



Demystifying empowered leadership: A CEOs Experiment in developing high performance workplace culture

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Abstract: During turbulent days, organizations are increasingly seen to innovate ways to manage business. One of these innovations is in the area of developing and managing human resources. Experience has shown that developing human resources often results in achieving a sustained organizational growth. Various strategies are being adopted by business organizations in this regard. One also sees a paradigm shift from an approach understood as 'welfare approach' to that of an approach commonly known as the 'empowerment approach'. This approach of employee empowerment has seen interesting outcomes and hence has been accepted almost all across the world. This paper is an empirical study of Indian industry¹. It highlights some unique strategies adopted for managing human resources in this industry. The efforts have paid large dividends to the company. The workforce is committed as well as efficient. The business organization has succeeded and has been able to achieve global standards. This paper makes an attempt to advocate the cause of employee empowerment and calls upon practitioners to shift their practices from that of welfare orientation to empowerment. The paper also makes an attempt to demystify the concept of employee empowerment.

Key Words: *Empowerment; Ownership culture; Leadership; Global Organization*

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Introduction

The **21st** Century Corporations will find it hard to survive, let alone flourish unless they get better work from their employees. This does not necessarily mean harder work or more work. What it does necessarily mean is that employees who have learned to take active responsibility for their work behavior, develop and grow organization, and are the one's who survive in the present days' business. The rules must change because the game has changed. Listen to the people in truly great companies talk about their achievements; you will hear little about earnings per share and proud feeling to associate with the organization. Companies that enjoy enduring success have high value for Human Resources and its development, followed by an apt leadership (Zimmerman, (1992); Hogg, (1993): Owen Gaffney (1994).As part of understanding the innovative HR practices adopted by an organization, the present enquiry was undertaken.

PPL, a twenty-year-old organization, manufactures economical hydraulic system and components conforming to International standards, such as ISO, CETOP, DIN, and SAE. Radical piston pumps, hand operated DVC, Pressure switches, Pressure relief valves, Pressure control valves and Cartridge valves are among much other range of products. Sri Suresh B Hundre, CEO & MD, a Mechanical Engineer turned Entrepreneur, has created PPL as the Best-managed organization on Ethical Principles. Coming from a humble family with father in a small time work, PPL is today a successful organization for its innovative human resources practices. JIT, Quality, High value to Human, Vision based approach by creating an Island of excellence through focus on customer, employee EMPOWERMENT and continuous improvements has been the hallmark of the organization. Firmly believing in clean and professional practices, honesty, transparency, bribe-free culture, committed workforce, quality products and high-empowered employees is what has made PPL known in Business world. Success for hard work is reflected in several acknowledgements like: President Awards for Entrepreneurship, 1984, Nacosi Sima Award for Excellence in Management, 1992, Rotary Club Vocational standards in Vocation, 1993-94, Delight Tax Payer Award in Recognition by Dept of Commercial Tax, 1998, Honored by Institute of Engineers for excellence achieved and outstanding service rendered in field of Engineering, 1998, *et al*². Further, high standard of integrity, fairness, hard working, high value to human, let each grow, quality in all the work are the prime motive and the way of life practiced by all and no exception with CEO & MD. As part of the study, an enquiry was done to know the strategies and practices adopted in creating such an excellent organization and workforce. It may be noted that several angles of enquiry at CEO level were identified and put to test. The responses are verbatim presented through various discussion held. The investigation is an empirical research work to understand how a model company can be created with innovative workplace programme and policies. It was also intended to understand the impact of such innovative practices on empowerment and how such processes could change the face of organization and help it remain at the top of business. An effort was made to understand all that contributed to empowerment--the systems, practices, policy or the leadership. An effort was also made to see how these management practices impacted upon empowered employee behavior.

The objective of this study and paper is to report verbatim, the experience of CEO in practicing employee empowerment, per se. Few enquiry areas at CEO includes:

What is your definition of Empowerment?

What type of is culture required for empowerment practices?

What are the traits that need to be developed in employees?

How to create an Empowerment culture and strategies in Organization (the various steps involved)?

The area (scope) of Empowerment practices (the boundaries to be defined, if all those exists)

What is the out-come of Empowerment (How to measure / capture the after-math of such practices)?

What is not Empowerment?

How should the CEO and the leadership be, viz: managing style, traits and the personal characteristics?

What should be the workplace policies of the organization?

How committed are your employees, while working in such environment?

Can training be given to understand the system, if so, how?

Does Empowerment in organization have any relation between atmospheres at home? Is there a co-relation between work place empowerment practices and atmosphere at home?

What should be the degree of freedom in an empowered organization?

What is open door policy and how is it practiced in PPL? Few examples practiced in your organization?

What type of leadership exists in PPL, which reflect empowerment practices?

What are Ethical Management and the relation with Empowerment (share the experience of PPL)?

How to develop Human Resources and Organization in the present Millennium through Employee Empowerment, per se?

What are the challenges in this type of practices?

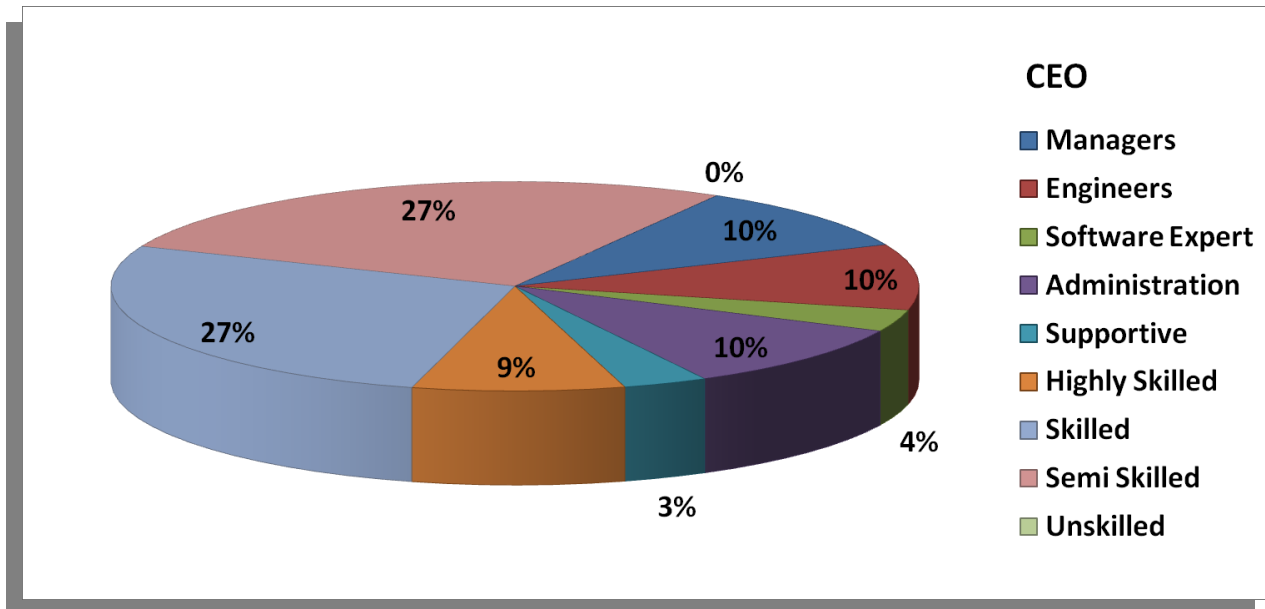
CEO views: Empowerment @Work: The making of an empowered Organization

"We will nurture an ethically managed organization. We will not exploit our customers, employees, supplies, government, society and the nature".

(CMD, 1/1/1995)

When put to test to know what empowerment is, the CEO opined: Empowerment is to transfer full power, to use one's own intellect, own ideas while accepting responsibility. It is not merely doing the job as is said. In an organization, allowing each to use his freedom at work to his fullest extent, and allowing the employees to use their creative blend towards organizational development is Empowerment (Argyris, (1998) strongly believes this point of power delegation for better results)

Fig No 1: The Workforce at PPL: Total 160



Management	:	6 (CEO, Corporate Manager, Managers)
R&D Engineers	:	8
Administration	:	22
Manufacturing	:	124

When put to test in knowing the areas of Empowerment practices, CEO opinions that: there is no one particular area one can start or work for empowerment to practice. But, for such a practice one can see as to how to go about in prioritizing the factors. You can priorities the practices, and the experience says that initially one could be given freedom with constant supervision of employees at work place. Supervision, direction and guidance are prime areas to work initially. Once, when employees understand the concept in its full spirit, then other areas like total transparency, complete faith, believing the actions, giving responsibility, making accountable for one’s action, complete freedom to decide work-place issues, involving employees in decision making area at specific point, asking open feed back, working and building teams and the like can be practiced. These are the areas, but they need to be practiced step by step but, if you don’t have faith you can’t have transparency. If you practice transparency and freedom without faith, you usually can’t have the system to work positively. Unless each is not aware of his responsibility, you can’t make one accountable. If you want one to be accountable, you should be transparent, open in communication and objective in all your actions. If one is not clear about objectives of the organization, you can’t know towards what

mission one has to work. These are few interlinked systems, practices & priority areas to be focused.

While an enquiry was also put to test in knowing how to create Empowerment system in Organization. The CEO opines that, if one is working to create an empowered organization, it has to be systematically worked out at length. The first step is, employees should be ready to accept such a type of work system and culture. They need to be educated in the areas of what are empowerment, why it has been practiced, how it has to be worked-out and what the benefits for oneself and organization as a whole. If one is not clear about these issues, mere practicing will some-times send wrong signals and lead everyone into chaos. While sharing initial experience at PPL, a series of discussion, educative class and continuous communication was undertaken in telling every employee why and how such a system is practiced, and why it is needed. Each was told about the merits of the system, *per se*, and this education helped the DNA of empowerment go into every employee thought process (Similar views were found in the studies undertaken by Zimmerman, *et al*, 1992; Hunt, 1993; and Rothstein, 1994).

Further, an enquiry was attempted to understand the work culture that is required & how it should be developed? The CEO opinions that Culture paradigm is important for any organization to excel. The culture which is progressive, developmental, free from unnecessary hurdles/ hassles is the need for organization to excel and empowerment to work. Culture, such as freedom to do work in one's own way, no supervision or absence of foremen on you, direct contact with anyone in organization without bureaucracy are a few important areas of development.

Infact, all the above systems are in practice at length in PPL and have seen long standing benefits. Such systems like: sharing common rooms, no one spy's you, gossips are not allowed, every action is trusted, each is encouraged to do a better job in their own way, no formal reporting system and the like are the areas practiced at length. One need to have certain traits peculiar to empowerment workplace culture, viz: goal oriented, intellectual integrity, ethical approach, which are necessary for empowered organization. The foremost is openness in all transactions, transparent behavior, positive approach, no particular mind-set, outrightly supporting all, and empathy towards the feelings, free from bias, no scape-goat approach and the like are the essential traits 3.

An enquiry was also undertaken to know and understand what is not empowerment? The CEO opines that, what is not empowerment is difficult to explain. If one says, I have empowered my employees by being transparent; it may not be so from the receiving end. Infact, only by transferring and sharing power, giving & taking responsibility, you can't promote or propagate empowerment practices. In one single word, as CEO opines all those strategies which are not in line with progressive HR practices, viz; do not follow transparent approach, sharing responsibility, no shared delegated work, no value to human, no trustworthiness may be considered as non-empowered work place practices.

The outcomes of empowerment are several, and CEO opines that the out come of empowerment are far-reaching and positive. You can't expect returns over-night. As I (CEO)

have been in this field for over three decades, the returns on HR are always late, but fruitful. The investment in HR development is not a sudden phenomenon while sharing experience in PPL organization, the outcomes have been healthy and are visible after days of practicing, per se. High productivity, consistent growth, generating revenue, nil employee turnover, high level of satisfaction on job, no problem of absenteeism, no conflicts and disputes, good Industrial relations, never a single strike, no union are the outcomes of empowering employees in organization. The study results of Barnes and Kaftans (1970); Lawler, *et al* (1989); Hudetz (1996); and Hewitt Associates Research (1998), also prove the point that empowered employee have an edge over other employees because of the culture in which they operate. Infact, the organization does not have any committee and councils dealing with dispute settlements and conflict resolution. The great satisfaction also lies in the proud feeling of the employees to be with organization as well as in seeing the happy faces return to work each day. These are the indicators of such employees in PPL. Infact, some out-comes are direct & some indirect, but the engagement is clearly visible in employee positive behavior and contribution. Enquiry was also undertaken in knowing the policies and code of conduct formulated at PPL. The policies and practices of organization are important and communicate the very foundation of what organization is looking for and stands on. While citing all the policies followed at PPL, the core policy includes:

“Honesty is not the Best policy. It is the policy. We are honest; we are transparent; we do not pay Bribe. **CMD, 2 Oct 1998**”

"We will nurture an ethically managed organization. We will not exploit our customers, employees, supplies, government, society and the nature". **(CMD, 1/1/1995)**

To recognize our responsibility as individual and devote ourselves for further development of healthy Industrial culture. Thus, the foreword for ethical management at PPL is
 ‘Each of our employees is responsible for both the integrity and consequences of his own actions. The highest standard of honesty, integrity and fairness will be followed and no illegal or immoral activity will be practiced’.

CEO further opines that this is not a single man’s policy nor has been done by management. All are a party to it and collectively been formulated and practiced. While citing the work place practices, there are no supervisors above you, no hierarachy, no interference of anyone at work-place, all are owners or the owner is not like an owner, no restrictions for new inventions, flat work system where anyone can report to any person, no one is victimized, direct relation and reporting to boss, are the few concrete practical practices as part of PPL work place policy. The PPL quality policy is
 ‘We at PPL strive to achieve QUALITY by increasing the rate of improvement better than the rise in customer’s expectations’.

But, on the other hand, the question as to, how the policies have to be? CEO cites that the economic activities and rapid change in economy, have affected all activities in Industrial work.

The age-old style of management, i.e. resistance to change, bureaucracy, and red-tapsim does not work. The right answer for running organization and developing HR are very many, but the essence is how best you manage to get best out of your employees each time, every time should be part of your policy. All this has only one answer...empowering employees and developing an ownership culture based on certain 10 laid down Beliefs.

Table No. 1: The 10 beliefs developed, nurtured by all @PPL

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- # 1: Purpose of BUSINESS is CREATION OF WEALTH (FOR THE NATION)
 - # 2: Business & Ethics are A Perfect Match
 - # 3: Excellence & Spirituality are RELATED
 - # 4: Every Customer is a "GOOD PAYMASTER"
 - # 5: Every Government Officer is HONEST
 - # 6: Profit includes INCOME TAX
 - # 7: Management system makes money Products don't
 - # 8: Employees should earn wages Not be paid
 - # 9: Corruption adds Cost & reduces Quality
 - # 10: Suppliers, Society & Nature are not Cows to be milked
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Further enquiry was put to understanding the Management style of CEO. Practicing high value for people, faith and trusting all, vision based management and means are important to reach the ends, ethical approach, honest in all dealings, core set of well articulated values, involvement of all in organization affairs are the areas worked out by top Management at PPL. These can be achieved through ethically based Management style.

Further, appropriate culture building has to start from top (Refer studies undertaken by Bowen, and Lawler, (1992); Foster, (1992); Collins, and Porras, (1996); Chirstina, (1997). The CEO should follow a particular style of management, which suffices and promotes high employee engagement. The practices what are followed at PPL include: value based approach, respect all, no compromise on quality, work as well as person is important, give them the chance to perform, listen to new ideas, don't develop a particular mind set in dealing work-place issues, see things as they are, don't interfere too much in others activity communicate regularly and systematically, ethical way of dealing workplace issues, be honest, value your time and that of others,.....are few characteristics that are reflected in the top man should practices and are reflected at PPL. PPL believes in developing people and all those system and practices are worked-out, because, if HR is developed, then organization develops.

Table No. 2: Workplace culture and Institutional Values *

Freedom to do work in one's own way
 No Supervision/ Foreman
 No Bureaucratic and Administrative interference
 No Red-tapism
 High Value to Human
 Sharing Common Platform
 Trusting each person's actions
 Each one is encouraged
 No restrictions for new inventions
 One can fail, no punishment

♣ Based on the experience and responses of CEO

Further, it was put to test in sharing some unique empowered features of PPL. The CEO opinions that any organization management style and organizational health can be seen in its leader (Top Man) functioning. At PPL, they follow certain practices which are visible, viz:

- a) There exists flat organizational hierarchy structure. Any one can use any place and work; subject that the work pertains to organization. There is no separate department, officer, peon or supervisor (indicating the work place chart). There are no security people to check you and you are free to move out.
- b) There is minimum (infact Nil) administrative interference and bureaucracy. No one need to take permission for trying new things; just information will do for record purpose. Everyone is free to work in his own way and can have his own work standards.
- c) Creativity and innovation have been given prime focus. Employees have developed several products with emphasis on quality. The policy at PPL is to see that new ideas do not get easily killed. As one believe, the language of creativity is direct - allow it and the organization will surely grow.
- d) Employees have full freedom to fail. There is no punishment for one who fails. Everyone is encouraged for taking new activity and if one is planning for new activity, he need not take anyone's permission. He can work in his own way and no bureaucracy permission is needed. Interference is nil. It is only for the official records that information has to be communicated.
- e) All the necessary resources are made available for new initiations. At no point of time, one is crosschecked and examined, and anytime ever spying is done. The R & D is given full free hand to develop and design products. These are few of the management styles and unique practices at PPL.

An enquiry was also undertaken to know the degree of freedom in an empowered organization? The success of empowerment at the Macro level depends on the degree of freedom. The degree of freedom depends largely on the degree of employee's maturity. Employees should have sound thinking, understand the very purpose of business and to a larger extent, understand the spirit of empowerment and employee ownership culture. Only once when the top person is convinced about employees taking independent responsibility, then you can free them completely. Initially, PPL CEO also did not free employees, but, now they are free to decide all work-place issues and improvement areas concerning growth of organization. This point is also

proved from the study results undertaken by Thomas, and Velthouse, (1990); Michael, (1992); Rothstein, (1994); and Gates, J R (1995).

Adding to this, the CEO opinions on the Open Door policy adopted at PPL. There are no sign boards stating 'knock and come', 'no admission without permission' and the like. This is what everyone practices at PPL. The organization does not have secrecy and confidentiality matters in any of the activity. Everything is transparent & open to all. There is nothing which is termed as closed affairs at PPL. Infact, the chamber of CEO is as good as any other person's chamber. There is nothing that you find can set parts the CEO chamber from rest.

While citing the practices at PPL, CEO shares another example: If any customer or guest comes to PPL in CEO's absence, any member in organization feels he can deal with customer \ guest, can sit and discuss business plans. Any one can come in at any time and discuss business plans with any customer or CEO. Infact, a guest to one is a guest to all and a guest to all is guest to everyone. One need not take formal permission. One can even watch the proceedings of discussion.

The question - Is educating employees necessary to understand the system? was also put to test. Education is an important factor to be considered before empowering workforce. The only difficulty is, the mis-match between what you practice and communicate, and the understanding on other side. Initially, the CEO also faced a few difficulties while creating such a work culture. Later, each was told about the objectives of such practices and why such a system has been worked out and the benefits, *per se*. Educating employees in this area is crucial for long-term success and functioning of empowerment system. Now at PPL, all have understood the system, and each is crystal clear about the objective and mission of PPL. The system has been deep rooted in all employees at PPL and one finds no difficulty about running this system in the days to come. Maturity of employees also decides the success of the system and through education you can make the system work more effectively.

Further, the CEO opines on the unique traits found in empowered employees. Such traits which are visible includes: High commitment towards work, transparent and open while communicating, practical in approach, disciplined, confident in handling work, trustworthy, seeks ideas through sharing, does not follow set pattern or norms, visionary and the like. Infact, they seek outright responsibility, and go in for new ways of doing / seeing things.

Other observations that CEO puts in this regard are: needs no supervision, highly motivated, more energetic, enjoys work, assumes outright responsibility (seen at 95% here at PPL), looking for new challenges, loyal to organization, truthful and the like. One thing is sure, the behavior, perception, attitudes, thinking are all too different at PPL, which are overtly visible. The CEO cites several examples of trustworthiness when put to enquiry. In the organization, they don't have guards, peon, and any person who supervises other employees work. The CEO has never closed (locked) or opened the doors of the organization. This practice has been for past several years. It's like an ownership culture, where, each is owner and each has the same degree of responsibility and authority like anyone. Everyone in organization has equal rights and responsibility to run the organization. This practice would suffice the trust and faith level that works in the organization (Yoon, (2001). As also, no cupboards are locked. All files and papers are kept open and are easily accessible and everyone can see and refer them. While back after duty, there is no person who checks at security. No single person ever has been checked while

going back home after duty hours. Infact, there are no security guards. They can go on leave without top man's permission and just need to write it on the board meant for this. No cross checking ever is done and no spying of any absentee person. For record purpose, one has to communicate the message to CEO.

A final enquiry was held to know how PPL was different from any other organization. Each organization has pros & cons and each organization is right in its own way. PPL organization is different from most organizations. The culture, the work-place systems, Management style, the ethos followed, policy adopted, the programme and the like are different from conventional organizations as also seen in the study of Yulk, G A (1989). This is how CEO would put it:

Table No 3: The CEO definition on workplace of PPL

Conventional	PPL
Do what is told	Do what is required
Liberty misused	Liberty made use to fullest extent
Not my job attitude	Its everyone's job
Commitment level low	High commitment due to system
Less ethical	High ethical standards
Lack of scope for improvement	High scope for improvement
Various committees / councils	Never a designated committee / councils
Less trust	Trust is core
Supervised work	No Supervision
Freedom restricted	More free
Restricted behavior	Transparent behavior

Concluding Remark:

The organization is in the process of creating global systems that serve the mission and vision and incredible things happen and this is how empowerment and empowering employees has been created at work place in the organization. Even in the words of Adi Godrej *"it has opened my eyes in many ways by seeing the excellent work done by you (PPL). I am sure your company has a tremendous future ahead of it"*. [April 22, 1992, after personal visit to PPL] The leader with the vision and mission can turn the very face of organization and great strides can be achieved as has been seen in the organization under the preview of the study.

Table No. 4: Areas of Empowerment*

Complete Freedom
Total Transparency
Keeping Faith
Complete Responsibility
Accountability for ones actions
Freedom / Liberty to decide course of actions
Involvement / Participation
Transparent feedback
Shared Responsibility
Delegated authority
No hidden Agenda
Complete Autonomy
Power to take decisions

* Based on the experience and responses of CEO

It should also be noted that, empowerment and empowering employees is a holistic approach and all the systems, practices, people, leadership, culture, ethos, policies and principles should together join hands in working at it. If a single element in this entire system is missing, empowerment can hardly be practiced. Today, employees at every level expect to be treated as valued members of their organization. They also seek power for better organizational deeds. The vision of the leader has paved the way for an introduction of all these. They are now paying dividends.

The experiment has come a long way. Today the results of such efforts are also far reaching. The organization can safely boast of having highly motivated and committed workforce: employees who handle their responsibilities professionally and have the inherent capability to take independent decisions; a low employee turnover; and a disciplined and confident workforce with open and transparent behavior. The industrial climate is also free from disputes. All these practices make for the good image the organization carries today in the market, while enjoys the reputation of high ethical organization. But, one thing is clear. At this particular time in history, with thousands of our major organizations facing global challenges and some even unable to cope in managing to the extent needed, it is little wonder that organizational anxiety about future will be much wide spread in our country in the days to come. We are likely to see more efforts of empowerment in future. We are put at end by stating that, "there is nothing Indian Organizations need more at this moment than a true **RENAISSANCE** strategy towards human resource development and management at every level". Empowerment and empowering employees in organization is the answer.

Lessons to learn: Plat form for Empowerment:

Be prepared thoroughly to experiment power distribution and delegated responsibility. A proper grounding is required and do not be in a hurry. One may start the practice and may not get the desired results immediately. Study and understand what has to be looked into: the system, the practices, the people and the leadership. Each stage requires careful study and each step should be followed by next appropriate step. Also, look at how much empowerment is too much.

There are certain essentials, which have to be seen and worked out:

Is organization policy apt to practice empowerment?

Is leadership at all level visible?

Is employee's behavior transparent?

Are they truthful and faithful;

Do employees accept challenges, and

Can employees at this stage understand the spirit of empowerment?

Describe the Autonomy:

Liberty is to be felt, rather than given. Autonomy in choosing the work, assignment, production style, prioritizing of the task.... are to be felt by the employees. The feeling that one has independence and the liberty in one's area of work will boost the morale and motivate employees. Autonomy in choosing the work style, manufacturing the products, scheduling the work area and autonomy in deciding the future course of action will be of prime importance in empowerment exercise. One should psychologically feel the autonomy and freedom to perform. All ways, systems and work place practices should make one feel liberated to perform towards corporate advantage.

Define the purpose:

Each employee needs to know what is that the organization wants from him and what's the organization purpose and objective. Define the organization purpose and that of individual purpose. Make them also realize how purpose was built and how it can be realized and fulfilled by each. Define the purpose of the organization, the purpose of empowerment and the purpose of why and how power is given to them and the difference they can make. People should be told the very purpose of WHY of all the activities undertaken in the organization while empowering them. When an empowering exercise has been practiced and employees liberated through sharing the power, there are some who may not understand the spirit behind it. Make them realize why such a particular act or action has been initiated.

Open Door:

Follow the principle of transparency in all the activities and functioning. Be open and clean in approach, action and follow-up work. Never should the management create an impression among the employees that they are dissatisfied with management behavior, attitude and the reason being the closed approach of management. Never should employees feel insecure owing to management behavior and policy. Their (management) behavior, attitudes, style of functioning, ideas, empathic behavior towards employee contributes and positive thinking makes all that difference in the success of an organization. Avoid dual policy of saying one and

practicing another. Create a friendly management feeling through apt actions. This also signifies how the organization could do in the days to come.

Ownership Culture:

Ownership concept should follow on the rule that each is an owner and each are worth equally in the exercise of running the organization. Make each feel like an owner in himself. This could be done through sharing equal responsibility and authority among all. While doing so, make your employees feel like owners and make them understand and realize the ownership. Ownership is a psychological feeling, which creates a personal World in itself. The concept that 'I' have just come to work should be removed and the feeling of 'My Organization' should suffice. They always need to feel part of the organization and not mere employees, who is paid to perform the work.

Leadership:

In this exercise of employee empowerment, develop leadership at all the stages, instead of making orders and instructions come from one person. One voice could be of several voices put together. A leader is to be understood in terms of shared voice, shared approach and shared organization endure. Leader need not be a power concentrated concept. Each should have the power in deciding the destiny of the organization. A good leader is one who leads the organization from the back.

Priority:

Identify what systems and practices should follow at what point of time. Which should be the first and the interconnection systems in a particular area? For Example: without trust, you cant delegate; without delegating power, you can't share responsibility; without sharing responsibility, you cannot share authority; without sharing authority, you cannot give power; without power distribution, no one is held accountable; without accountability, non can share the success; without success, you cannot create a business. Hence, business is built on trust. In this exercise of employee empowerment, one should decide what should follow what and how each should be interrelated. Priorities the area of practices and relate one to another in a meaningful way towards desired objective. Infact, check and build the foundation. Identify what has to be changed in the organization...personal; interpersonal; or organizational. Is it the Individual; group; department; systems; practices or policies. Is it one section or several or all at the same time?

Recognition:

Decide how merit has to be recognized organization wide. People should know 'what' one's contribution is towards the organization and what work gets recognized. Follow and adopt good governance. Keep financial awards as the last way to recognize one's contribution. People are motivated and feel pleasure to receive appreciation in other forms, and those could be:

A nice dinner with CEO;

A personal Photo on the organization wall, and of family members too;

A place of workshop section to name after a person for his contribution;

Membership to the Board;

Membership to some Municipal or community council;

Look to represent the organization in the community;

Look to lead the organization for a day and more;
Sees to decide the menu for others;
An invitation as guest to CEO could make an employee as guest.

There could several like these gestures. Identify those while recognition. Self esteem has to be raised and people like this. Practice raising self-esteem. Self-esteem is the cause for building civilizations.

Passionate workplace:

Passion cannot be instilled or purchased or can be brought from any place or person. One, infact, cant transfer passion; instead, work place practices should instil passion towards reaching organization goals. Flat and circular work structure, commonality, due recognition for the work, mutual trust, reposing faith in a person, assigning work objectively will create passion. Then CREATE it. The management actions should be objectively executed and the entire organization issues should be objectively dealt. A clean practice creates passion and with passion, civilizations are built. Management is crucial in creating passion workforce and this can be done through clean and professional policies and practices, per se. Be truthful and demonstrate it to everyone in the organization. It is the feeling of employees that they are 'WITH' the organization as the success thumb rule while empowering employees.

Attitudinal surveys:

People also feel to be treated as equal partners in the organization. People also think about how organization should be. Conduct attitudinal surveys regularly. The span could depend on organizational policy and time, but once in six months would be an ideal span. Survey should include about the given power- whether it has been utilised; how much power is too much; attitudes of employees towards the organization goals, improvements, aspirations and ideas generated. These surveys send the message that management cares and is concerned. Infact, naming it as "our staff satisfying survey" would give proper thrust and push-up. The outcome of attitudinal survey should be debated organization wide.

Create Opportunity:

Opportunities are to be created equally to everyone, and he/she should be told to utilize them. Provide them all the tools and resources for power to succeed. The healthy work place culture, climate, practices and strategies are to be created over a period of time and worked-out successfully and meticulously towards the organization success. People should not develop the feeling of deficiency in oppournity. Oppournity do come, but creating an oppournity to each employee makes the difference. By crating oppournity, employee contributes significantly and on the other, their feelings towards organization are high.

Common language:

Improve the work place language organization wide, from I to WE; One to ALL or US and ME to they all. The systems like sharing commonplace, due recognition for the work done, information to be transparent, equal power to all and the like are the management approach to be adopted. People should feel that they share common feeling, which the organization makes with better work place ethos. The language should make them feel part of the organization and not mere an employee, who has come to earn the days livelihood. A language is after all shared

human feelings and this has to be instituted and developed organization wide amongst all. Management also can create this, if it deals objectively with all the issues in the organization. A simple distension amongst employees kills the spirit.

Power of Empowerment:

Make employees AWARE that empowerment exists and all ways of empowerment exercise are open to them. People tend to look at power distribution as weakness of management and passing the power towards employees as a punishment. Make employees realize how power has been given to each, and how it has to be effectively used towards organization growth. Also, make sure to communicate how organization is improved (will improve/has improved analysis) through employee empowerment. Employees should realize the POWER of empowerment and the gains, per se.

Time to empower or not to empower:

An initial human nature study needs careful understanding and analysis of individuals with respect to:

Who are cut above average at their level of responsibility?

Does the person has the right technical / functional skills before one is empowered;

Is an employee self-disciplined? Look for it because they have to work with no supervision;

Do people like to be empowered?

Do people understand the spirit of power behind empowerment;

Are people with EGO clash and status?

Can an empowered employee be still further being empowered?

Can't empower areas:

There are some areas you cannot empower and empowerment is restricted. These areas should be keenly seen and understood. Otherwise, it is advisable to be cautious in these fields, like:

Employees stating their own wages or scale to the post;

Setting of the wages of top management;

Deciding the time and quantum of bonus in bad times;

Deciding the amount of dividend paid to share holders;

Making downsizing decisions and deciding on the final employee selections;

Deciding to work less than prescribed hours;

Devoting organization resources for personal reasons;

Ignoring company policies;

Spending and planning to spend company money beyond certain limits, and

Creating a threatening 'or else' climate.

Don't impose empowerment:

An organization perception and attitude survey from time to time needs to be crafted out. It could also happen that few employees may be not just prepared to accept such work place systems and practices. Don't impose or set time boundaries. Drive out the fear and illusion. Prepare their mind and heart before one is empowered. Communicate the spirit behind such exercise.

End Notes

1 A Private Ltd Company, situated in Northern part of Karnataka State, viz: Polyhydron Pvt. Ltd.

78-80, Vishweshwariah Industrial Park, Machhe Industrial Estate, Machhe, Belgaum - 590 014. Karnataka. India. [www.polyhydron.com]

2 Ricardo Frank Semler, SEMCO, rua dom Aguirre 438, Sao Paulo, BRAZIL “The practices reflects and resemble that of SEMCO, on the lines of beautiful principle.... ethical management and idea of natural business”. [August 15,1994, through letter]; Dr D Nagabrahman, Director, TAPMI, Manipal, Karnataka, India, writes back to one of the Professor at IIM-C, who co-ordinates activities at Management Centre for Human Values, IIM-C, “I have seen an really exceptional and endowed with Qualities and values of ethical Management been advocated and runs PPL on different model. It is to be seen to be believed for his concepts of business and work, his values and his spiritualism”. [May 9, 2001, after personal visit to PPL, writes to Shri Chakaravaoty, Professor, IIM-C, West Bengal, India]

3 Managing Director, Godrej Soaps Ltd, Vikhroli, Mumbai, India” It has opened my eyes in many ways by seeing the excellent work done by you. I am sure your company has a tremendous future ahead of it”. [April 22, 1992, after personal visit to PPL]

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Annexure No: 1: Major Chronological Events@PPL (some important happenings, which has shaped the organization towards excellence)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Land mark Developments</u>
1981	Establishment of PPL in a 300 Sq feet area
1984	President's Award for Entrepreneurship
1987	Changed from Conventional management to Ethical management Computerization of the work
1988	JIT implementation
1988-1996	Evolution of PPL way like Factory within the factory; no security; no reception; no stores; trust based; single scoring, no incoming inspection; elimination of department; finest special library.
1989	Became Private limited company
1989	Participated in IMPEX (earlier in 1986)
1989	Visit of CEO to ITALY (collaboration under UNIDO)
1989	Construction of new building of PPL measuring 30,000 Sq feet (at Machhe)
1992	Nacosi Sima Award for excellence in Management
1993	Introduction of Welfare schemes
1992-93	Vocational Award for High Ethical standards
1993-94	First prize in Industrial Exhibition
1994	Visit of CEO to USA for collaboration with Oilgear Company, USA
1996-97	Visit of CEO to Japan, Taiwan for Quality Mission
1997	Visit of CEO to Germany for Exhibition
1998	Diligent TAXpayer award by Commercial Dept
1998	Honored by Institute of Engineers
