EMPLOYEE INITIATIVE: HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

4-HOUR COURSE

HRDQ®

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

Course timing

Chapter One: Understanding Empowerment

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Introduction	15
	Creating a shared vision and mission statement	15
	Sharing information	10
	Dealing with resistance	10
	Exposing group norms	10
	For managers: avoid artificial empowerment	5

Chapter Two: Completed Staff Work

	What is completed staff work?	10
	The steps of completed staff work	60
	How to implement	10
	Case study	20

Course timing

Chapter Three: Developing an Accountability System

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Elements of an effective system	25
	Dealing with errors and mistakes	10
	How to survive a major mistake	10
	Wrap-up	10

Contents

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

◊ Explain the concept of empowerment
◊ Create a shared vision and mission statement
◊ Identify and overcome obstacles to empowerment
◊ Recognize and replace negative norms
◊ Recognize the benefits and challenges of completed staff work
◊ Perform the steps of completed staff work
◊ Practice systematic analysis
◊ Evaluate and prioritize alternatives objectively
◊ Establish meaningful accountability measurements
◊ Minimize the negative effects of errors and mistakes

Chapter One

UNDERSTANDING EMPOWERMENT

Introduce yourself; review the course objectives and the benefits listed on this page. Explain that empowerment and accountability is a way of building ownership in employees—changing their mindset to become more proactive and view situations from their managers' perspectives. Review the elements of building ownership listed on this page.

Introduction

Definition of empowerment

Empowerment = Information + Authority + Accountability + Trust

Benefits of empowerment

◊ Increases your credibility and your reputation in the workplace
◊ Gives you recognition as the originator of the idea or proposed action
◊ Increases the likelihood that your proposal will succeed because you did your homework
◊ Protects your boss from half-baked ideas, undeveloped presentations, and rambling memos
◊ Enables you to avoid potentially embarrassing mistakes and problems from unintended consequences of decisions

Building ownership

◊ See it
  – Everyone has eyes and is expected to use them
◊ Own it
  – Focus on acknowledging problems and what can be done about them
◊ Solve it
  – Replace "It wasn't my fault" or "Why me?" with "What can I do to solve this problem?"
◊ Do it
  – Make it happen—provide the support and get the results you need

Creating a shared vision and mission statement

Four questions a mission statement must answer

◊ What do we do?
◊ For whom do we do it?
◊ How do we do it?
◊ Why do we do it?

Involving employees in the creation process

◊ Base the mission statement on your organization's/team's core values.
◊ Focus on desired behaviors.
◊ Spread the word constantly (but expect some saturation time).
◊ Actions mean more than words.

The first step in empowering employees is to involve them in the process of developing a vision and mission statement for the organization/group/team. If employees are merely told what the vision and mission is, they will have little sense of ownership and see no reason to take initiative. But, if the employees have had a hand in creating the vision and mission statement, it will truly be theirs and they will want to see it succeed.

Activity: Have participants work in small groups to answer the four questions listed on this page. If members of each small group all work in the same area, they can answer for their area. If group members are from different departments or areas, they can choose one member on whom to concentrate and help him or her answer the questions. Debrief by sharing answers. Note what the underlying values are upon which the mission statement is based; check if the answers focus on desired behaviors (not attitudes) and what actions would demonstrate the mission in action.

Sharing information

The shorter the distance, the faster and more accurately information flows.

Why share

◊ Good decisions depend on good information.
◊ Responsibility without information is a recipe for failure.

What to share

◊ Technical information
◊ Financial information
◊ Social information

How to share

◊ Employee/management forums
◊ Participation meetings
◊ Financial performance and competitor assessments
◊ Huddles to surface and solve problems informally
◊ Online access to data; electronic bulletin boards, etc.

Consequences of not sharing

◊ Employees will not act empowered, may avoid responsibility, may make excuses and gripe
◊ Lost opportunities
◊ Mistakes or other serious consequences

Activity: Finding opportunities

Think of a decision you could make or a responsibility you could have (that your boss or someone else is handling now) that would produce better results. What type(s) of information do you need to carry out that decision or responsibility? What's the best way to obtain that information?

4

Dealing with resistance

Challenging types

"What if I don't succeed?"

"I'm happy doing exactly what I'm doing."

"That just sounds like more work to me."

"We're doing fine. What's wrong with the way we're doing things now?"
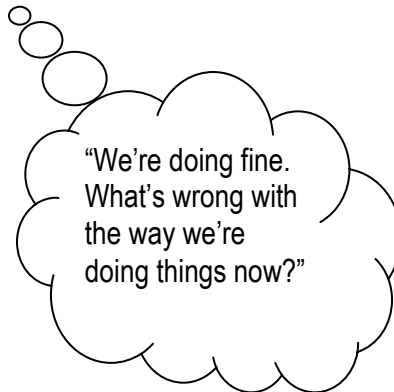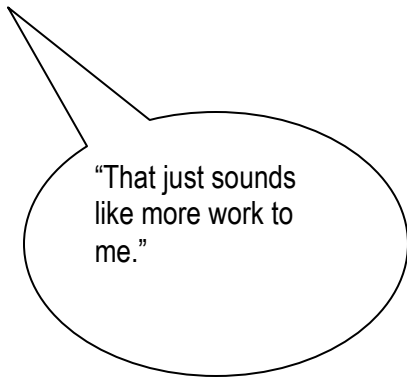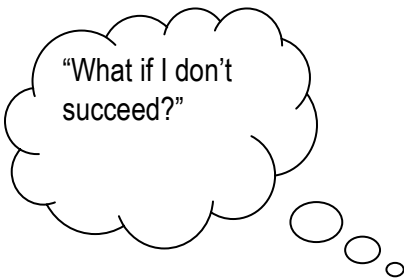
Activity: Identifying empowerment obstacles

Form small groups and discuss ways your organization may be discouraging empowerment and what you can do about it.

◊

◊

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Resistance to empowerment can take many forms. Ask participants if they've heard or thought about any of the comments listed on this page. Tie the comments to common forms of resistance.

- "What if I don't succeed?" -- Afraid of failure

- "I'm happy doing exactly what I'm doing." -- Don't want responsibility or accountability

- "That just sounds like more work." -- Unmotivated

- "What's wrong with the way we're doing things now?" -- Stuck in their old ways

Activity**:** Have participants discuss ways to handle the resistance described in the quotes. Also, have them discuss ways the organization may be discouraging empowerment and what they can do about it. Some suggestions:

- Make it safe to make mistakes.

- Don't mask "doing more with less" under the guise of empowerment.

- Expose paternalistic attitudes of managers. Sometimes good intentions to "protect" employees hinder their development.

- Examine organization/team norms. These are unspoken behaviors that reflect the organization or team's culture. They can be positive or negative, and can be very difficult to change.   (More on this on the next page.)

This page contains fairly complete information about group norms. Norms can affect all aspects of an organization's culture, but for now we're focusing on how they affect employees' tendencies to behave proactively (empowered) or not.

Review the information on this page, and give examples of group norms that negatively influence empowerment. Some examples:

- Taking risks is avoided because mistakes are frowned upon.

- Creative thinking is suppressed because the boss rewards consistency and stability.

- Department factions prevent various functions from working together effectively.

Review the process for challenging and replacing negative norms.

- Develop a "normative profile" for your organization group by surfacing and ranking harmful norms

- Prioritize the norms your group agrees have the worst impact, and work on the most negative ones first

- Identify new positive norms to replace harmful ones

- List specific behaviors that make the new norm evident

- Brainstorm realistic ways to get the changes started

Exposing group norms

Many behaviors that defeat or suppress empowerment have become so entrenched that employees would be surprised and suspicious if anyone behaved differently. Behavior that has become deeply established is called a "norm." All organizations create norms, both consciously and unconsciously.

Definition of a norm

◊ A pattern or trait taken to be typical in the behavior of a group
◊ Behavior of a group's members that is anticipated and expected by the group as a whole
◊ Learned behavior and attitudes that are practiced in order to be perceived as fitting in

Why norms are important

◊ Norms regulate the behavior of the group's members. They represent a form of social approval that has a powerful influence over how people live and work together.
◊ Behaviors that appear to be successful are imitated, especially those of a strong leader.
◊ Behaviors that result in being criticized or singled out are discontinued.

Five-step process for challenging and replacing negative norms

1. Develop a "normative profile"
2. Prioritize the norms
3. Identify new positive norms
4. List associated behaviors
5. Brainstorm ways to get the changes started

For managers: avoid artificial empowerment

Responsibility without authority is a strong demotivator. Complete this assessment to see if you're guilty of inadvertently contributing to employees' indifference.

1. I involve employees in important tasks, projects, and decisions.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
2. When employees come to me with a problem, I offer suggestions for how to solve it.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
3. When I get information from upper management, I share it immediately with my staff whenever possible.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
4. I want employees to check with me before implementing decisions so I can make certain they don't make a mistake.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
5. I seek employees' thoughts and opinions and act on them.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
6. I give employees responsibility for reporting successes and failures to upper-level management.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
7. Employees go above and beyond their "regular" jobs when we're in a pinch.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

This is an opportunity to assess whether managers are doing all they can to support an atmosphere of empowerment. For managers in the group, ask them to complete this as a self-assessment. For employees in the group who aren't managers, ask them to complete the assessment thinking of their boss. Participants don't have to share the results with anyone else.

Scoring: The preferred answer for 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 is Often. The preferred answer for 2 and 4 is Rarely.