people won't buy into your ideas if you don't include them at decision points, but it doesn't have to be that way, either. Certainly, there are some circumstances that warrant others' involvement in decision making, but as a general rule, the answer is no. Others do not have to take part

in developing Strategy, building the GPP, or addressing any smaller questions that may arise, as long as your plans are appropriate, you're selecting the right people, and you're providing the type of support they need.

For the most part, leaders themselves struggle to make good decisions, and they have the experience (and now tools!) to do the job better than the people they manage, so why would you risk inferior Strategies, Tactics, and systems and structures for the sake of gaining buy-in? A report by Wharton School¹²¹ of Business associate professor Iwan Barankay suggests that the majority of people prefer to receive a limited amount of feedback and information from their superiors. In two advertisements placed for an identical position where one ad mentioned supervisory feedback, prospective applicants were three times more likely to respond to the second ad that made *no mention* of feedback. Not all people need to play your role, nor do they necessarily want to see your 50,000-foot view. Typically, in regard to sharing decision making, Strategies, and the big-picture view with the people you empower, you will encounter three types of people:

1. **The people who need to know:** In some situations, people need to share in decision making, Strategy, and the inside knowledge in order to execute on the plans you have given them.
2. **The people who don't need to know but want to know anyway:** There are those people who feel most comfortable when they understand where they fit within the scope of the grander scheme. Although these people don't necessarily need to know the details, sharing with them enables them to do their jobs without the distraction of uncertainty.
3. **The people who don't need to know:** This group of people will perform for you if you give them the plan, some direction, and any additional support, but they don't need to share in decision making or strategizing in order to carry out your plans. They don't need to know, don't want to know, might not understand if you told them, or all of the above.

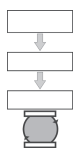
At the very least, the way to gain buy-in is to give people their plan, explain their function within the context of the larger picture, and give them everything they need to make a successful contribution to the whole.

A final factor that you need to consider when transferring power involves the question of *how*. Depending on the skill levels and involvement of the people, you will adapt your methods of transferring power to them accordingly. Just as you must provide appropriately matched tactics to the individuals to whom you will be transferring authority, you may find that at times you will have to walk through a process or project with your people, whereas in other situations you can hand off the task to an experienced manager that you've worked with in the past and know

that a few progress updates here and there are all you need to keep the initiative on target.

Every time you empower others and you are building the GPP, keep in mind the small subset box on the GPP diagram that represents you; you as a leader are always responsible for building the 80% of the GPP so that you can properly empower people who make up the 20%, ensuring that they always have their best understanding of their roles and expected outcomes.

Step 4: Monitor Progress and Adjust the Process

 Your responsibilities don't end once you have transferred power to others. This is where the work of monitoring their progress and making necessary adjustments along the way begins. Your role in Step 4 is very similar in approach to your activities within the Learning category. Not only might you be monitoring your organization, global happenings, and competitors to stay abreast of matters important to your organization, but in a similar fashion, here you are also monitoring your people, their progress, and the unraveling events that influence the overall initiative to make sure that these variables aren't steering your intended plans off course.

Since at this point you're constantly becoming aware of new occurrences so that you can readjust to the conditions if need be, you may find that you will need to create new plans on how to accelerate progress, correct any misconceptions that may have arisen, or retrain, replace, or terminate people who were initially involved in your initiative. Just because you devised a plan doesn't mean that it is set in stone; evolving situations will require you to determine what individuals and systems and structures need to be modified by you to maintain levels of productivity and to ultimately yield the results you want.

Regardless of whether your situation changes or remains the same from the start, the degree to which you are involved with your people will vary based on a number of factors unique to your situation. For some people, being led by a positive micro-manager will foster progress, whereas other people will only rise to the occasion once a more demanding leader raises the level of expectations and follows through to ensure that people have met preset benchmarks. Others still may respond more favorably and produce results faster if they're left alone to do their work, and say, have to apprise you of their progress through weekly reports.

Furthermore, your circumstances will dictate the role you play in monitoring progress and making adjustments. Geographic culture and corporate culture also influence whether you act in the capacity of advisor, mentor, coach, or something else. Regardless of the role you assume or name you assign to it, you will continue to act as a guiding support person for the people you have empowered. Here are some common examples of the roles you may opt to play:

Reviewer: As a reviewer, you are looking at a number of indicators that tell you a story about the progress of an initiative. Some of the indicators include: KPIs (key performance indicators), financial reports, the feedback you get from face-to-face conversations with others, and so on. In the capacity of reviewer, your findings reveal that an adjustment needs to be made to a nonhuman component such as a system or process; in these cases, you may not have any need to communicate your adjustments to the people you have empowered.

Positive reinforcer: Although I normally wouldn't encourage you to run around "hugging and kissing" everyone as a primary means of making progress, you may find that there are often occasions during which the people working with you are doing a decent job, but they need some positive reinforcement from time to time to let them know that they are on track. In these instances, you are checking in to confirm that they are making the progress you want, and since you don't need to make any adjustments to what they're doing, you give them encouragement before moving on. Obviously, I can't predict all the different situations, types of organizations (for-profit, not-for-profit, government, military, education), and cultural and geographic factors that determine whether positive reinforcement is helpful. But I can tell you that in my experiences working with decision makers around the world, I have never encountered even a single organization where some type of encouragement does not work, that is, when the GPP is in place.

Advisor: The very name often denotes a level of confidentiality, but confidential or not, the advisor is someone who offers guidance after they've collected some background information about a situation that impacts their advisee. An advisor is usually someone who is sought out by others for their insight and advice. The advisor can offer direction, lessons, stories, and instruction to help the other person (persons, or groups) to reach the Desired Outcome. The role of advisor is helpful when you're working with people who are receptive to outside advice, who want to accelerate their progress, and who are open to receiving tips on how they can personally improve their performance. To be clear, working in the capacity of advisor can range from a relationship that is complex, long-running, and confidential to one that is as simple, fleeting, and open as a laborer asking a foreman, "Can you give me some advice on how to handle this customer's problem?"

Coach: In an organizational capacity, a coach is usually someone who walks you through the stages of performance; many times he or she is assigned to a person or group of people to increase performance levels. The challenge with the word "coaching" is that it has become a buzzword of the 21st century that can carry negative connotations, although coaching in and of itself is not necessarily negative. After all,

what credentials do you need to be a coach, and who certifies them? Life experience, business experience? But does experience alone qualify you to be a teacher of sorts? The CEO of an \$800 million firm confided in me that his organization had spent millions on coaching over the years, but not until the economic downturn in 2008 did the CEO realize, “In good times, we appeared to have excellent coaches, but when things went bad during the recession, we realized that we had wasted our money.”

A good coach has the insight to know when the timing is right to push someone and when to leave someone alone and let them put to use what they have learned for themselves. In general, however, most people do not make great coaches.

A side note: In some organizations, coaching has too often become synonymous with the quasi-performance review. In some of these de-motivating scenarios, the “coach” meets on a weekly basis with the person they are supposed to be coaching, but instead of acting in the capacity of a coach, these leaders take notes, ask questions, and then shoot off verbal criticisms or (primarily negative) letters of performance-related feedback to the people who are being “coached.” Under the guise of “coaching,” they tend to hinder productivity, the antithesis of empowering others. This type of coaching is always bound for failure. Job and performance reviews (not to be confused with the aforementioned type of review) are after-the-fact assessments of performance, whereas coaching should enhance performance while the individual is engaged in the activities of their job. If you want to guide, coach. If you want to scold, do a job review. But if you want to guide people and make them distrust you simultaneously, confuse the two.

Mentor: The mentor acts in a similar capacity as the advisor, but generally the mentor guides and advises someone because of some personal attachment he or she has with the mentoree. Being a mentor shouldn’t feel like something that is forced. This type of empowerment should arise from a relationship based on trust, where it is apparent that the mentor wants to bring another person under his or her wing and tells them not just what they should do, but how they can improve their ability to think and make better decisions so that the mentoree is able to make better decisions independently. Mentors help someone improve performance, because they care about that person.

[My First Mentor]

I met my first business mentor when I was 21 years old. At the time, I was a recent college graduate, and he was the CEO of Tilcon, a rock quarry supplying more than 90% the stone used in the New York City area. John Gillespie hired me for a summer position on a day that began with his calling my home at 5:30 a.m. His schedule dictated a change in time for our originally scheduled 9 a.m. interview. Could I be there by

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7 a.m.? I quickly calculated I'd have seven minutes to shower and another couple to down a quick breakfast. I was soon in my car heading down the highway to a destination that was more than an hour's drive away.

At the interview, John asked me a series of questions about previous work experience and any knowledge I may have had of quarries, of which I had absolutely none. After the questioning, he offered me a job at above minimum wage. When he was about to leave, I told him I had a few questions of my own. I guess he liked my moxie, because from that moment on he treated me differently. Little did I know that it was then that he decided to take me under his wing and mentor me, even giving me a pay raise that day.

I didn't immediately realize that his approach to grooming me was to show me the big-picture view of the entire facility (rather than to pigeonhole me into a single, siloed position). John's way of empowering me was to give me the right exposure so that I might potentially be a successor to his role. He quickly put me on a kind of rotation that would give me a full tour of the quarry's systems and structures, and he met with me once a week to give me the guidance I needed, answering my questions so that I could fill in any blanks that were left after my experiences in a particular area of the company. My mentor had given me access to more information than most people who were working there for years, and he put people in charge of helping me when he couldn't do so.

He was never a "hugger and kisser." At times, the lessons were hard learned; more than once, he gave me a general framework for what he expected in terms of outlines, and then let me go. On one occasion, employees intentionally let me make a mistake by allowing me to unknowingly drop a rock the size of two sedan cars into one of our machines, a move that clogged up the system. John knew that my growth would come from a combination of one-on-one instruction and the freedom to err.

At the same time, he had a plan for me and personally watched over my progress so that he could elevate my perspective to the 30,000-foot view, and then to the eventual 50,000-foot view and keep it there. For example, my first job at the company was to work in the dispatch office. He wanted me to understand how the network of 250 semis moved upwards of 22,000 tons of stone a day as well as how the organization would move nearly 15 scows each transporting 1,000 tons of stone daily.

There was one notable moment that marked John's progress as my mentor. It occurred shortly after he overheard me ask the dispatcher about the costs of each shipment. In my mind, I was trying to calculate the quarry's overall sales volume, but the dispatcher could only offer, "Mr. Gillespie doesn't want me to know that information." Both of us were unaware that John was around the corner and had overheard my inquiry, but I learned of it later that day, when my mentor pulled me aside and told me he wanted me to be thinking this way. "Keep putting together the pieces," he encouraged. Whether I was working in dispatching, the scale house, or any other function alongside the other workers, John encouraged me to ask questions and challenge myself to learn continuously. Within no time, he promoted me to assistant supervisor, his encouraging stamp of approval motivated me to keep on progressing.

My relationship with John began as a boss to an employee and expanded to a mentor to mentoree. As the years passed, I stayed in touch with him, keeping him updated on my career and listening to any nuggets of wisdom he had to offer along the way. Through the years he attended my wedding, joined our extended family for special holidays, and stayed in touch long after I had made the decision to venture out on my own into other business endeavors. He has always been someone I could count on for great advice.

Regardless of the role you want to play, follow the concepts of the Learning category and be sure that you are providing new information and the opportunities to keep your people abreast of on-the-horizon happenings that can help them make their best contributions to your organization. By continually monitoring the progress of your people, you send the message that you're interested in them and that you're accessible to them whenever they need your input. By staying connected to the people you empower and asking yourself how you can better serve them, you increase the chances that the results you achieve are in alignment with your Desired Outcome.

The Misnomers of Motivation and Morale

Motivation and morale are misunderstood. They are not achievable as long as your focus remains on them. In fact, trying to make people motivated and trying to build morale will actually have the opposite effect. By now, you understand the GPP and its premise that without first building the network and environment that breed success, the pursuit of motivation and morale is counterproductive. Encouragement and compliments are like salt and pepper: they can make the dish more palatable, but they alone won't make the meal.

If you're finding that morale or motivation are dwindling, look at how *you* are empowering (or not empowering) your people before you cast blame. Jeff is a frustrated unit manager who oversees 142 total employees and 7 direct reports. He complains of low morale within his unit, and attributes the problems to corporate leadership's unrealistic demands on him and his staff to increasingly produce more. Corporate decision makers crunch numbers in a room, ask themselves what they want the next year, then wield crazy demands without considering new project initiatives, product or service price compression or reductions, currency fluctuations, or population changes, and without accounting for corporate mishandling of product and service initiatives such as the delay in a mobility platform, distribution center, or the reality that they have yet to fill the VP of finance's job, vacant for eight months, which is delaying all reporting. In one year, they wanted Jeff's unit to deliver a 19% increase in volume on top of the 106% increase he produced last year without providing any more resources to Jeff and his people.

When Jeff tries to explain that corporate's goals are burning out his people and drying up his resources, Jeff's supervisor tells him to "figure it out." The senior management team that oversees Jeff and his unit have failed to properly empower Jeff to do his job. It's not enough to tell your people that they're smart enough to come to their own conclusions. If your people are struggling, it's up to you to help figure out the real challenge and to contribute to the solution.

Yet time and again, I see senior managers drive away outstanding talent, because

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DAVID GOLDSMITH, president of the Goldsmith Organization LLC, is an international consultant and advisor, speaker, telecast host, author, and business owner. He has served on the New York University faculty for twelve years and was awarded the SCPS Teacher Excellence Award. David holds an MBA from Syracuse University.

LORRIE GOLDSMITH is co-founder of the Goldsmith Organization LLC, a leadership development organization offering consulting, advising, speaking, and educational resources to decision makers globally.

DAVID AND LORRIE are based in New York State. *Paid to Think* is their first book.

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Goldsmith Organization, LLC
Manlius, NY 13104
+1 (315) 682-3157
info@paidtothink.com