



Power-With Workplace Glossary

Try updating some of the terminology you use at work to help people update how they think. Let go of ‘power-over’ terms, based in control, hierarchy, and depersonalization, and adopt ‘power-with’ terms that signal mutual respect – while also articulating concepts more clearly.

| Power-Over | Power-With |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers / personnel Boss / superior Rank and file Chain of command Write someone up Manage performance Perform your duties Rewards / incentives Human resources Talent management Human capital Headcount Work under / report to Loyalty Employee retention Mandate Insubordination Manage out Catch them doing something right Make people do | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coworkers / team members / colleagues Leader / coordinator / sponsor Individual contributors Decision makers Address / document a problem Enable / support results Fulfill your commitments / expectations Compensation People Hiring Skills and knowledge Number of employees Work with / on the same team as Engagement / commitment Stay / voluntary leave / tenure rate Policy change Violated commitments / agreements End employment Give positive feedback Ask / invite / offer / request / support |

Please note: We do not advise adopting power-with terms to mask power-over beliefs or systems. Veiled hierarchies and unnamed power can be more damaging than calling things what they are.

We are also not advocating for shaming people’s word choices or assuming they represent a power-over perspective. (We’re not even sure yet if the alternatives we’ve proposed here will create more clarity and less cringe!) What we do recommend is having an open, curious conversation with your team about the words you choose to use at your organization.

Are there other terms you love or hate? Let us know at hello@scarletspark.org!

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Want to build a power-with workplace? Read [Lead Together: Stop Squirreling Away Power and Build a Better Team](#) 