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## Authority, Responsibility, & the Hallelujah Chorus

The manager of a retail store told cashiers that their responsibility was to make transactions easy and quick for customers. However, if an item had no price or bar code, the cashier was required to call a manager and wait.

What's wrong with this picture?

You're correct if you said that the cashiers were held responsible for customer satisfaction, but did not have the authority to make the decisions which would make customers happy.

If your employees are responsible for a specific result, do they have the authority to make to make it happen?

Here's how to find out:

1. First, ask employees "What are some situations where you aren't sure whether to take an action or to refer it to me?" Then clarify what you want: "Well, in a situation like that, I'd like you to (fill in a, b, or c below).

- a. Ask me for a decision or permission before taking action
- b. Inform me after taking action (just a heads-up so I'm not surprised)
- c. No need to inform or involve me: "You handle it."  
(insert music here: "The Hallelujah Chorus")

2. Second, make a positive comment when your employee decides and acts. If his decision wasn't exactly the one you'd like, calmly and helpfully say "Next time, I'd like you to \_\_\_\_\_. You made the right decision not to keep the customer waiting. I'm glad you handled it."

Correct the decision but reinforce the action of deciding.

How much time could you save yourself (while developing your team members) by moving the decision-making one notch "down the alphabet" (see above)?

How much more will your team members enjoy their work, and *develop themselves* for more responsibility?

How delighted will your customers (internal or external) become?

*Hallelujah.*