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Time for Points to Ponder

Do you tell or do you ask?

It depends on whether you want to be an Employer of Choice, or be seen as "the big bad nagging boss".

There are times when you need to play an active role in making decisions and solving problems, and other times when you get better results by soliciting opinions and involving others in the resolution process:

- If your direct reports believe that, in general, situations are out of their control, they need to be told what to do. Conversely, if your direct reports believe that they control their environment, they will have higher morale when you ask them for their input.
- Your team members will feel more valued if you invite their participation, providing they have the knowledge and experience to contribute. If they do not, inviting their participation can still empower them, or can make them feel uncomfortable.
- If your team members have more expertise and stronger personal positive qualities, they will contribute more by participating in the discussions, evaluations and problem solving. Asking for this participation when you have concerns about the commitment, attitudes and abilities of your direct reports can be risky.
- Your direct reports that have more invested with the company and a long-term commitment respond more positively in being included in long- or short-range planning. Subordinates with more clearly defined objectives and routine work respond better when given time lines and hard deadlines.

Other factors that can influence which method you choose are the acceptance of your direct reports to your actions, their overall satisfaction and morale, how committed they are to the project and to the organization's success, and the consequences attributed to both your actions and their participation.

Conclusion As the boss, you have the ability to help your employees realize their top performance. How you interact with them - the words you use, the signals you send - all affect their performance. The key is to know your direct reports and how they are motivated and inspired. Then do it - even if it means you need to adjust your leadership behaviors. [Contact Shari](#) to bring this and other edgy and results-oriented programs to your department.

Reference: Bass, B.M., & Bass, R. (2008). The Bass Handbook of Leadership; Theory, Research and Managerial Applications, 4th ed., Free Press: New York

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