

# Employee Empowerment

Lecture 5

# Employee empowerment defined

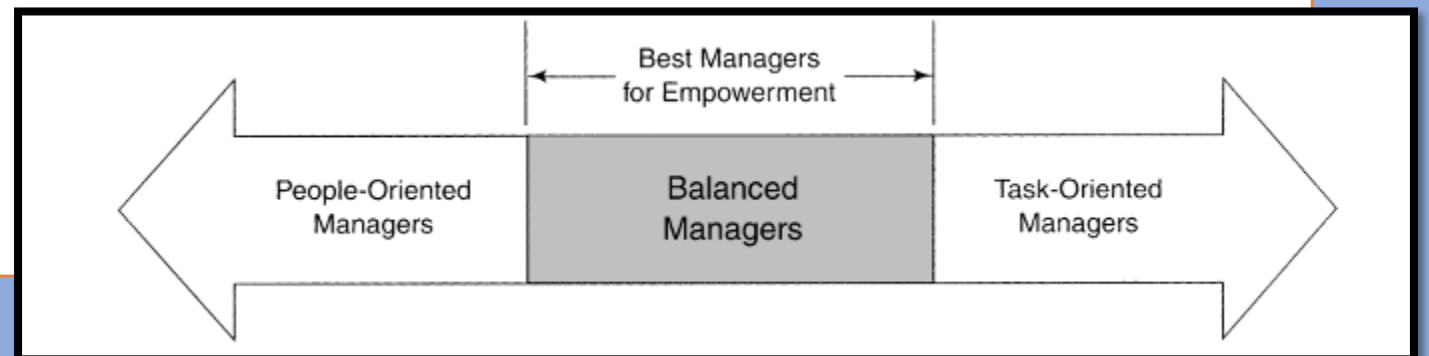
- Employee involvement and empowerment are closely related concepts, but they are not the same. In a total quality setting, employees should be empowered.
- Here are important differences between involvement and empowerment. **Involved employees** are asked for their input, but they are not given *ownership* of their jobs. **Empowered employees** are given ownership of the processes they are responsible for and the products or services generated by those processes.

# Rationale for Empowerment

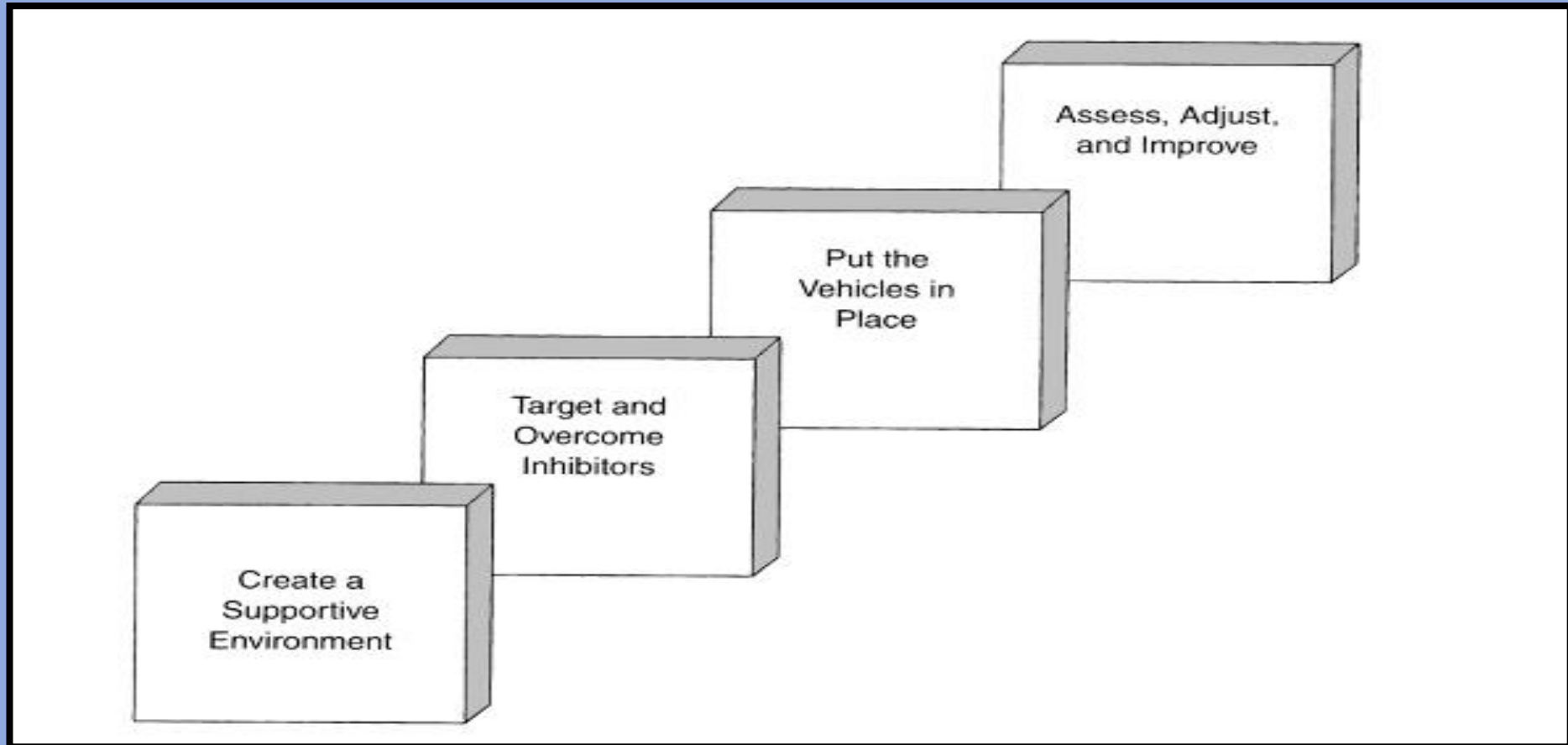
- Traditionally, working hard was seen as the surest way to succeed. With the advent of global competition and the never-ending need to improve, the key to success became not just working hard but also working smart. In many cases, decision makers in business and industry interpreted working smart as adopting high-tech systems and automated processes.
- An aspect of working smart that is often missing in the modern workplace is involving and empowering employees in ways that take advantage of their **creativity** and promote **independent thinking** and initiative on their part. In other words, what's missing is empowerment.

# Inhibitors of empowerment

- The primary inhibitor of empowerment, **resistance to change**, is an indigenous characteristic of human nature. Resistance can be magnified when suspicion replaces trust.
  - Resistance from Employees and Unions
  - Resistance from Management
  - I'm-the-Boss Syndrome
  - Outdated Management Training
  - Old-School Syndrome



# Implementing empowerment



# How to recognize empowered employees ?

- The following comparisons will help leaders in an organization determine whether they have empowered employees.
  - Waiting to be told versus taking the initiative.
  - Seeing only problems versus seeing opportunities.
  - Accepting input at face value versus thinking critically.
  - Pass decisions up the line versus building consensus for solutions.

# Empowerment errors to avoid

- The following precautions will help organizations avoid the most common empowerment errors:
  - Clearly defining what empowerment means in the organization.
  - Provide empowerment training for all personnel.
  - Do not rush or become impatient.

# Beyond empowerment to enlistment

- Involvement and empowerment focus the experience, knowledge, creativity, and ideas of a broad cross-section of stakeholders on a problem. Empowerment is now widely accepted and practiced in competitive organizations. What, then, is next? How can organizations go beyond involvement and empowerment?

