

15 Empowerment

Empowerment – devolving responsibility to your team for decisions affecting their work – increases team members' involvement and commitment. Use this self-assessment to determine how well you empower your staff.

Empowerment self-assessment

Here are 20 statements describing what you may or may not be doing. Read each description and circle the score which best fits how frequently you do it, where:

- 0 = Never
- 1 = Rarely
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Often

Be honest!

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| ● I demonstrate enthusiasm for the organization | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● My actions are focused on the customer | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I trust my team to take initiatives | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I am tolerant of mistakes | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I share information with my team on a regular basis | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I allow my team to make decisions on their own | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I encourage my team to be pro-active in solving customer problems | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I seek out, and act on, the opinions of my team | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I recognize and reward good performance | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I help develop my team's skills and knowledge | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I jointly set objectives with my team | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I give constructive feedback on performance | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I encourage teamwork and co-operation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I support decisions made by my team | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I am approachable | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I make clear the expectations I have of my team | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I make individuals feel valued | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ● I allow my team to by-pass me and go to my manager | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

- I take an active role in helping my team set and meet their development plans 0 1 2 3
- I encourage members of my team to develop new working methods, even if they are very different from what we do at the moment 0 1 2 3

Now total your score



How to interpret your score

- 40 and over You have an empowering leadership style. Your actions show a willingness to devolve responsibility. You help create the conditions in which people can succeed.
- 39 or less Your behaviour does not encourage your team to be empowered. Look at those items where you have scored never or rarely since they may block empowerment in others.

Consider asking your team to complete this survey and see if their perceptions match yours. Discuss the results.

What does empowering leadership involve?

Empowering leadership is underpinned by the following values and assumptions:

- Respect for the individual
- Recognition that everyone has a different contribution to make
- The importance of customer satisfaction and retention
- Open and honest two-way communication
- The belief that managers do not always know best
- The need for continuous improvement
- Recognition of the value of personal growth and development.

These beliefs manifest themselves in the behaviours outlined in the self-assessment. These actions help the individual to feel more involved and responsible. They create a rewarding place of work as well as a customer-focused environment.

RECOMMENDED READING

Clutterbuck, David (1994) *The Power of Empowerment*, Kogan Page, London
 Foy, Nancy (1994) *Empowering People at Work*, Gower, Aldershot