

# How to Empower Your Team to Succeed Using the Freedom Scale

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**Collaboration**

business consulting

# How to Empower Your Team to Succeed Using the Freedom Scale

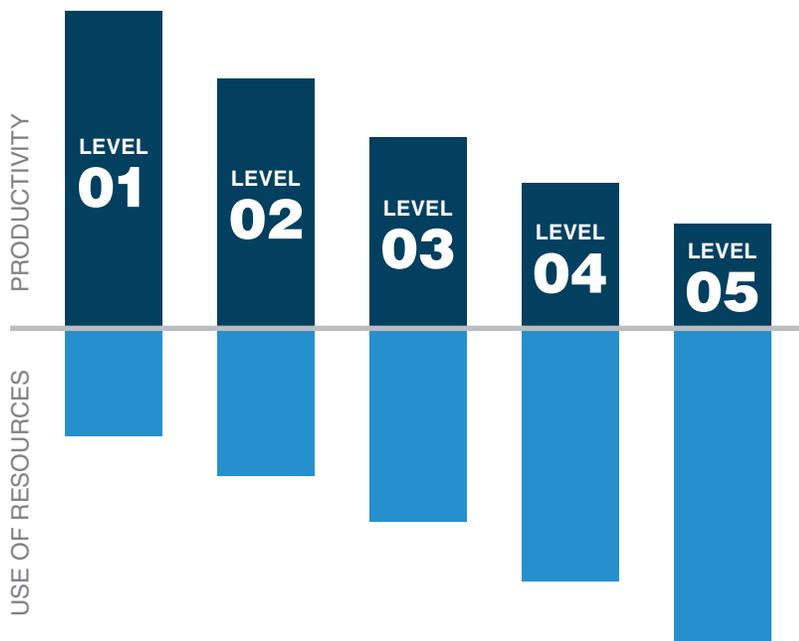
## What is the Freedom Scale?

The Freedom Scale is a methodology. It is a way for executives/managers to optimize the productivity of their human resources. It is an index, with five levels of empowerment.

The Freedom Scale (below) is a tool that quantifies levels of delegation and empowerment. Delegation or empowerment is typically thought of as an “either, or”. Either you do it, or you do not.

The Freedom Scale enables you to systematically scale up and improve your people’s growth and productivity based on their interest and potential to take on more and bigger challenges.

### FREEDOM SCALE



## Key Summary

To compete in today’s fast paced market, organizations need to find new ways to manage their resources

Effective managers know how to find and acquire top talent in order to build effective teams

Leveraging human productivity means getting the most out of your people without burning them out

Freedom Scale is a tool that quantifies levels of delegation

The key to managing this is to know where each subordinate stands on this index and to manage them accordingly

The Freedom Scale is best utilized to help teams stretch individuals, but not break them

# Breaking Down the Freedom Scale

This index is best utilized to help stretch individuals, but not break them. If managed correctly, most subordinates will grow their capabilities and are more likely to meet their goals on time, at or under budget, while meeting customer's expectations.

Managers are under increasing pressure to get more work done correctly, more efficiently and with less cost to the organization. The key to managing this is to know where each subordinate stands on this index and to manage them accordingly.

## Levels

- The Freedom Scale has 5 levels; these will be described more in detail below.
- Level 1 and 2 are “high producers” that are efficient in their use of resources.
  - Level 1 behavior is optimal, providing the highest leverage
- Level 3 is typical; he/she breaks even between use of resources and productivity.
- Level 4 and 5 spend the most resources of the company to produce a limited amount of work.
  - Level 5 operates at the lowest level of productivity

# Level 1: Acts & Reports After-the-Fact

## Distinguishing Quality

A Level 1 subordinate goes ahead with a task or project and executes it completely, reporting after the fact to their leader.

## Highest Leverage

A Level 1 subordinate provides the most leverage for the leader vis-à-vis productivity.

## Proactive & Thrive on New Opportunities

A Level 1 subordinate is ideal and the most proactive. This person is motivated, a high performer, inspired by opportunities to grow and learn and is easily bored when micro managed, potentially causing him/her to job hop until they find the right fit for themselves.

## Have the Brightest Future

A Level 1 subordinate has the most growth potential and is granted the most independence. The leader of a Level 1 subordinate is extremely confident in his/her ability to meet and exceed expectations with consistency. A leader must have substantial confidence in the competence of this individual to delegate this level of empowerment and freedom to act. The leader only has after-the-fact control.

## Powerhouse of Productivity & Create an Expectation for High Performance

A Level 1 Leader sees the value of leveraging resources, and will desire to surround himself/herself with other top producers. He/she will not have patience for anyone less than a “mentoring” Level 3 subordinate. As Level 1 leader will easily delegate tasks and projects to their top performers and prefer to influence projects during or after-the-fact, providing, of course, that they have a high level of confidence in their subordinate’s ability to “get it right.”

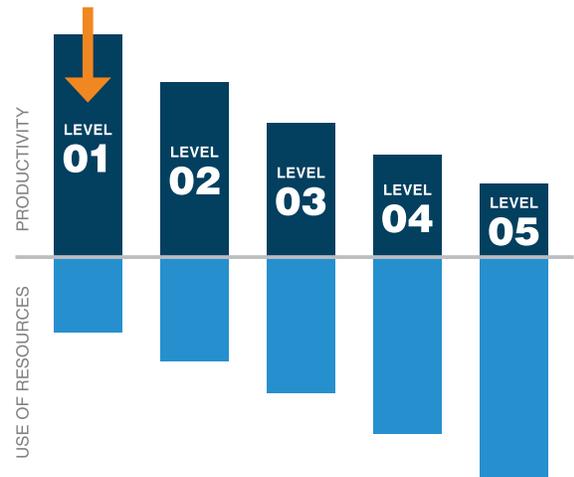
## Key Summary

Level 1 subordinates are proactive and thrive on new challenges. They have the brightest future.

Level 1 leaders will be a powerhouse of productivity for their organization and inspire high performance

Organizations ideally need to hire and retain Level 1 employees

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Level 2: Acts, but Seeks Advice in Real Time

## Distinguishing Quality

The subordinate will go ahead and determine a direction or solution, but let the leader know in real time/during the fact so the leader can make suggestions and provide input.

## Leverage

A Level 2 subordinate provides almost as much leverage as a Level 1 subordinate.

## See the Big Picture and Can Execute with the Leader's Guidance

A Level 2 subordinate is a self-starter, who is ambitious and motivated by reaching new horizons in their work. They see the big picture and can act on it, but they do so while letting their leader know what they are doing, while they are doing the work. This gives the leader a chance to provide input but it is not a "show stopper." The leader has a high level of confidence in his/her competence.

## Need to Establish Trust to Move up to Level 1

The Level 2 subordinate needs to keep the leader informed and be "right" in almost every case in order to progress to Level 1 subordinate.

## Can Manage Teams Effectively and Delegate Easily

A Level 2 Leader is typically a high producer. He/she will ideally build the skills, knowledge and confidence to quickly move up to a Level 1 leader. A Level 2 leader will easily delegate tasks and projects to their top performers.

## Key Summary

Level 2 subordinates provide a good amount of leverage

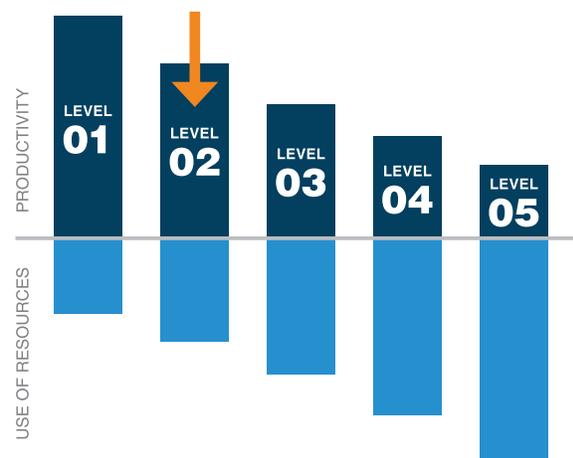
Level 2 subordinates see the big picture and can execute with guidance

Level 2 subordinates are ideally in transition from Level 3 behavior to attaining Level 1 behavior

To get to a Level 1, the subordinate needs to establish trust with their direct superior

Level 2 leaders will be effective in managing teams and delegating

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Level 3: Recommend, then Take Resulting Actions

## Distinguishing Quality

Subordinate generates alternative ideas/courses of action, works with the leader to converge on the best one before taking action.

## Minimal Leverage

A Level 3 subordinate produces minimal leverage and delivers the status quo.

## Delivers the Status Quo

They can generate ideas, and can think outside the box when problem solving or innovating. However, they either do not have the confidence or the authorization from their leader to choose the best route to execute.

Much of the decision making has to be approved by the leader before he/she can proceed with the work which limits their productivity and their leverage.

## Behavior is Acceptable—Only for a Certain Amount of Time

This behavior is expected in the early stages of new hire orientation and early days at the business. Identifying a new hire, or newly promoted subordinate, as a Level 3 subordinate gives the leader an opportunity to train and mentor this individual and graduate them to a Level 1 or 2 subordinate standing. If a leader concludes that the Level 3 subordinate is stagnant and not growing, as hoped, then it may be time to demote, re-structure or terminate.

## Key Summary

Level 3 subordinates provide minimal leverage and deliver status quo

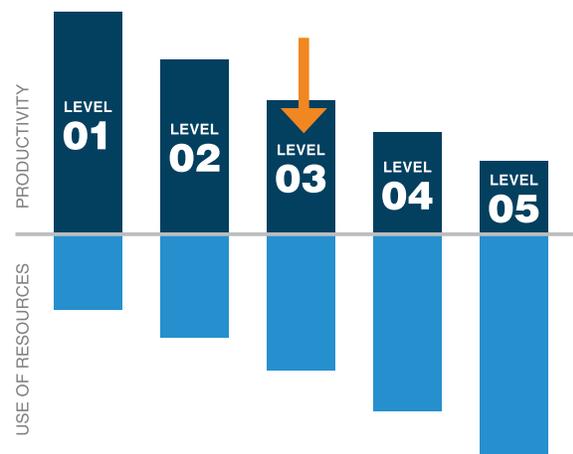
Level 3 subordinates and leaders provide minimal leverage

They can generate ideas and provide solutions, but typically lack the confidence or do not have the freedom to carry out their ideas

Level 3 behavior is a typical micro-manager and is rooted in ignorance, a culture of mediocrity or lack of confidence

Level 3 can be held back by subject-matter ignorance, cultural complacency and the lack of confidence needed to execute

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Level 3

## CONTINUED

### Makes Hurdles for Organization

- Level 3 subordinates or leaders may also have a hard time making decisions and can effectively halt productivity for the entire company if they are in a senior position.
- This is typically rooted in one of three causes:
  - **Ignorance**—They know enough about their role or the industry to understand they don't have enough information to make the right decision, and thus they seek guidance and in doing so waste time.
  - **Cultural**—They are working in a company culture that rewards their Level 3 behavior, so they grow complacent in their Level 3 performance.
  - **Confidence**—They either tend to be risk adverse, or they do not think they have the skills to tackle the task/project. (In this case, ideally he/she will acknowledge this and seek to train or educate themselves in the areas in which they need help.)

## Key Summary

Level 3 subordinates provide minimal leverage and deliver status quo

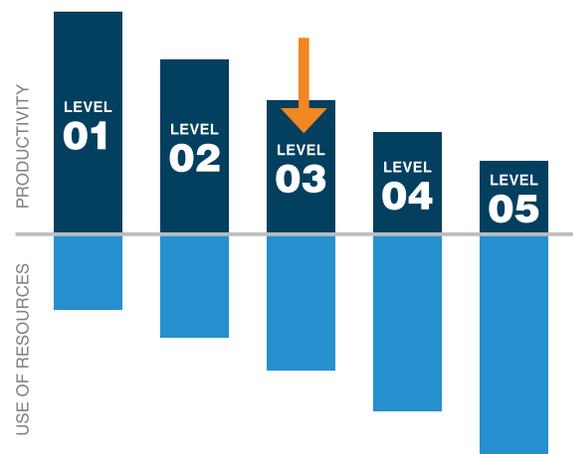
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### FREEDOM SCALE



# Level 4: Asks

## Distinguishing Quality

Subordinate asks leader what to do before taking any action.

## Provide Little if Any Leverage

There is little leverage at this stage.

## Low Producers

A Level 4 subordinates are low producers. They show little initiative. Once they have run out of projects/tasks, and only at that point do they ask for direction. They do not have the foresight nor take the responsibility to anticipate tasks or projects. They do not take responsibility to look ahead. As with a Level 5 subordinate, they are reactive, not proactive.

## Only Tolerated in Specific Roles

The only time this type of behavior should be tolerated past a training stage is if the role is relatively complex or detailed. Again this is up to the Leader to make the call.

## Adopt a Reactive Posture

Given the fast paced business environment of today, it is preferable to employ individuals who execute for innovation and think ahead. This saves time, energy and money, which directly impacts the bottom line.

## Struggle to Survive

Not many Level 4 Leaders actually survive. But if they do, they are easily identified as being often overwhelmed with their work and are continually looking to their Level 1 and 2 subordinates for solutions. If they fail to find solutions they abdicate responsibility to adopt a “victim” role.

## Key Summary

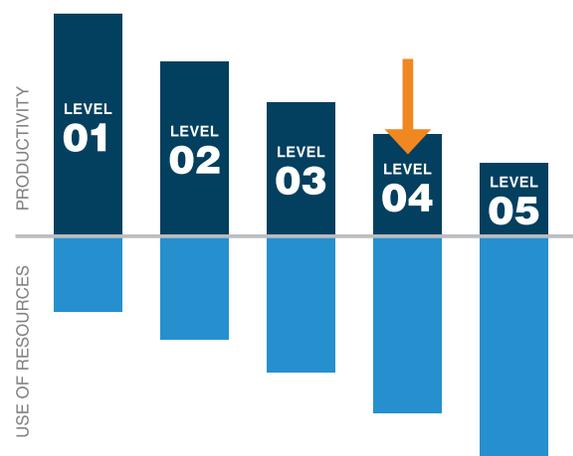
Level 4 subordinates are low producers, who take little initiative

Level 4 subordinates provide little leverage

Level 4 employees will always have a million excuses for why a task was not finished and are perpetual victims

Level 4 leaders rarely survive

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Level 5: Waits

## Distinguishing Quality

The subordinate remains inactive until the leader tells him/her what to do.

## No Leverage

There is no leverage at Level 5. Level 5 Operates at the lowest level of productivity.

A Level 5 subordinate is the lowest productivity position on the Freedom Scale. They are essentially inactive until they are prodded by the leader to accomplish specific tasks determined by the leader him or herself. This oversight by the leader is expensive and it keeps him/her from doing the work they are directly accountable for, which in turn, makes them less productive

## Drains Resources & Produces Very Little

A Level 5 subordinate drains the resources of a company, producing less work and requiring more time than those higher on the index. The leader has to hold their hand through projects.

## Grounds for Termination

The ONLY time this type of behavior is “available” for a subordinate is during orientation and training period of time. This should only be allowed for a set period. Past that, this is a HUGE warning sign that this person should not remain “on board”.

Given the demands of today’s work place it is preferable to get someone who takes initiative and innovates rather than someone who simply waits to be told what to do. We have software and other automated processes to take the place of traditional roles that rely on executing tasks if and only if asked.

## Cannot Survive

A Level 5 Leader is nonexistent. If you ever meet a Level 5 Leader he/she will not probably be in that position for very long.

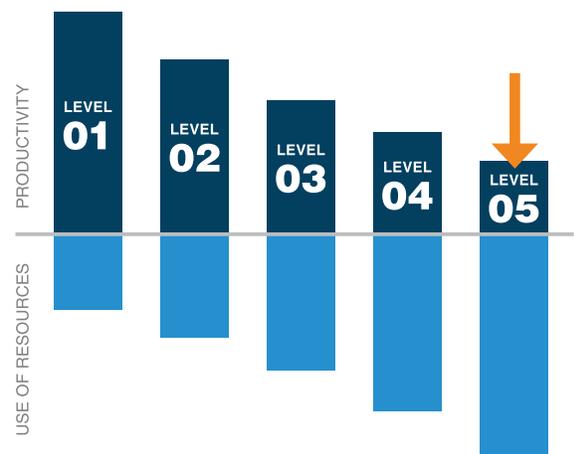
## Key Summary

Level 5 has no leverage

Level 5 drains resources and produces very little

If you identify a Level 5 employee, this is a warning sign and poses a threat to your organization’s productivity

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Key Takeaways for Your Subordinates

Encourage your subordinates to consider the Freedom Scale and evaluate where they believe they currently fit in the Freedom Scale. Ask them the following questions:

1. Where do you think you are on the Freedom Scale?
2. Based on that, where do you want to be? (Hopefully you want to be at a Level 1 or 2.)
3. What barriers do you see? Is it a skill issue or a self-confidence problem? Are you being micro-managed too much?

## Train Your Subordinates to Seek to Build Trust with their Leaders

If your subordinates feels like they have a micro-managing leader and wish to gain his/her trust, encourage them to begin incrementally. Have them start taking initiative with little tasks they know they can perform well without any help. Help them understand that once they have developed a pattern of completing quality task work, they can begin to ask to complete initial tests, projects, drafts by themselves and produce the work for review. Most micro managers will eventually relinquish control if the manager believes the subordinate is capable to operate alone and they have established confidence in their subordinate's ability to get it done right, on time and at or under budget.

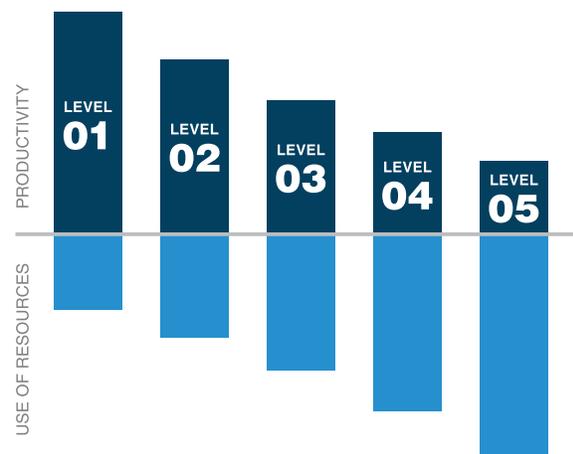
## Key Summary

Consider asking your subordinates to evaluate themselves. Self-inventory is key to motivation

If your subordinates complain that their leaders are micro-managing them, encourage them to seek opportunities to build their leader's trust with their accuracy and reliability in their work

Most micro-managers will relinquish control once they have the confidence in their subordinates to execute

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Key Takeaways for Leaders

## Time for Managers to Self-Evaluate

Encourage all the leaders in your organization, including yourself to self-evaluate where they stand on the index.

Are you micro-managing? Are you empowering those under you to succeed and build the skills needed to increase their productivity and performance?

## Mentor or Remove Micro-Managers from Your Organization

To combat this, consider building up their manager to try to reduce their micro-managing tendencies. If you cannot get them to move up the Freedom Scale and thus free up your top performers, you should consider removing them. The risk of losing your top performers is too high to keep a marginal manager in place.

## Place a High Value on Identifying & Retaining Level 1's

Effective leaders want as many Level 1 subordinates as possible in order to get the highest productivity out of each team player and the organization of which they are a part.

## Carefully Recruit Level 1 & 2 Subordinates

Effective leaders do a careful job of recruitment. They appreciate the importance of top talent. They recognize that people will do what they've done in the past. So they work hard and take the time to investigate candidates past performance.

## Invest in Your Level 1 Subordinates' Skills

Effective leaders will invest in the continued education and on-the-job skill building of their Level 1 and 2's to keep them learning and loyal to their organization. Without them, an effective leader knows there will be a dramatic drop in productivity.

## Key Summary

Mentor or remove micro-managers and watch that they do not over work or burn out the Level 1 and 2 employees under them

Meet with your leaders and create a strategy for identifying Level 1 and Level 2's and retaining them

Budget to invest in the skills of your highest performers. Recruit carefully and aim to hire Level 1 and 2 employees and invest in their skill set

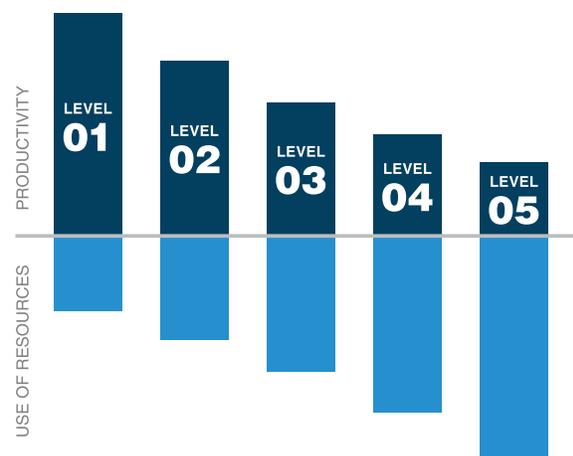
Identify and mentor Level 3 subordinates up to a Level 1 and 2; also identify Level 3 leaders and mentor them as well

Remove Level 4 and 5 employees they will only drain your resources

A leader's primary role is to get work done through others

The Freedom Scale provides a way for leaders to assess their subordinates' value to the organization and path to mentoring them to a higher level of productivity

### FREEDOM SCALE



# Key Takeaways for Leaders

## CONTINUED

### Train and Mentor Your Level 3's up to a 1 & 2 Level

Effective leaders take the time to personally train and mentor their Level 3 subordinates so they can move up to the Level 1 and 2 stages.

### Remove Level 4 and 5 Subordinates As Soon As Possible

Effective leaders recognize their Level 4 and 5's and find replacements as soon as possible.

### Bottom Line

The role of a manager is to get work done through others. This tool will help enable any manager to do just that. This is where you can realize a higher level of productivity by using the Freedom Scale.

To continue our series and learn how to manage people up the Freedom Scale, how to:

1. Gauge toxicity in evaluating employee potential
2. How to mentor promising employees and track their improvement as they move up the Freedom Scale

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