



10 keys of empowerment

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1. Corporate culture/climate

The right climate should prevail in the working environment. There ought to be that feeling of trust; where employees, with appropriate support and training, would get on fine with their tasks and would account for their judgement-calls and decisions made at the 'moment of truth'.

2. Concept awareness

Understand the concept of empowerment. Managers need to know how empowerment could help to improve their organisation's, as well as their own effectiveness.

3. Scope and responsibility

Know the functional scope. For a 'command' organisation, managerial authority is needed



to get things done. But in an 'empowered' organisation, people are generally given more scope to exercise control over, and take responsibility for, their work.

4. Job structure

Tasks or jobs need to be structured in such a

way that individuals could personally plan, evaluate, and execute a complete operation in a total process.

5. Extent of delegating

If empowerment is to be seriously implemented, managers or superiors should

delegate more; allowing individuals and team members greater scope to plan, act and monitor their own goals and measures.

6. Extent of employee participation

Know the extent/degree of empowerment accorded to groups of employees so that they value the opportunity or 'say' in how their work ought to be organised and in addressing their work-problems.

7. Encourage team/individual solutions

Individuals and team-members are to be spurred to develop their own problem-solving and decision-making methods to specific issues within their empowered functions or operational activities.

8. Management layers

For empowerment to flow spontaneously, the organisational management layers should be very thin (flat rather than conical hierarchy). There should be minimal checking or supervisions at each level so that decision-making close to the point of action is not seriously inhibited.

9. Reward system

The company's corporate culture should have a reward system that recognises achievements on the part of the managers in empowering their staff and the individuals in making a bigger contribution in a climate of empowerment.

10. Support and training

Empowerment would only be successful if the 'tone at the top' is positive. It is of paramount importance for superiors and managers to render support, training, and guidance on an ongoing basis. This would assure that the empowered individuals and teams are always motivated so that they could operate effectively.

The benefits of empowering

Reasons for organisations to resort to empowering their employees vary and depending on the identity, type of industry, culture and philosophy of those organisations. But the more generic reasons would be because empowerment:

- reduces operational costs by eliminating unnecessary layers of management, staff functions, and quality control and checking operations.
- speeds up reaction times and decision-making.
- renders people more responsibility.
- provides employees gain greater sense of achievement from their work.
- enables maximal utilisation or deployment of human resources.
- engenders greater job satisfaction, commitment and motivation.
- releases the innovative and creative capacities of employees.