



October 13th, 2020

Empowerment

BUILDING TRUST IN TEAMS

Written by: Jesse LaDousa, Chief Operating Officer

Last week, I introduced the concept of empowerment. This concept has allowed us to successfully grow our company, strengthen our employees, and deliver better results to our clients over the past decade.

We view empowerment as a broad concept that affects all aspects of our company. From individuals to teams, senior employees to interns, empowering across the spectrum of interactions we have on a daily basis sets the tone for our company and is reflected in the work we do for our clients.

Today, let's focus on how to empower teams. As a reminder, Wikipedia defines empowerment as:

"A set of measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority."

But how do we apply this to our teams? How do we create

autonomy and self-determination? There are several key concepts that promote ownership and behavior shifts in teams. I firmly believe that it all starts with trust. As a leadership team, we must trust that we have hired the right people to deliver high quality results. Trust must flow the other direction as well. The team must trust that the leadership believes in them and, most importantly, the team must trust each other.

Trust must be built over time but can be accelerated by adopting some core concepts. These include:

- Make sure input is sought out from all team members. You've hired smart people - listen to them!
- Reinforce successes with positive feedback. Addressing issues is always necessary, but don't forget to also address the successes.
- Stretch the capabilities of your team and the individuals on it. Pushing people a little beyond their comfort zone

will yield growth and pride in the outcome.

- Create a transparent environment. Nothing should be off the table for discussion. Trust can only be formed in an open and transparent environment.
- Create a culture of mentorship. Always be looking to coach your team members to become better. Help them grow!

Trust is the most important foundation any team can have. But it is not a given. By taking action and demonstrating the characteristics outlined above, you can show your team that they are empowered to create success for themselves.

I used this sentence in my last article, but I believe it bears repeating:

"Great teams are not managed top-down but rather given the autonomy to deliver in the best way the team determines."

In order to embody that idea, you must trust your team! How have you shown your team that you trust in them?

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