

# Wroten & Associates

## May 2012 Leadership Insight

### LEADERSHIP AND POWER

**"Knowledge is power, therefore learning is the fundamental path to power."**  
*- Sir Francis Bacon*

Leadership and power are closely related. We tend to follow those who are powerful. Leaders have power for many different reasons. They may be experts in their field, they possess it by virtue of their position or title, or have power because their team members admire them. These leaders may influence others effectively as a result of their skills and personal qualities.

To be an effective leader it is important that we have an understanding of power. Social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven conducted a notable study and identified the following five bases of power: **legitimate power** is that a person has the right to make demands and expect compliance; **reward power** is a leader's ability to compensate another for compliance; **expert power** refers to a person's superior skill and knowledge; **referent power** is an individual's perceived attractiveness, worthiness, and right to respect from others; and **coercive power** is the belief that a person can punish others for noncompliance. The results of the study determined that the most effective leaders utilize **referent** and **expert** power. That being said, be aware that with referent power it is not enough to be worthy and likable, a leader must have a strong sense of integrity and honesty. Expert power is essential because as a leader, your team members look to you for guidance and if your team members respect your expertise and trust your judgement you will be able to motivate them toward successful completion of the project or goal.

Do you recognize these types of power in yourself or others? If so, think about how power influences the way you live and work. Any one of us has the capability of holding power and influencing others, we do not need to have an impressive job title or beautiful office. To improve your leadership skills recognize your own sources of power and build on them.

**Wishing you a powerful and inspired month!**

**Positively provided to you by:**

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