

April 19, 2021

EMPOWERMENT VS. ENTITLEMENT, Part IV

Remedies and Conclusion

We are never going to have a perfect workplace. It can even feel like the more we try to create a Utopian environment, the more difficult it is to achieve. Some people will always be unhappy and feel they're getting the short end of the stick; that you're favoring one person, or one group, or one department over another. But this shouldn't keep us from working toward the goal of having an empowered culture.

Strategies

- Reward people based on accountability and performance, not length of service. This will require work to establish performance standards, but it will pay dividends in the long run.
- Deal with actively disengaged workers promptly and directly, even if (*especially if*) they are family members.
- Spend more time with empowered employees than with the entitled ones. This will send a very clear message to everyone throughout the organization as to the type of behavior that's expected.
- Hire new workers based on culture and values, not on their experience. As Patrick Lencioni states in his book *The Ideal Team Player*, look for people who are hungry, humble, and smart.
- Continually reinforce your expectations.
- Lead by example. Model the behavior you expect from your people. Be authentic and real and surround yourself with only the best.
- Make decisions based on long-term perspective rather than short-term need.
- Build a culture of WIIFU (us) instead of WIIFM (me).

Signs of Progress

- Trust and respect are apparent throughout the organization. Drama and backstabbing do not take place.
- Core values are lived and evident in every aspect of the business.
- Your phone stops ringing constantly because employees are making decisions.
- High absenteeism, tardiness, and poor attitudes are trending down while those who enjoy coming to work are trending up. Employees are going the extra mile to ensure an environment of teamwork and collaboration.
- Time spent on disciplining becomes less and less while more time is spent on coaching, developing, and reinforcing expected behaviors.
- Turnover and retention numbers are improving.
- You're enjoying coming to work and spending time with your people.

Walking back an entitled culture isn't easy. But when you consider the costs of allowing it to continue versus the benefits of empowerment, the effort is worthwhile.

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