

Emboldening an Empowered Team



by John Tschohl

I love this saying by Lee Iacocca: "LEAD, FOLLOW, OR GET OUT OF THE WAY."

LEAD

Iacocca, former president of Ford Motor Company, took over Chrysler when it was leaning towards bankruptcy. He asked Congress for a loan, arguing that if Chrysler filed for bankruptcy, the government would have to spend more on unemployment compensation than on keeping the company in business. The loan was granted, and a year later, Iacocca announced Chrysler's first profit in many years.

During his turnaround of Chrysler, he brought the convertible back into fashion and introduced the minivan.

By leading in this fashion, Iacocca inspired (emboldened) his people to feel confident enough to behave in a particular way. He steadily encouraged them by letting them know they faced no opposition. They began to spend time in the process of growing, of learning of their abilities to turn this company around, to make a profit, to pay off debt, to become a member of an **empowered team**.

In 1983, Chrysler paid the government back its \$1.5 billion federal government loans, and in 1984, the company posted

profits of \$2.4 billion (higher than in the previous 60 years combined). How did he do all this? *He emboldened his people to be empowered.*

As I travel the world, I am astounded at the lack of Empowerment. This is only surpassed by the myth that executives have about their level of employee empowerment. It's the one thing they constantly state as being important. They don't feel their employees will follow through and take the steps necessary to make an empowered decision.

ATTRACT FOLLOWERS

If you have set yourself up as the leader, you need to hire people who aren't afraid to stand out, not afraid to follow you. Unfortunately, most systems are set up to hire those who...fit in.

Leaders recognize their need to attract followers. Followership is key to understanding leadership. To follow, people must feel confident in the direction in which the leader is headed. To have this level of confidence, the leader must have clearly communicated the overall direction, the key outcomes desired.

The definition of "Empower" is to *give power or authority to, or to authorize* (embolden). In the workplace, empowered employees have the power and the authority to make quick, informed, and on-the-fly decisions to

help a customer, move a project forward, or solve a problem. When you embolden employees that are empowered to do their part in accomplishing the stated objectives, they have the framework that they need to guide their own actions.

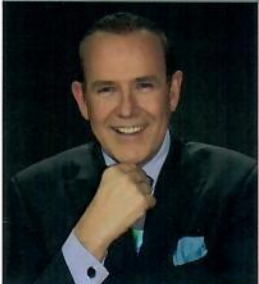
"BECOME THE KIND OF LEADER THAT PEOPLE WOULD FOLLOW VOLUNTARILY, EVEN IF YOU HAD NO TITLE OR POSITION. CONDUCT A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT AND ASK YOURSELF, 'WOULD I FOLLOW ME?'"

—BRIAN TRACY

Get out of the way and Embolden Empowerment: A good leader recognizes that for their followers to perform most effectively, they need to understand the big

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picture. They also know that their job is to remove barriers that may have a negative impact on the employees' success—not to micromanage how the employees accomplish their work. They communicate, not just the overall direction, but any information their followers need to successfully carry out their responsibilities.

They need to know why the organization is pursuing the current strategies. Mostly, they need the assurance that their leader has confidence in their ability to perform and produce the desired outcomes.

A leader who emboldens their empowered people also understands that while money is a motivator, so is praise, recognition, rewards, a thank you and noticing individual contributions. Speaking directly to an employee about the value that their work

“LEADERSHIP IS THE ART OF GETTING SOMEONE ELSE TO DO SOMETHING YOU WANT DONE BECAUSE HE WANTS TO DO IT.”

—GENERAL DWIGHT EISENHOWER

provides for the organization is a key source of inspiration for the empowered employee. You can't provide a raise in pay without company profitability, but you absolutely must share the rewards and praise if the organization is doing well.

The actions that you take every day at work are powerful beyond your wildest dreams. Make sure that your actions are

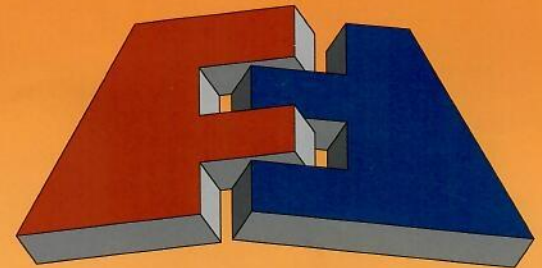
inspirational and call out the best from your employees.

“EMBOLDEN YOUR EMPLOYEES TO BE EMPOWERED AND... GET OUT OF THE WAY.”

American Fastener

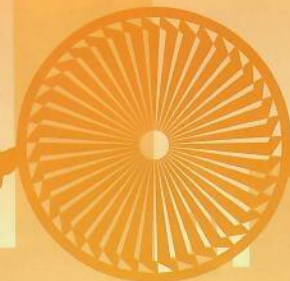
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