

Benefits of Empowerment

By Brian Ladden

Research shows that when applied properly empowerment can provide benefits to the individual and to organisations.

Benefits to the Company

Empowerment can bring benefits to productivity, decision making and customer service. Empowerment has been shown to improve quality of service, productivity and competitiveness. Improved productivity and competitiveness in turn contributes positively to the firm's financial performance in the form of an improved "bottom line".

Empowerment contributes to improved decision making and greater commitment from the workforce to decisions that are made. In an empowered organisation the location for the making of decisions is pushed downwards to the point that it is most appropriate in terms of information, expertise and need. This allows product and customer service issues that arise to be dealt with much quicker because they are dealt with by those directly involved.

In relation to customer services, employees provide quicker response to customer needs during service delivery and quicker response to customer's complaints during service recovery. Empowerment leads to quicker solutions for customers problems because employees do not waste time referring customer complaints to managers. Employees feel better about their job and themselves they will interact with more warmth and enthusiasm to the customer.

Empowerment is highly critical in situations where customer needs are highly variable. In these situations empowerment enabled employees to customise service delivery. In the current environment where Irish companies are struggling to compete with low-cost economies of China, India or Eastern Europe, customisation of services and products is a critical competitive advantage.

Benefits to the Individual

From the individuals perspective, empowerment has been proved to improve job satisfaction, motivation and morale.

Empowerment has been shown to improve job satisfaction. Job satisfaction describes how well a person likes their job and how rewarding they perceive it to be. The greater the empowerment; the higher the internal work motivation, the higher the job satisfaction, the lower the job stress, the greater the job involvement and the more involvement beyond the defined job of the individual.

Employees who are empowered:

- Have low ambiguity about their role in the organisation
- Feel that their organisations provide them with socio-political support