

Chapter MP3 script 23

Delegation and Empowerment

In this recording we summarise the content of chapter 23 Delegation and Empowerment. Studying this chapter should help you evaluate when and why to delegate, empower and engage employees within the organization; discuss good practice (how to) in delegating and empowering employees; Evaluate arguments for and against greater empowerment and engagement in contemporary organizations; .

Introducing the chapter, the authors start with 1. In this part of the book we continue to examine how management theory is translated into practice. Over the past two chapters we have focused on the application of scientific management, motivation, group work and contingency theory to the practice of organisation and work design. Central to the design of work is the attainment of organisational goals through people and technology. One of the key challenges for management is therefore to get the most out of their human resources within the context of their organisation. Completing work requires discretion and access to resources both of which rely upon power and authority. Power, however, is distributed by management to varying degrees.

2. Throughout the book we have described and reviewed Taylorism, noting its impact upon job design (fragmented, repetitive, specialised and tightly controlled). This approach to job design was ignorant of the social aspects of work and the legacy of Taylorism contains many drawbacks such as those described in the previous chapter (dissatisfaction, demotivation, poor productivity and quality and a reduced ability to adapt to changing requirements). Attempts to address these problems involved organising work along more human-centred lines. In response, practitioners set out to enrich work and increase employee involvement. Work redesign focused on the functional aspects of the work performed, autonomy and the level of meaning that people derive from work (completeness of task and ability to see the sense in what they do).

3. As we saw in the previous chapter, one of the central issues of organisation design is the question of how to create the best balance between control from the centre and delegation throughout the rest of the system. This chapter examines some of the factors surrounding power distribution and delegation, including questions of span of control, empowerment and employee engagement. In the previous chapter, delegation was considered in organisation-structure terms, especially in terms of centralisation versus decentralisation. This was taken to mean the degree to which the authority to commit resources was diffused throughout the organisation by means of the formal allocation of roles within a structure. This chapter considers key concepts associated with power and employee engagement. We discuss delegation at the more personal level as the transfer of authority between one individual and another, i.e. as a management issue rather than an organisational one. We then progress to consider how management thinking has evolved in this area..

The key concepts discussed within this chapter are:

authority - the right to make particular decisions and to exercise control over resources; Delegation - a distinct type of power sharing process that occurs when a manager gives subordinates the responsibility and authority for making certain decisions previously made by the manager; Empowerment - A climate whereby employees are allowed greater freedom, autonomy and self-control over their work, and the responsibility for decision-making; power - the ability of individuals or groups to persuade, induce or coerce others into following certain courses of action; responsibility - an obligation placed on a person who occupies a certain position in the organization structure to perform a task, function or assignment; span of control - A measure of the number of employees who report to one supervisor or manager; .

Other terms discussed include:

Accountability; employee engagement; .

Summarising and concluding, the author(s) make the following comments - 16. In this chapter we

discussed various forms of employee involvement (participation) and engagement. In turbulent environments and where work is surrounded by uncertainty, employees typically require greater freedom, autonomy and self control over their work and responsibility for decision-making. We discussed delegation as the process of allocating authority and responsibility to others throughout the various levels of the organisation. Whereas managers occasionally used delegation throughout the 20th century, in the 21st century empowerment and engagement became the norm. As environments became more dynamic and turbulent, empowerment and engagement (more than simple delegation) became a necessity in many organisations..

We have now reached the end of the chapter 'Delegation and Empowerment'.

There are a number of references for this chapter where further reading opportunities are identified for you.

Additionally, there are questions or activities to help develop and test your understanding of this chapter