

# Involvement and Influence

Think of a time where a DECISION was made in YOUR workplace that affected YOUR work.

Were you involved in that decision?

Did you feel like your feedback was taken into consideration?

KEY DECISIONS need to be made in all workplaces .... Decisions about a SPECIFIC JOB, about a TEAM, or maybe about a workplace as a WHOLE.

When people have INFLUENCE in the decision-making process and they have the chance to be INVOLVED in a meaningful way, they are usually more committed to their work.

When workers are ASKED to provide feedback instead of merely INFORMED about the changes that affect HOW their work is done, they can often come up with solutions that are more creative and agreeable. This process also allows employees to stand behind the decisions that are being made.

Managers are USUALLY responsible for WHAT is being done; but workers can give input about HOW that work is being done.

There are some things to keep in mind when asking colleagues for their input...

Take Chang for example.

Chang works in a grocery store as the supervisor of the produce department. The store manager, René, had been thinking about changing the layout of the store to improve consumer experience. He has been given a set budget to accomplish this task.

To help him make the best possible decision, René sent out a survey to ask staff for their input about what changes they would like to see.

Chang had MANY suggestions. So did his colleagues. When the final decisions were made, it seemed like not a lot of the staff feedback was really used.

What did Chang's manager do right?

It is a POSITIVE thing that Chang's manager was trying to involve staff in this change ... It was a good idea to be inclusive and to involve employees in decisions that influence HOW they work.

What could have been done differently in this situation?

His manager chose NOT to let staff know that the changes had to be made within a SET BUDGET.

While the staff's input would be considered, ULTIMATELY, the manager would have to ensure that all the changes fit inside the budget while also increasing the positive experience of both shoppers and employees.

The manager should have let them know that even though their suggestions were good and valued, they decided to go a different way. This is being transparent.

Even if every decision can't be entirely collaborative, it is important to involve staff by letting them know why decisions have been made.

Chang's manager should be sure to keep workers in the loop when decisions are made. That way the workers will know that they have been listened to.

Although all of the staff's suggestions couldn't be incorporated in WHAT the decision point was, management could ask the staff's suggestion on HOW TO ROLL OUT the plan, so that they continue to feel involved in the updates.

Although Chang's manager used a survey, this is not the only way to involve staff. Supervisors could suggest having regular touchdown meetings or a suggestion box for ongoing feedback... or suggest that Managers can have an open-door policy, to hear directly from staff. When employees see the positive outcomes of being involved and being able to influence decisions, they are likely to be more engaged.

Creating a culture of openness makes it feel safe to give feedback as it comes up... not just when requested by managers.

In our example, we focused on a big change. Involvement and influence can also happen with day-to-day tasks that aren't quite as big.

Think about an important decision you have to make in your workplace. What is ONE way that you can involve others in a MEANINGFUL way?

Involvement and Influence is one of 13 factors that support psychological health and safety in the workplace. Learn more at: [MentalHealthCommission.ca/NationalStandard](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/NationalStandard)

For more resources for your workplace, check out [haveTHATtalk.ca](https://www.haveTHATtalk.ca)

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