

THE ROLE OF EMPOWERMENT TO FOMENT BETTER PRODUCTIVITY

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INTRODUCTION

Nations across the globe are depending more on Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) in their productive sectors. In addition, it is observe that the COVID-19 pandemic affected to a high extent the aforementioned institutions. Consequently, the vulnerability of this sector affects the economy as whole and specific economic functions like employment, business continuity, and productivity. In fact, enterprises are facing a variety of problems such as a decrease in demand, supply chain disruptions, cancelation of export orders, raw material shortage, and transportation disruptions, among others (Shafi, 2020). Furthermore, the instituted health protocols, though enforced differently by different nations, require special attention because of their direct impact on the business continuity of MSMEs. Berry, Rodriguez, & Sandee (2001) argue that MSMEs are considered very important in industries or economies that face rapid market or economic condition changes, such as a sharp macro-economic downturn. COVID-19 is actually a major change not only impacting the micro but also the macroeconomic conditions of any nation. Based on the above, enterprise resilience is a must condition to business continuity and every person or group in charge should plan for a long-term continuity.

According to the World Economic Forum (2020), MSMEs and entrepreneurs need to address and integrate five key indicators to build resilience. Among these indicators is leadership. As one goes through the revelations and the lessons learned by many of the CEOs and General Managers across the globe, a salient recommendations for leaders is to have empathy with the subordinates and the customers, first, and second to empower the ranks of the employees across the different hierarchies in order to boost productivity amid the aggressive pandemic environmental business conditions. Blanchard, Carlos and Randolph (2001) contend that recognizing the talents of all staff and stressing a message of service, leads to focusing the efforts of the entire staff. Though to achieve the aforementioned, people must be empowered with sharing information for better decision making [enabled with the appropriate technology], be empowered with declared boundaries for autonomy, and rely more on self-managed teams. The above is only possible amid the pandemic if leaders are themselves committed to offer different management thinking. Specially, those leaders must have a basic faith (belief and trust) in their people and let them being engaged.

Empowerment, if achieved within MSMEs, creates a sense of ownership which is considered a booster of morale when dealing with human capital. So, when employees deal with their customers and peers, they will assure an errorless quality service/product. Empowerment becomes a key success factor for the firm which leads to business continuity. However, achieving empowerment is not a simple task or a business exercise that the leader plans with human resources department and then just observes, it is a major cultural change from the top and an exercise of building trust and breaking silos of the hierarchy.

The name of the game is making people feel important, having empathy, providing reward, and know their capabilities and believing in them to reach a business closure with no errors, with satisfaction and creating a rapport of trust with customers and suppliers. The financial objectives will be achieved as a consequence.

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