



A paradigm shift has occurred in the global work culture and organizations are rapidly embracing the global mindset.

The whole world is becoming one giant labor pool, as off-shoring opens up the free trade of labor - instead of goods - across borders. Technologies and extended supply chains now widen the scope of global networks.

There is also a major shift in how, when, and where work gets done, with flexibility being the buzzword. While the many organizations are labor-intensive, it cannot simply remain a spectator to the winds of change sweeping through 'workplaces'. It is therefore important for organizations to develop their own global mindsets and skills for adapting not only to differences between markets, but also to change.

These global mindsets will help them reinvent their core strengths - the kind of capital change needed for achieving high performance. This in turn will aid in retaining talent as people fear being left behind if they do not go with the flow.

A very important tenet of this culture is freedom and empowerment. It refers to the process in which managers give employees the autonomy to exercise control over job-related situations, problems and decisions. Managers at such properties are likely to transfer responsibilities, provide opportunities for personal initiatives, and demonstrate trust in their employees.

The term "empowerment" rose to prominence in the late 1980s and saw considerable use through the 1990s in conjunction with the total quality management (TQM) movement. Its use has been so widespread that the term itself has become a buzzword. We're told repeatedly that we must empower employees to enable them to make their best possible contributions to organizational success; we're told this as though it were something new, some late-twentieth-century discovery.

Although empowerment may be described in a variety of ways, its essence remains giving employees' control of their jobs and letting them make their own decisions and solve their own problems. Therefore, there's no difference between empowerment and proper delegation. Therein lies the problem; delegation has been so widely misused and abused that the term itself has become hopelessly tarnished. The conscientious delegating manager—or honest empowering manager—clearly defines employees' limits and keeps hands off as long as they operate within these limits and deliver the expected results.

Empowerment increases morale, which is directly linked to achievement. Morale, accordingly, is defined as the feeling a worker has about his/her job based on how the worker perceives himself in the organization and the extent to which the organization is viewed as meeting the worker's own needs and expectations. A higher degree of employee empowerment correlates directly with a higher service orientation and acts as a perceptible differentiator in a crowded space called the 'brand world'.

Companies who care about their employees and what they can do to benefit their business are the companies that truly value their human resources. Organizations like these put a huge emphasis on the correlation between increased financial productivity and employees who enjoy what they do?

It's not hard to imagine that employees who are given positive incentives to come to work each day can benefit a company greatly by performing to the best of their abilities.

By conducting human resource activities that improve employee attitudes, companies can reap the benefits of a workforce that skillfully masters the business strategy as well as increased performance levels and higher market values.

Employee empowerment is the most critical aspect of successful business today and is not yet a popularly understood concept. For an organization to be responsive, agile and decisive, empowerment at every level is the key.

Empowerment makes the difference when a sales person decides doing that little bit extra for customers. Empowerment makes the difference when the split second decision by worker saves the production line from a possible breakdown.

Empowerment makes the difference when people try to locate opportunity for improving their work processes. And still managers do not know how to make empowerment a reality in their area of work. They are not sure of what capabilities are desirable in themselves and subordinates to make empowerment happen.

How to Empowering?

- **Know Your Employees Well.**

Know their strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, and limitations. Know what they can and can't do; know them well enough to be able to judge which of them should be given what assignments.

- **Teach them What to Do and How to Do it.**

This is one of the weakest points in the delegation process as usually practiced; some managers tend to make an assignment and move on with inadequate attention to preparing the employee, when in reality this step can be time-consuming. The manager's "reward" of time saved comes well in the future; to save time in the future usually requires spending more time in the present.

- **Provide the Resources**

Provide all the authority necessary for task completion. Empowered employees should command all the resources needed to get the job done.

- **Define Limits and Expectations**

This is crucial; employees need to know precisely the results you're looking for and how far they can go in achieving those results. Focus on results; within reason, you needn't be concerned with all the steps taken to achieve those results.

- **Turn them Loose**

Once you feel that they know what's to be done, when it's to be done, and what results are expected, let them do it.

- **Provide them Guidance and Advice**

Be available to provide advice and assistance as needed, but let them come to you. Don't hover and don't micromanage. Don't intrude uninvited unless you see something going so wrong that it can't be left alone.

If you want to make a difference you need to interact with others. To gain power you need to share yours. If you don't share your power no one will share their power with you. Without respect and appreciation for people, all people, you will not be able to build the network of dependencies that you need to become successful. Business is about people and relationships not about functions and organization charts.

If you look at people as mere functions, replaceable at your mood you eventually will fail. To succeed you need others that support you and that are willing to go the extra mile with you to succeed. You only will find those people if you are willing to give more than they expect. More respect, more appreciation, more love and more accessibility.

Conclusion

In many parts of the organization today there is an honest effort going on to empower people at lower job levels.

No organization can succeed more than the development of its people, therefore, their effective development for best performance is crucial. Therefore; understanding that empowering people are your greatest asset is a simple and invaluable prerequisite to achieving your business objectives.

Therefore, the idea of empowerment is quite simple. People at the workplace should be helped, guided, reinforced socially, and supported emotionally. Helping employees means training, mentoring, and coaching them in their jobs such that they produce no defects or rejects in their output.

When people at the workplace have been legitimately empowered, their efforts are far more likely will translate to the kind of performance that the organization will find most valuable.

Don't you think it's high time to empower people in your workplace?

About the Author

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