



Employee Empowerment - How To Let Them Succeed

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"If the job is going to get done then I have to do it!"

This is a familiar phrase that we've all used at one time or another. Sadly, it is a costly attitude, and it does very little for employee growth and empowerment. This workplace mentality puts additional strains on everyone due to missed deadlines, task jumping, tension between employees, frustration: you name it, it's there. So, what is the solution? It starts with you.

You have to start with yourself and look honestly at how things have been managed to this point, realistically determine what has worked and what has not worked, and determine a path of action that could be implemented from this point forward. This evaluation process has to be undertaken with sincerity and dedication to be effective. Excuses and justifications must be recognized for what they are...roadblocks to a more successful working environment.

Delegate

One of the first steps to employee empowerment is delegation. Let go of the thought "I have to do this myself" and take note of what can be delegated. This starts a process that will enhance performance. You are, in fact, starting to empower your employees by proving that you trust their skills, and that you think enough of them to make them accountable and responsible for outcomes. Employees, then, will take ownership of the situation all the way to the finish.

A note on delegation: we must remember that placing those best suited for the job at hand (through past experience, training, or proven performance) in the right position is of utmost importance. We must make a concerted effort to ensure that employees are assigned responsibilities that will allow the best in them to come through. This also ensures that as the staff grows, there are those around them who are competent, and confident in their roles.

Benchmark

Employee empowerment is a joint venture. There is trust and confidence building that has to take place on both sides of this equation. For employees to be confident in their new empowered roles, they must be given a guide to the goals and expectations you have for them.

Set up a benchmark schedule that will help keep you and your employees on track, assist in keeping projects on schedule, allow for evaluation of the progress of the project, and keep in contact with the staff.

Coach

Coaching is one of the true leadership skills. Much like what happens on sports teams, a coach's role is to provide tools and guidance and then step back and let the players do their jobs. In the corporate environment, the term coaching is expanded to include benchmarking, training, and evaluation.

This process need not be as arduous as it may sound. It is quite simple really, but it must involve all parties and not sound like some dictatorial process.

Reaffirm

You become the barometer of the environment employees work in, and if a storm is looming employees can usually sense it well in advance. It's here that the difference can be made. Storms are part of the day to day work realities. Good leaders, however, know the importance of trained and competent crews, which are able to face the challenges that can, and will, appear before them.

You have to work with, and look for, opportunities that allow you to contribute to the situation at hand. You must show with sincerity that you want your employees to succeed, and make available whatever tools are at your disposal. This is an ongoing process, one that you start and staff will always be able to finish.

Self Managed Teams

This is where the fun begins, and in some cases for the Supervisor/Manager/Coach, fear sets in. This is where, after all is said and done, you get to put your money where your mouth is and prove that you have trust and confidence in your team.

If anything, the implementation of self managed teams shows that you are willing to embrace change, to help improve, and to empower your staff. Without question, if you keep at the process you and your team will reap the result from the final process. You will end up with a crew that can meet challenges head on and weather storms with confidence and success.

Trust

When you allow others the opportunity to perform, they will try their best. And, although sometimes the result is not exactly as smooth or successful as hoped for, this trust encourages employees to try harder and better next time. Good leadership is allowing employees the means to succeed, and providing them the guidance (coaching) to finish the task at hand.

Employees will, without a doubt, become highly capable and empowered. You will have laid the seed for success that will benefit all on board. They will, in fact, be able to do what is needed, efficiently and with confidence. You have now empowered them to succeed.

"Education (Training) is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know"
Daniel J Boorstin

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