

Empowering Yourself for Success

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In recent years there have been many books and articles published to help people empower others. Alternatively, some sources take the approach that for you to give the impression that you have “empowered” someone else may send a negative message that the person is perceived to have been powerless in his or her own right to begin with.

The reality is that you have the ability to create personal power within yourself and to share that power with others. Much of this capacity comes from your personal attitude about yourself. It also comes from your ability to access resources and strategies that can provide tools that you need to be successful.

Basically, self-empowerment comes from having a *can do* attitude about yourself, your abilities, and your opportunities. “Nay sayers” or those who continually think of reasons why something will not succeed often fail in the workplace. Taking an approach of, “*That will never work here,*” “*We tried that before and it did not work,*” or “*That cannot be done,*” will certainly lead you and ultimately your organization to failure when dealing with others.

To help prevent or overcome a negative viewpoint, try the following strategies:

- **Work to build trust.** Trust is the basis for all relationships. Without it, you have no relationship. To get trust, you must also give trust and show others that you have faith in their abilities and intentions. Once you do this, you will likely find that they open up and share more freely their ideas, issues, questions, concerns, and resources with you. Only when you get to this level of mutual sharing can you effectively provide quality customer service. Many people will display trust simply by the fact that they come to you and your organization for assistance. However, if you or the system fails them, the trust will be destroyed and may never be regained (at least not to its previous level).
- **Create information-sharing networks.** Work with co-workers, supervisors, vendors and customers to establish a conduit through which information is freely and regularly passed. For example, if you find an article or bit of information from which someone else can benefit, forward it along with a little note telling them that you thought the information might be of value. Even if they cannot use it, you have sent a message of concern for their needs. They will likely remember this gesture and return in kind in the future.
- **Set personal goals.** Even though your organization likely has goals, and your supervisor or team leader may work with you to set performance goals, set some personal goals for improvement. Such goals might include:
 - Taking an evening class at a local educational facility;

- Attending a workshop to enhance your knowledge or skills;
- Reading a book or listening to an audiotape on a work related topic;
- Joining a professional group to learn more about your profession and get actively involved to expand your knowledge and skills in the area of leadership.

Whatever you do, be active in your personal growth and knowledge expansion. To do otherwise dooms you to the path of the dinosaur (you may go away or become extinct) and your professional growth may be thwarted beyond repair.

- **Work to build positive self-esteem.** Self-esteem is the way you view yourself and your capabilities. A lot of your self-perception comes from the values and beliefs learned as a child from a variety of sources. As a result, much of the way in which you interact with customers and others directly reflects whether you care for yourself or not.

In these tough economic times, it is easy to find things that are not working or not meeting your expectations. The key to enhancing your self-image is to focus on positive elements in life and avoid negative ones. This includes avoiding people who tend to be negative or who focus on the negative aspects of many situations.

There are many self-help books in bookstores and libraries and online (e.g. www.selfgrowth.com or www.ezinearticles.com) to assist you in recognizing your level of self-esteem and to provide strategies for improvement. Search out people and resources that can help you and then get started on your path toward self-empowerment.

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