
The Mathis Group's Messenger

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Empowering For Success

As a general rule, people love power. We like being in control and having things done our way. However, that can't always be the case.



We don't always have time to have our hand in every aspect of the organization.

You must learn to empower your employees. Empowerment is giving authority or power to someone. Empowerment will generate better ideas, increase employee buy-in, build the organization's strengths, and increase communication. Allowing your workers to make decisions and take immediate action on an issue will also increase your customer satisfaction. Customers will not have to feel like their time is being wasted if employees are able to solve problems or make changes without the need to continually get approval from their superiors.

Empowerment, however, is not for every employee. There are several factors you must consider before determining whether a given employee has the necessary capabilities to be empowered. First, you must ascertain the level of security the worker possesses. There are some cases where an employee does not have the authorization for the information. Second, confidential issues concerning co-workers should never be shared to anyone not related to the situation. Finally, will the person protect the information? Be sure the person to whom you are giving information will keep the necessary aspects confidential.

Just as some people should not have additional authority, there are some matters that should not be handled

by people other than management. Such matters are:

- Establishment of policy or procedures
- Handling fighting between employees
- Specific things your superior told you to do
- Some training issues
- Highly confidential matters

Even though empowerment can be extremely beneficial for an organization, oftentimes management is reluctant to implement such an action. This could be because they don't agree with the direction in which the company is going, fear losing control or power, aren't comfortable with workers doing this level of decision making, are fearful that the employee might get their recognition, or question what their new role is in the organization. Managers may be fearful of putting additional authority on someone who is not qualified.

Selecting the correct person to give the authority can be tricky. You should look for people who:

- are shakers and movers
- look for areas in which to help
- have strong organizational skills
- make little or no mistakes
- need very little supervision

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Spread authority around. If the largest part of the pyramid is to be at the top, the top people should have the authority.
Bits & Pieces

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Choosing the wrong individual can make things difficult within your company and with clients or customers.

There are four musts that are vital in order for empowerment to be successful.

Supervisory staff willing to share power

If management isn't willing to share power, other employees won't be able to make decisions on their own. Limiting authority within the organization will cause more time handling problems that arise.

Plans for starting and maintaining empowerment

There must be a system in place for initiating and evaluating empowerment of employees or it is likely that there will be a breakdown. You must evaluate the employees to make sure they are handling their authority properly and in a manner that reflects the organization's core values and beliefs.

Coaching atmosphere

Help your employees be successful. Let the atmosphere of your company be one that encourages asking for advice when needed. Teach them all aspects of the empowerment and let them know of updates as needed.

Rewards and appraisals



Regular evaluations will keep you apprised on how your employee is handling the empowerment. Reward him or her for a job well done--this will encourage them to keep up the good work!

As you're empowering others, give specific, detailed results of what you are expecting. Establish enough authority that he or she is able to complete the task. Spell out responsibility in a clear manner. After you have given a worker authority, allow him or her freedom to work. Don't continue to try to manage them with the same closeness as you did before. Lastly, give employees the resources to do the job effectively and efficiently.

You must realize that shifting from a top down control of decision making to empowerment will take time. This is not something that will happen overnight. Upper management will still make many decisions without asking for input. Employees should not feel like they are obligated to know everything that is going on within the organization. There will be instances where situations will change and projects will be taken back suddenly without warning. This does not necessarily mean that the employee failed or did anything wrong. This also does not mean that he or she should be passed over the next time additional authority is given out.

Giving your employees the power and the resources to make decisions and solve problems without supervision will allow you to spend your time more wisely. It will also give your employees the confidence and experience needed to handle anything that comes their way.



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