Empowerment

A WAY OF LIFE

SAMPLE

PARTICIPANT BOOK

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The Global Leader in Customer Service

Session One:

Chapter 1:
WHY ARE WE HERE?

Welcome!

Congratulations. You've been selected to participate in the workshop, **Empowerment: A Way of Life**. Your participation in this seminar means that your company values you as an employee and wants to make you more productive in your job. When **Empowerment** becomes a Way of Life, you will feel better about your work; you'll feel stronger and more empowered in the workplace.

Empowerment is about creating an environment where employees have the responsibility and authority to make fast decisions that benefit customers. Ensuring over-happy customers should be the number one goal of your organization and your purpose on the job. You want to constantly exceed your customers' expectations. When they are happy, your organization succeeds. When customers continue to bring their business to you, your organization thrives. A healthy organization is happy with itself and happy with its employees, which creates a more positive and productive workplace.

As you participate in these two in depth training sessions, constantly remind yourself that **Empowerment** WILL make your job better. **Empowerment** WILL dramatically improve your overall success at work. By the end of this seminar, you will realize that **Empowerment** is a necessity, not just in the workplace, but also as **a Way of Life**.

Chapter 2:
SO, WHAT THE HECK IS EMPOWERMENT ANYWAY?

Defining Empowerment

Empowerment is defined by Webster´s dictionary as "the giving or delegation of power or authority." Sounds good, right? I mean, who doesn't want more power?

Specifically in the business world, **Empowerment** means having the authority and responsibility to make quick, on-the-spot decisions that help your customers by using available information and common sense.

Empowerment gives you, and every employee, the responsibility and authority to satisfy your customers. Yes, there are limits, but even the parameters we'll discuss will help you feel empowered.

Characteristics of Empowerment

Empowerment means solving customer problems without asking permission. The sooner you make a decision, the sooner the problem is solved. If you have to ask five different people if you can solve a problem, the problem and the customer's dissatisfaction escalate.

Empowerment means working quickly and efficiently. The word "slow" has no business in an empowered workplace. In customer service, everyone's time is important. Being able to make an empowered decision helps you move things along.

For example, let's say a woman calls and states that "the company shipped the wrong order." All she wants is the order she placed. Instead of talking to three supervisors and having to get clearance, you tell her that the company will ship the correct order to her immediately and you will make arrangements to have a shipping company pick up the incorrect order. She thanks you for your help and you hang up the phone, having fixed a difficult situation in a timely manner.

You have solved a problem quickly and efficiently. By doing so, you have prevented an unhappy customer from being inconvenienced any further. If this matter had required several phone calls to supervisors, the customer would have become annoyed. The annoyance would have been magnified if you could not ship the new items until the old ones were received. Agitation would set in even further if you had informed the customer that they needed to pay to ship the old items back.

Exercise 2:

1. WHAT WENT WRONG IN THIS SCENARIO?

2. HOW COULD THIS NEGATIVE SITUATION HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

3. DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU WANTED TO HELP A CUSTOMER BUT COULDN'T BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T EMPOWERED TO DO SO

4. WHAT WAS THE END RESULT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE? HOW DID THE CUSTOMER REACT?

5. WHAT IS THE END RESULT TO THIS BUSINESS OF THE NEGATIVE SCENARIO IN THE VIGNETTE YOU'VE JUST SEEN?

6. HOW WILL THE LACK OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AFFECT THIS ORGANIZATION IN THE FUTURE?

Business of Customer Service

Customers are the engine that makes any company move. Now, every engine needs maintenance, but if you wait too long to take care of it, the engine will break down. Taking care of your customers keeps your company's engine running smoothly.

You are in the business of customer service and that's what **Empowerment** is all about: servicing the customer. It's really pretty simple:
Those who make slow decisions that they have to run through channels will no doubt produce a disgruntled, frustrated customer.
Those who make quick, empowered decisions to help the customer will inevitably ensure a more satisfied customer.

For example, let's say a man comes in to your store with an item that is defective. He only discovered the flaw after he purchased the item. All he wants is to exchange the flawed merchandise for one that works. Unfortunately, the defective model he purchased was the last one in stock. You respond by telling him you will check other stores to see if they have the item. To both your dismay and his, the item is out of stock everywhere. You can see the man getting increasingly agitated as he gruffly replies that all he wants is a refund. However, you note that you have a superior model of the same item in the store that normally costs thirty dollars more, but because the man has been inconvenienced, you offer to give him the better model without the price increase. The man's irritation subsides and he gladly accepts the superior model.

You just made an empowered decision and look at the results. A customer was about to walk away angry – even with a refund. Instead, because you offered the customer something for his trouble, in this case an upgraded item, he completed his purchase and left the store happy. That's a sale today – and most likely more sales in the future.

Why Should I Care About Empowerment?

Empowerment makes your job easier! Being empowered increases your chance of success. **Empowerment** allows you to get things done quicker and faster. Who doesn't want to make their job less difficult?

Empowerment allows you to show what you can do for your company. It is a platform to demonstrate your competence and decision-making skills to your employees. People who are empowered in the workplace stand out. They force employers to take notice of the excellent job they are doing.

Empowerment will help you advance your career. Empowered employees are more likely to get raises and promotions. Employees who reject **Empowerment** remain stagnant.

Empowerment has strong benefits for the company. Companies that use **Empowerment** save money and time, and increase profits. The reason is clear: **Empowerment** keeps customers happy and loyal. In turn, they share their happiness with others who become new customers. Let's not forget who benefits when a company's fortunes improve: You, the employee, as the potential is greatly enhanced for promotions and salary increases. So, if you want to make your job more difficult, not get promoted and not receive raises, and cause your company to go under, then go ahead and reject **Empowerment**.

Exercise 3:

1. DESCRIBE HOW THIS SCENARIO UNFOLDS IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN THE FIRST ONE.

2. HOW DOES THE EMPLOYEE IN THIS VIGNETTE UTILIZE EMPOWERMENT?

3. DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU MADE AN EMPOWERED DECISION TO HELP A CUSTOMER.

4. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW WILL EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES AFFECT THIS ORGANIZATION IN THE FUTURE?

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW:

Points to Remember

- ***Empowerment*** *means making quick, on-the-spot decisions.*
- ***Empowerment*** *means doing whatever it takes to ensure an over-happy customer.*
- ***Empowerment*** *is providing excellent customer service.*
- ***Empowerment*** *turns unhappy customers into ones who are elated.*
- ***Empowerment*** *makes your job easier.*
- ***Empowerment*** *makes the company more profitable.*
- *Rejecting* ***Empowerment*** *as a way of life will make your job more difficult!*