



Empowerment in the Workplace

Quality Leadership involves empowerment, effective communication skills (speaking, listening, other), and the ability to make sound decisions based on facts rather than emotion. A good leader will work to accomplish improvements in these areas.

The Importance of Empowerment

The basic act of empowerment is a key component of achieving quality leadership.

Empowerment can be defined as follows:

To give power to; to enable or permit; to give authority to or authorize.

In order to be an effective leader, you need to empower those below you and thus enable them to take action on their own. A poor leader micromanages and fails to empower. This ultimately becomes a costly exercise in failure since one business manager cannot direct every single action taken by every single person. Employees must feel OK about acting on their own and not overly scrutinized. They must not fear repercussions or reprisals for taking individual actions (and sometimes failing).

Empowerment Questions for Leaders:

- Have you actively modeled the behavior you wish to promote and empower for?
- Have you given those you wish to empower the permission or authorization to succeed?
- Have you shown, privately and publicly, your confidence in them?

- Have you developed a “connection” with those you wish to empower?
- Do you consciously maintain a high level of honesty in everything you do?

Underlying this process is the concept of *trust*. In order to empower others, you must develop a relationship based on trust.

Critical Factors For a Trusting Relationship

- *Connection* – There should be a fundamental “connection” in a trusting relationship.
- *Honesty* – It almost goes without saying that honesty is very important to developing a trusting relationship. If you are seen as a deceitful person by those you wish to empower, they will likely be uneasy when it comes to acting on their own. You must always keep your word and maintain a “transparent” image so others can understand your motivations.
- *Integrity* – You must act in a fair manner and not show favorites, and your actions should be based upon strong morals and ethics that benefit all rather than a few. Always seeking “win-win” outcomes helps to build integrity.
- *Listening* – You should be able to listen in order to develop trust, and this involves solicitation of feedback. This feedback will guide you and identify any possible issues with the relationship.
- *Accountability* – When you are wrong, you should readily admit it, and when others are wrong, you should point it out in a non-threatening way.