

# Concept of Employees Empowerment in HRM Essay

## Introduction

Personnel empowerment refers to giving employees power and the capability to make decisions on their own; the concept means that employees are trained and coached on making the right decisions for the company in the event they have been left in such a situation.

Emphasis on employee empowerment was developed in the 1980's in the era of strategic management concept development; the area has undergone numerous developments with management gurus coming up with new approaches.

For example in the 1990's management gurus developed the concept of delegation which happens to be a strong support to employees' delegation (Legge, 2004). The topic of human resources empowerment is crucial in contemporary business studies as it gives managers wide knowledge of how to handle their workforce.

This paper discusses how effective human resources managers empower their human capital to enhance their competitiveness; the paper will give reference to the hospitality industry players.

## Human resources empowerment

Organizations require physical, human, and financial resources for their operation. Management scholars have continually argued that human resources are the most precious resources that organizations have; however to benefit from these resource effective personnel management strategies should be adopted (Bright and Earl, 2008).

Human resources department within an organization has the role of establishing effective strategies to manage human resources. Personnel management gurus argue that to benefit from human resources capabilities, managers should have policies that encourage employees' empowerment.

Empowered employees are innovative, creative, invention, loyal, and highly motivated (Brown and Hesketh, 2004). Contemporary hospitality industry is highly competitive with new players coming up with new policies and approaches to business; companies in the industry need to have effective human resources empowerment strategies to assist them gain competitiveness (De Wit and Meyer, 2004).

The fact that the employees are making the decisions does not mean that leaders are not responsible for the decisions or they have lost control (Fagan, 2008). Leaders and managers are still the ones answerable to the decisions. In empowering environment, there is demand for strong emphasis on effective delegation.

Empowerment cuts across the entire organization; this is where the directors empower top managers to make decisions for their company but still remain answerable for the decision. The

top managers then empower line managers to make decisions pertaining their line but still remain accountable for the decisions made.

On the other part, the line managers can empower supervisors and team leaders to make decisions, and then they become accountable for the decision made (Hind and Moss ,2005).

Team leaders and supervisors can make empower their team members to make certain decisions. When empowering human capital, organizations should have strong leadership, communication channels, and have high degrees of trust and accountability (John, 2004).

### **Why human resources empowerment is crucial in contemporary business environments**

Personnel management gurus have defined human resources management as those policies and practices within an organization that make employees feel worth and respected by their employer. According to the scholars, people need to be appreciated on the kind of work they are doing despite the level of their expertise in the area (McGoldrick, Stewart and Watson, 2001).

When someone finds that his work has been appreciated then he works harder to improve his results. In the hospitality industry for instance there are many payers in different sectors; in the event of a restaurant, the waiters, barmen, supervisors, cleaners, and room attendants should be made to feel comfortable and worth within their company.

Among employees management should create an environment of teamwork where no one is more important than the other but roles and responsibilities in the firm have to be allocated and power distributed. When everyone feels worth, then he will be motivated to improve his performance for the good of the company (Milkovich and Newman, 2006).

### **Communication and employees empowerment**

For organizations to practice rewarding empowerment there is much emphasis on having effective communication channels in the organization; effective communication channels are strong indicators of employees' empowerment. Honesty and repeated communication are the main performance indicators of effective management practices (Paauwe ,2009).

Employees demonstrate high empowerment if they are getting involved in decision making and are able to make decisions that hold in an organization; when current business management like total quality management and six sigma are employed in an organization, managers are able to establish the areas that their employees have strength and seek to empower them along that line (Kleiman, 2000).

### **How employees should go about empowering human capital**

Staff empowerment is a gradual method that managers should be very sensitive when enacting, they should know the areas that they need to empower their human capital to make decisions and try them using policies like volunteers to serve on a project as a Green belt.

When participating in green belt projects, employees are trained on how to define measure, analyze, control, and improve their problem solving skills in the effort to make them better

decision makers (Swanson, 2002). With the additional skills and the lessons they learn from the green belt, they gain much confidence and are more willing and able to make decisions in the line of their empowerment.

They also increase their effectiveness and efficiency in solving problem and providing potential solutions (Storey, 2007). The hospitality industry requires people to make decisions and do the right thing always; the industry is more of a service oriented where employees are expected to be offering the right high quality service always.

Service cannot be curved into a person but the role played by the individual has the greatest role to play. With empowerment employees in the industry will be more flexible to make decisions that improve their service delivery and the net effect will be satisfied customers who translate to competitiveness (Armstrong, 2006).

### **The benefits of having empowered employees**

Employees' development and the existence of effective human resources management lead to employee's motivation; employees get the zeal and synergy to perform in their tasks and give their best for their company. Motivation programs are enacted to create a platform through which employees empowerment will be laid on.

Motivated staffs are dedicated to their works and can be trusted with organizational decisions and roles (Bandt and Haines, 2002). After attaining high employees' motivation, human resources management should develop employees' development training programs that aim at improving employees' skills expertise, exposure and problem solving skills.

For example when empowering line managers, they should undergo different organizational management programs to assist them develop skills to handle larger tasks than the ones they have been oriented to handling at line levels. They should not be left at free will or be given the capability of making decision before the management is certain enough that they can handle the situation (Henderson, 2003).

When employees fail to make quality, timely, and right decisions despite how effective and elaborate their processes are, the entire organization results cannot be appealing. Active employees are engaged with situations that they need to make decisions without much of consultation, they should be at free will to make decisions beneficial to their organization; to be capable to do this, and they must be empowered and coached to handle different situations (Storry, 2005).

Every level of an organization needs to have effective employees' empowerment policies; it should have consistent executive coaching, management training, supervisory training, leadership development skills, and team management strategies (Harold & Michael, 1994).

There have been assumptions among management that employee's innovativeness, and inventiveness is derived when they are highly motivated; although they believe is true, there is much relationship between employees' empowerment and their creativity and innovativeness.

Employees who are highly empowered have higher chances of innovating and coming up with programs that benefit their employer (Beardwell and Claydon, 2010). In the hospitality industry for instance, there is much costs associated with the supply of goods and commodities to the company.

Employees in the line should be empowered to make decisions pertaining the flow of commodities in the company. When making decisions they are more likely to come up with a better way to handle the situation than when they were only receiving the goods without proper understanding on when they were ordered or sold. Innovation, invention, and creativity, are possible when employees are exposed to situations that require them make decisions that will be felt across the entire firm (Jackson, 1992).

Management should understand that it is the same employees they have that handle some leadership positions in community like community leaders, serve on church boards, are elected officials, do volunteer work; thus they have some experience of leadership and should be given a chance.

When human capital has been empowered, they gain synergy of work processes /system and the improvements that follow can be amazing. The burden on managers to decide on every little thing in the organization is challenged (Littleford, Halstead and Mulraine,2004).

### **Relationship between creativity, innovation and invention and employees empowerment**

The dramatic shift to knowledge economies has generated a flurry of interest in workplace creativity and innovation; it has called for the need to have highly empowered staffs to participate in decision making. Today's business environment requires organisations to develop strong capabilities to innovate for long-term success and survival (Borkowski, 2009).

This requires businesses to develop creative work environment and develop innovative products and services; creative work environment are required for empowerment of employees since they are the platforms that empowerment dwells on. Management gurus ascertain that creativity and innovation can be viewed as closely related constructs as they exhibit significant overlap in characteristics.

To facilitate the discussion presented in the later part of this section, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the two constructs (Kew and Stredwick,2008).

Thus, innovation can be defined as the process of capturing, filtering, developing, accepting and implementing new ideas, processes, products, or services; to be effected within an organisation, there is need to have empowered staffs who are the pioneers of creativity and innovativeness.

Review of literature reveals a large number of scholars and practitioners have acknowledged relationship between innovation and employees empowerment to facilitate organizational success and survival (Palmer and Hartley,2009).

Literature reveals that the concept of innovation has been defined in a number of ways. Further, management gurus assert that creativity is the "starting point for any innovation". This discussion

reiterates the need to develop a creative work environment to facilitate and lead innovation in an organisation.

To drive innovation within organisation, there is a need to blend creativity with business processes by developing and supporting a creative environment that recognises and nurtures innovation.

In this regard; these include, organisational encouragement to innovate and contributions, supervisory encouragement to support work groups and show confidence, work group supports, freedom to be creative and innovative at work, sufficient resources, and (a challenging workplace environment).

It is important for organisations to provide their employees with the freedom to experiment and be creative (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008).

### **Intellectualism and employee's empowerment**

When making human resources management policies, managers should aim at tapping their organisations intellectual power; this can be attained through effective policies that empower employees.

When employees are empowered they made decisions that assist managers know their strength and weakness for their management purposes like human resources blending and deploying employees in different areas (Lindgren and Bandhold, 2009).

Before an employee has been empowered to make certain decision, they should have worked under delegated power were their decisions are evaluated for quality, timeliness, and how they respond to situations.

During the delegation stage, managers or the delegating power should give room for decision making but remain vigilant as chances of wrong decision will lead to him being accountable. Organisations with empowered staffs have high chance of being innovative and creative; when innovative and creative their organisations gain high competitiveness (Horn, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Human resources are the most valuable resources that organizations have; they have the capability of combining different factors of production to the benefit of their organization. Decisions made within an organisation determine the success that a firm will attain; fast, quality, reliable, and timely decisions led to success and competitiveness.

Employees should be empowered to make the right decisions at the right time as doing this improves operation within an organization. Employees' empowerment programs start by training human resources and ensuring they attain such skills as they would require come up with the right decisions.

Coaching, mentoring, and delegation strategies are the most effective methods to develop employees' problem solving capabilities and boost their confidence.

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