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The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

THE POWER OF AN AUTONOMY AUDIT

In both his talk at the Summit and in his book, *Drive*, Dan talks about the value of autonomy. But how much of it do the people in your company really have? If you're like most folks, you probably don't have a clue. Nobody does. But there's a way to find out—with an autonomy audit. Ask everyone in your department or on your team to respond to these four questions with a numerical ranking (using a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “almost none” and 10 meaning “a huge amount”):

1. How much autonomy do you have over your tasks at work—your main responsibilities and what you do in a given day?
2. How much autonomy do you have over your time at work—for instance, when you arrive, when you leave, and how you allocate your hours each day?
3. How much autonomy do you have over your team at work—that is, to what extent are you able to choose the people with whom you typically collaborate?
4. How much autonomy do you have over your technique at work—how you actually perform the main responsibilities of your job?

Make sure all responses are anonymous. Then tabulate the results. What's the employee average? The figure will fall somewhere on a -40--point autonomy scale (with 0 being a North Korean prison and 40 being Woodstock). Compare that number to people's perceptions. Perhaps the boss thought everyone had plenty of freedom—but the audit showed an average autonomy rating of only 15. Also calculate separate results for task, time, team, and technique. A healthy overall average can sometimes mask a problem in a particular area. An overall autonomy rating of, say, 27 isn't bad. However, if that average consists of 8 each for task, technique, and team, but only 3 for time, you've identified an autonomy weak spot in the organization.

It's remarkable sometimes how little executives, who are nominally in charge of companies, know about the experiences of the people working around them. But it's equally remarkable how often the smartest of these leaders are willing to do things differently if they see a little data. That's what an autonomy audit can do. And if you include a section in your audit for employees to jot down their own ideas about increasing autonomy, you might even find some great solutions.

For more information, visit <http://www.danpink.com> or follow Dan on Twitter (@danielpink)

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