

Examples of Employee Empowerment to Awaken the Inner Manager in Employees

🕒 2010-09-15 📁 [Human Resources](#), [business](#)



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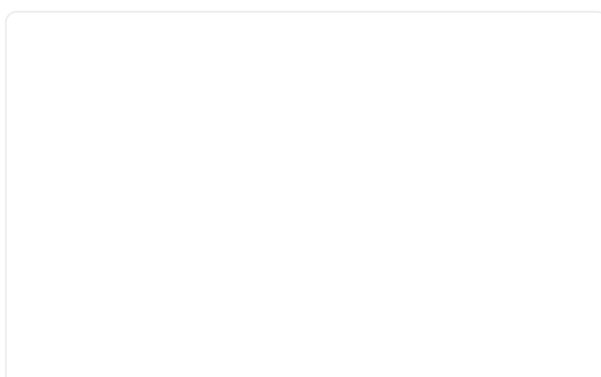
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Employee empowerment is a term popularized in business and involves the transfer of the decision-making authority to employees to give them a sense of ownership or investment in their work. Employee empowerment is a powerful motivational tool because it touches the core of the human spirit that desires to be in control of one's destiny and to bring about a sense of self-created order in a chaotic world. Nowhere is there a greater need for empowerment than in a workplace constantly embroiled in change and where shifting responsibilities into the hands of persons who are the most equipped to handle new situations can lead to increased productivity.

Structural Examples of Employee Empowerment

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Define Employees

Employee empowerment can vary in degree and scope and can permeate through the various levels of the organization. Here are several great examples of employee empowerment that can be implemented on a wide scale to re-balance the fundamental way decisions are made regarding planning, production, service, and human resources.

Transfer of Quality Control – In the final analysis, we are all judged by the “quality of our work,” and this is why empowerment often starts with decisions that involve quality control. Many Total Quality Management (TQM) practices include a strong component of employee empowerment that can be adopted in most organizations. A good example of this type of empowerment occurred during the 1950s when Toyota [first set up the Kanban system](#), which enabled employees to determine production levels to meet real time demand based upon visual signals used on the production floor.

Inclusion Through Consultations – Seeking the consultation of those directly involved with performing the tasks when [constructing the project charter](#) is another effective way to increase employee empowerment. However, the consultation must be substantive to have a lasting empowering effect. Calling a last minute meeting to seek others input when there is no time to rework the project only qualifies as lip service consultation. Even if the consultation is solicited well in advance of a project deadline, there must be joint decision-making for the empowerment to be viewed as more than a rubber stamp.

Increased Role in Hiring Decisions – Having a real say in the hiring decisions that affects the employee's department or area is another good example of employee empowerment. A team with good rapport among the members will be more productive. To be truly empowering, employees should be given the opportunity to screen candidates from

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consensus candidate, the employees' choice should stand unless management can point to a specific and good reason to deny the candidate the position.

Asking for Volunteers – Asking for volunteers for projects is another great example of employee empowerment because it creates at the inception of the project a team of employees who already have a greater sense of ownership from the mere act of volunteering. When a person volunteers for an assignment, his or her perspective shifts and the person feels a stronger connection and commitment than if the task had been assigned arbitrarily. As long as employees are not pressured into volunteering or do so only out of a sense of obligation or anticipation of future gain, then their willingness to volunteer comes from a genuine interest and will be empowering.

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Small But Effective Examples of Employee Empowerment

Often simple examples of empowerment can be found in giving employees a say in the areas that affect workplace policies and procedures.

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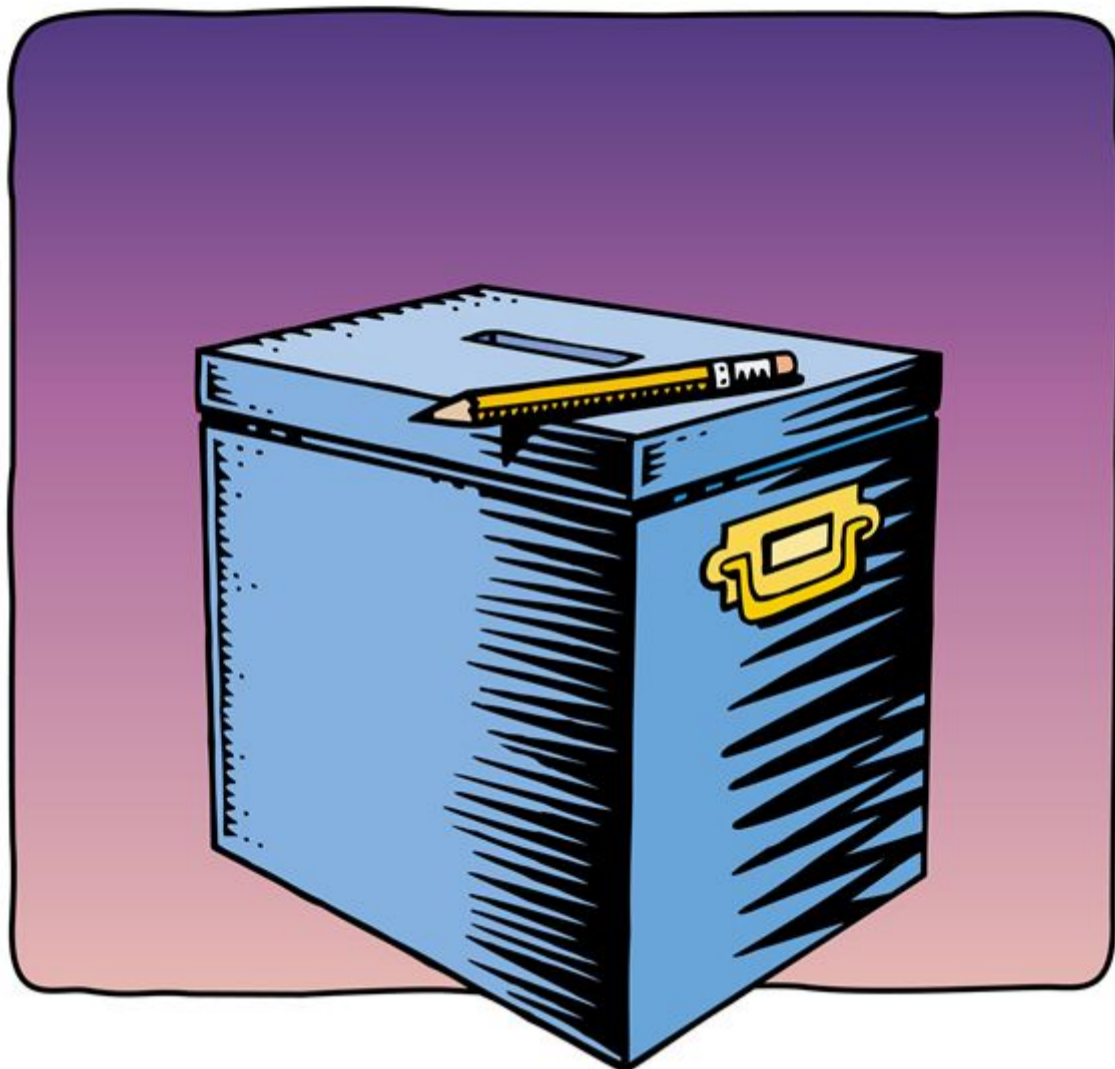
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Employee Suggestion Box – Some of the best ideas are generated from employee suggestion boxes that can lead to improve every aspect of the workplace. To generate continuous positive feelings of empowerment, good suggestions need to be implemented, recognized, and rewarded by management.

Flextime Policies – [Creating a flextime policy based upon workers' input](#) speaks loudly and directly to the issue of empowerment because an employee's time is no longer micromanaged. Setting one's schedule is empowering because we don't all operate at our peak performance between 9 to 5. Recognizing a person's work clock is different will also harness the employee's creativity.

Greater Control Over an Individual's Work Area – Working in an environment that is comfortable is important to overall job satisfaction. When employees have control over their individual workspace and can create their own comfort zones they feel empowered. Whenever feasible, employees should be provided with



Break Room Decor and Policies - For common areas such as the break room, giving employees the opportunity to choose the decor and set the policies regarding the use and upkeep instills in them another sense of ownership and pride in their workplace. Also it is another opportunity for employees to work together as team to make decisions that affect them personally when they are momentarily off the clock.

Casual Dress Code – Setting a casual dress code policy is a subtle but effective way to empower employees. Allowing employees to determine the style of dress to match the type of work they do everyday sends a powerful message of confidence. [In analyzing the pros and cons of the casual dress code](#), make sure you determine that a dress code is appropriate for your organization and whether some broad guidelines are needed.

Every example of employment empowerment, no matter how great or small, can stimulate employees renewed interest in their workplace while increasing their awareness of how their individual contributions lead to the success of the organization. To effectively execute employee empowerment be sure to follow these [seven principles of employee empowerment](#).

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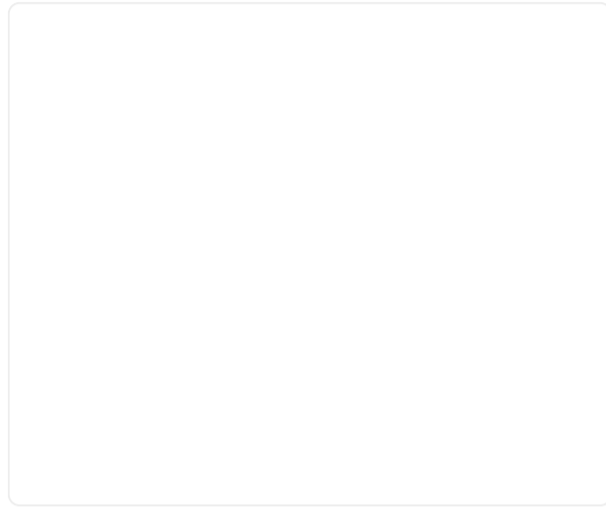


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