

**T**HERE is a better way to increase your company's competitiveness. It is not about focusing on efficiency and cutting corners. It is about effectiveness, on coaching your staff to become self-empowered employees. Self-empowerment is about taking charge and doing whatever it takes to get things done.

The employees are more solution-driven, rather than problem-oriented. They take responsibility; provide no excuses and take action to get results. Thus, they are more effective and they increase the performance of the company.

There are 10 areas of self-empowerment. The first part of this article will discuss the first five areas and the second part next week will touch on the remaining five.

#### SELF-AWARENESS

Self-empowerment must begin with self-awareness. One cannot begin to develop oneself to become more effective if one does not know one's areas of improvement. I suggest a proven approach called the Personal SWOT analysis, which answers the questions below:

- What are my strengths that I have not leveraged?
- What are my weaknesses that I have not rectified?
- What are the opportunities that I have not capitalised?
- What are the threats that I have not countered?

Of course, to understand one's areas for improvement, it is useful to engage others to provide feedback to help overcome one's blind spots. Keeping an open mind, accepting feedback and taking responsibility to improve are keys to being self-empowered.

#### SELF-BELIEF

Self-belief is the trust and confidence one has in one's abilities. In our consulting work with clients, we noted that the No. 1 reason why people do not perform better is due to lack of self-belief among employees. Writer Sydney Smith's words come across very poignantly here: "A great deal of talent is lost to the world for want of a little courage. Everyday sends to their graves obscure men whose timidity prevented them from making a first effort".

Do not let the negativity of others sap your self-belief and your power to achieve great things.

#### SELF-MOTIVATED

The problem with most motivational programmes is that it makes participants dependent on them to get their wave of inspiration and energy. Most motivation that is externally-induced is not sustainable. Therefore, the greatest motivation is self-motivation,

# SELF-EMPOWERED EMPLOYEES



essentially to search deep inside oneself and find the cause and meaning to do something. One may be self-motivated to prove a point that he can do what others are doing. One can also be self-motivated by setting a goal of becoming a manager by 30 or achieve financial independence before 40. Subsequently, one can visualise the benefits arising from achieving such goals. Those mental pictures of achievement can motivate oneself to go all out to achieve these goals.

People seldom do things to the best of their ability; they do things to the best of their willingness. And we can all do our best through self-motivation.

#### SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

The workplace is demanding for people to take responsibility. The most common reply an employee gives for an unaccomplished task is: "That's not my job". We are all too familiar with the story: "There are four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because



it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have".

Self-responsibility is about seizing an opportunity to take charge. It is about being answerable and accountable to a challenge and taking initiative to overcome it. One need not do it alone but one could get the involvement of others to resolve the problem.

#### SELF-ACHIEVEMENT

There is magic in self-achievement. When one has achieved something outstanding, one derives a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. It will also

reinforce one's self-esteem, which in turns, spurs one's motivation to achieve more. While teamwork is important in organisations, people like to choose those with personal achievement when selecting team members.

In today's increasing complexity and challenges, we need self-empowered employees to take charge and solve problems as fast as they arrive. There is often little time to sit for a meeting or to request more resources or authority to get things done. The power to get things done is inherent in self-empowered employees. They are the key advantage organisations have in winning in the marketplace.

Dr Victor S.L. Tan is the CEO of KL Strategic Change Consulting Group. He is also the president of Pusat Perubahan Sumber Manusia Sdn Bhd. He is an author of 10 management books. He has conducted customised training on Developing The Self-Empowered Employees for many organisations. For feedback on this article, send an email to [victorslan@klssc.com](mailto:victorslan@klssc.com) or contact at 012-3903168.