Empowerment Moves Your Company Forward

🕐 MARCH 6, 2014   👤 ANNIK STAHL

Empowerment is a big word, and it has a variety of connotations. From the civil rights movement to Nike's "Just Do It" slogan to what's currently going on in Ukraine, people everywhere want to feel empowered by their own strengths and beliefs.

In theory and in practice, every employee who has any dealings with your customers represents the face of your company, from the Chief Financial Officer who's wining and dining investor prospects to your delivery truck drivers. Being able to empower both of these workers and everyone in between can only serve to make your business a more efficient and productive one.

"Empowered people are crucial to any organization's

success," says Dan Sanker, CEO of logistics outsourcing company CaseStack, in his post on LinkedIn. "They're confident, knowledgeable, and able to be more productive without being micromanaged or having excessive oversight. They demonstrate initiative and own their work. They become superheroes."

Everyone likes a superhero, right?

When your superheroes are on the go

In order to empower people and in order for them to *feel* empowered you need to provide them with the right tools. Otherwise all your bluster and big talk about empowerment rings hollow.

Consider this scenario:

You're a food supply business, distributing to 200,000 customers, in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, schools, and government institutions. You have a fleet of 5,000 refrigerated tractor trailers and you operate more than 50 distribution centers.

At this point the only way your customers can place an order is by calling or submitting one online. Most have standing orders and many are long-time clients. In the past, on delivery day, if a grocery store customer wanted, say, an extra case of Red Bull and two cases of Unisom Sleep Gels, even if the driver had those on board, he probably couldn't

provide them. Why? Because he has no way of knowing 1) if the customer is credit-worthy; and 2) how to accept the money — not to mention the remittance — right then and there.

But wait! Why couldn't it be part of the driver's job? Remote Deposit Capture (RDC, which has been around since 2004 when Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act — also known as Check 21 Act took effect) is basically the ability to convert a check into an ACH capture from anywhere to anywhere. Of course it's useful; it enhances cash flow and reduces processing and transportation costs. That's all well and good, but your driver would still have to return to either the main office or some field office and use the remote deposit scanners — normally one for the check and one for the remittance — and send the images to be keyed in by either the bank or your A/R department. It's clumsy, it's still not an automated solution, it takes productive time away from the driver (who could be visiting another customer), and the current customer isn't getting what she needs right when she needs it.

Mobile solutions provide the cape

What would really empower this driver is a totally mobile solution. If the driver had the ability to take and post a payment from his customer on the fly, Red Bull and Unisom would be on the shelves in no time. Imagine the driver using his cell phone to input some information, take a picture of the customer's check, and away it goes — complete and with the remit — to be posted automatically. It's quick, it's easy, your money gets to you almost instantly, and your customer is happy.

This isn't a pie-in-the-sky scenario; this solution is on the horizon and coming to a caped and empowered delivery driver near you…

"We want to empower our people; we want to strengthen them; we want to provide them with the kind of qualifications that will enable them to build up their own country themselves." — Aung San Suu Kyi

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