

Q. Six months ago I was hired to take over as manager for our Vancouver office. A lot of my time has been spent building my team and establishing myself as a senior manager within our international company. One of my long time staff members who does a great job, and who I thought I had a good relationship with, has recently started side stepping me to take on projects that should be delegated through me. How do I handle this?

A. Skilfully managing power and politics at work is a part of leadership. Power trips occur because as humans we have self preservation built in. It seems your relationship is not as solid as you think. Often, there is a difference between how your people view you as a leader versus how you think they see you. This is an opportunity for you to start narrowing that gap and strengthens your leadership skills.

Meet with this person and put the problem on the table for discussion. Their actions are sabotaging your team's success. Don't make this about you; instead, focus on what's going on for him or her. What's the motivation behind the behaviour?

Be committed to establishing goals and stretching your people to reach those goals. At the same time, you need to inspire collaboration for the common good. Spelling out what acceptable behaviour looks like is important – set some guidelines for your staff to work within so they know exactly what you expect. Even better, ask your staff to help you establish the rules. Have each person commit to them and if a team member works outside of these boundaries, be committed to holding them accountable. Walk your talk.