



CASE STUDY - I was a lousy manager – I just didn't know it at the time

Dave* came to see me because he was having trouble motivating his team of technical staff. Morale was very low and staff turnover high. In their high-tech industry this continuous drain of trained people was disastrous and a costly waste of resources.

Dave had worked his way up to his current management position through being an excellent engineer. The problem was that he had no experience of working with people, and the company he worked for had given him no training in people skills.

The problem for Dave was that he didn't know how to delegate. He believed he was the best engineer on the team and took all the critical jobs himself, leaving the rest of the team to cope with the routine work. They quickly grew bored and demotivated and the complaints started to flow. Dave's response was to say 'I'm the team leader and you'll do what I tell you'. They didn't!

I worked with Dave over several weeks; my role was to help him gain new perspectives about the way he worked and the impact this had on the others in the team. If the team were not effective, then he had to change the way he worked with them. This involved getting to know the people as individuals and finding out what motivated them in their work. It included a skills audit to find out what they could do and to identify any training needed to fill the gaps so that each member of the team would be capable of undertaking any aspect of the work on the projects. Then he would have confidence to delegate and to recognise each person's part in the success of the project. Most important it meant a change in the way Dave communicated with his colleagues, keeping them informed, respecting their views and acknowledging their contributions. So what was the outcome? I'll let Dave tell you that.

'I'm ashamed to say that, before I trained with Breakthrough and Grow, I was a lousy manager – I just didn't know it at the time! I was always 'in charge', didn't consider the team of people who worked for me and took credit for everything they did. Working with Breakthrough and Grow was a real eye-opener. As a result, I've totally changed my leadership style, become more focused on other people and helped them to develop their own technical and personal skills. Now they are more involved, enjoying the job, gaining satisfaction from what they are doing and are consequently far more efficient. We also have a much lower staff turnover now. I've learned a lot, and gained a so much more personal satisfaction and success in the process'.

*Names have been changed to protect identity