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Self-Managed Work Teams: How Implementation Plans Affect Success or Failure

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**SELF-MANAGED WORK TEAMS:
HOW IMPLEMENTATION PLANS AFFECT
SUCCESS OR FAILURE**

Julia E. Meeker, B.A.

A Culminating Project Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Lindenwood University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science Administration

1999

ABSTRACT

This applied learning project will deal with the implementation of empowerment in an organization and the importance of an implementation plan.

Research shows that resistance to change by management or front line employees can lead to the failure of the change. Resistance to change is a normal human reaction but can be minimized through effective change management.

Effective change management includes clear, understandable, complete communication at the appropriate time. The development of a change implementation plan can reduce the resistance to change by providing information that addresses employees concerns regarding the proposed change.

The purpose of this project is to design an Empower Implementation Plan that incorporates the change management principles recommended in current research. It is hypothesized that the creation and use of an effective Empowerment Implementation Plan will effect the success of moving a company from a traditional management style to the empowerment management style.

Two evaluators were selected to participate in the evaluation of the Empowerment Implementation Plan. The evaluators were business professionals in the mortgage banking and insurance industries. Both were college graduates and had management experience. One had worked in an empowered work environment. They were asked to complete a review the plan and complete a survey that the plans effectiveness in communicating in the following areas: (1)physical layout and presentation; (2) clarity and understandability; and (3) completeness.

The results of the analysis showed the overall plan was effective but that there were areas for improvement. Analysis also showed that additional studies need to be completed to completely validate the effectiveness of the plan.

COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF CANDIDACY:

Associate Professor Daniel W. Kemper,
Chairperson and Advisor

Adjunct Assistant Professor James Lister

Adjunct Assistant Professor Jeff Harris

Dedication

To my mother:

Without her gentle encouragement I may have never finished.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The corporate world is constantly introducing new organizational structures and business philosophies to remain competitive. Some businesses embrace these new ideas while others take a wait-and-see attitude. The empowered self-managed work team philosophy is no different.

Companies such as Xerox, Proctor & Gamble, GM, Federal Express, and GE have all shown increased productivity (anywhere from 13% to 40%) by using the self-managed work team concept (Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger 5-6). Even with such results, other companies remain embedded in old management styles. Other companies site numerous failures as their reason not to incorporate this management style.

Historical Overview

The terms "empowerment" and "self-management" are becoming the buzz words of the 1990s. Exactly what these terms mean, however, seems to depend on the person using them. By looking at the historical development of the major systems of management one will be able to gain

a clearer understanding of what is meant by empowerment and self-management in the world of business.

There are four methods of management that Torres and Spiegel discuss in their book Self-Directed Work Teams: A Primer. These four methods summarize the types of management used throughout history. They are management by doing, management by directing, management by results and management by method (81).

Management by doing was in use in preindustrial society. Craft guilds were common during this age. This system was based on creating goods known by the craftsman's trademark. Monetary and social recognition was based on the quality and type of goods produced (82).

This method of management is similar to the work-team philosophy in that the "production system involved small groups of people who collaborated to produce high-quality products" and "had a high degree of control over quality, quantity, pricing, and design of their work" (83).

The invention of the steam engine in the late 1700s put an end to the craft guilds and ushered in the mechanized factory. Management by directing was used in these factories. Employers were mainly interested in increasing productivity. The concept of bureaucracy was developed at this time. This concept and its principles became the foundation for organizational structures throughout the twentieth century (84).

This type of management was not designed to initiate creativity on the part of the employees. It was also not designed to be pleasant. Its purpose was to produce large quantities of goods at the lowest possible cost. "Workers were regarded as interchangeable and were expected to respond to the demands of the job unemotionally" (85).

During this time Frederick Taylor (the "father of scientific management") began his experiments. Taylor is most famous for his time and motion studies. Bureaucratic principles and Taylor's scientific management were major characteristics of management by directing (86).

Taylor's scientific management has influenced the work-team concept by looking at who plans and controls the production of the good or service.

Taylor's error was that he believed that only engineers and experts could plan and control the work; however, work teams today can manage all aspects of the production process. (87)

Management by results came out of the belief that the current management system was dehumanizing. The relationship between physical working condition and the employee greatly affected productivity. The Hawthorne studies helped to establish this relationship.

Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, and Douglas McGregor were also key movers in the management by results era (87).

The results of Mayo's studies marked the beginning of the behavioral-science investigation directed at improving productivity and organizational effectiveness by emphasizing the critical human factors. . . . Maslow created a model depicting the relationship between human motivation and performance. . . . McGregor . . . proposed that a manager's assumptions about human motivation influences his or her style. McGregor called these contrasting sets of assumptions **Theory X** and **Theory Y**. (88-90)

Many of the ideas and principles found in the self-managed work environment have come from the theories and studies of Mayo, Maslow, and McGregor. The ideas of these men fell short, however, in the areas of innovative thinking, problem solving, and quality awareness (92).

Management by method focused on the system not individual tasks. Under this method, the interactions between work-group members was researched. These studies were performed to reach higher production goals (93). W. E. Deming played a significant role in the development of management by method through statistical process control (94).

Much of Deming's philosophy is drawn from the tradition of humanistic management and from the sociotechnical principles. He believed that all employees are motivated by the opportunity to work

with pride; therefore, they must be involved in the development, refinement, and control of systems and methods in order to maintain and increase quality.
(95)

By looking at the management methods of the past, self-management is clearly seen as a combination of characteristic from each of the previous methods.

Empowerment and Self-Management

Tracing the development of the self-managed theory is easier than defining the theory. It means different things to different people and businesses. One of its fundamental characteristics is employee empowerment.

Empowerment, then, is passing on authority and responsibility. As we refer to it here, empowerment occurs when power goes to employees who then experience a sense of ownership over their job.
(Wellings, Byham and Wilson 22)

Trust is the key to successful employee empowerment. Management must have confidence in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the employees in order to pass power to them. Employees, on the other hand, must trust that management will provide them with the training and

support necessary to accept the responsibility and accountability being passed to them.

Empowerment is the first step in the self-managed work team development. It is empowerment that make this method of management different from traditional management. Table 1 shows that the self-managed work team concept is almost the exact opposite of the traditional management format. Another main difference between self-managed teams and traditional management is the reward system. The traditional system is "tied to type of job, individual performance, and seniority" (Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger 11). The self-managed team system is "tied to team performance and individual breadth of skills" (Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger 11).

Table 1: Methods of Management

	Traditional Employee Involvement	Self-Managed Work Teams
Roles	Fixed	Interchangeable
Tasks	Rigid	Flexible
Skills	Specialized	Multi-skilled
Control	Individual	Group
Status	Differential	Equal
Supervision	Outside the group	Within the group
Work effort	Divided	Cohesive

SOURCE: Self-Directed Work Teams: A Primer.
Cresencio Torres and Jerry Spiegel (1990).

Stages of Team Development

Self-managed work teams go through several stages of development. Mark Kelly, in his book The Adventures of a Self-Managing Team, lists five distinct stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and transforming (113-114).

Forming is the initial stage a team goes through. This is generally a time of confusion and questions. Each team member is trying to find his or her place on the team (113).

During the state of confusion, usually lasting from six to nine months, teams and managers confront the sobering truth of self-direction [management]. Team members realize they must do more than simply learn a new role; they now see how their role, like Proteus, becomes a different beast every time they think they have it mastered. Managers and supervisors realize that for them the transition means more work and more worry than a new job, they must perform their old job until the teams can manage themselves, and they must respond immediately whenever a new team runs into trouble. (Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger 92).

Also during this stage, the team has to decide "goals, expectations, and tasks to be done" (Kelly 113). These are not unchangeable but are needed to give the team a starting point and a uniting purpose. If the team members have not worked together before, it will give them a common

ground to start building their working relationship. It is very important during this stage that management be supportive of team ideas and open to finding answers to the team's questions.

The second stage most teams go through is storming. This stage is known as a "period of frustration and disagreement among the members. There is usually significant conflict around the issues of leadership, power, control, and influence" (Kelly 113). During this time special emphasis needs to be placed on training. If management wants to be seen as supportive of the self-management effort, an investment in training is crucial. Both soft and hard skills are needed by each team member. A soft skill would be interpersonal skills.

Research shows that our words communicate 35% of our message. The rest of our meaning, 65%, is conveyed through nonverbal signals we give. And a lot of the time, our non-verbal messages are a clearer indication of what we really think than our words.
(Today's Team March 1991, 1)

Training in hard or technical skills should also be started during this stage of team development. "Multiskilling and skill-based pay systems make extensive job skills training critical for successful individual and team performance" (Wellins, Byham and Wilson 164).

Management needs to be aware that just providing training is not enough. This training needs to be provided at the right time. There is no need for a class in budgeting if the team is nine to twelve months from receiving the responsibility for planning the team's budget.

When you consider the total amount of training self-directed teams require, it is important to apply a Just-In-Time approach, where training is provided as close in time as possible to actual use of the skill. A great deal of training is rendered useless because the participants don't immediately have an opportunity to apply their newly learned skills. (Wellins, Byham and Wilson 171).

The third stage of development is norming. Here "functional relationships among members are developed, and disagreements are negotiated. Stronger bonds begin to develop among the members, and they become more interdependent as a group" (Kelly 114). Each team member begins to see his or her strengths and how these strengths add to the success of the team. Each member settles in to his or her main responsibilities. The team, as a whole, begins to gain confidence in its empowerment or ability to make significant changes and assert control over the variables that affect the end product.

Becoming a self-directed work team is an evolutionary process. Work teams don't spring up overnight. People adapt over time to greater degrees or

responsibility, self-direction, and empowerment
The empowerment continuum helps teams and
management alike to understand where they are in
terms of empowerment -- and where they want to go.
(Wellins, Byham and Wilson 28)

Performing is the fourth stage. In this stage the team can look at how the work is done not just on the developing of the team. It is during this stage that process improvements occur. Brainstorming and process mapping are just two of the tools that can be used to improve processes. One of the main reasons a company moves from traditional management to self-management is to encourage new ways of doing current processes. During the performing stage companies will probably see an increase in new ideas and innovative process changes.

The last major stage in the development of a team is transforming. This stage is characterized by significant change(s) within the work team itself. "Types of changes that may occur include losing or adding members, redefining a team's primary mission, or a total break-up of the team" (Kelly 114). Any of these changes can cause the team to regress to one of the previous stages and then move forward again.

Changing Management Styles

By looking at the historical development of the self-managed work team philosophy, it is clear to see that it is much different from the traditional management style. When a company decides to change management style, great thought and planning must be done before introducing the change. Table 1 clearly shows that traditional management and self-management are virtually opposite. Because of this, upper management needs to clearly understand what self-management is and how it works. A good part of the success or failure of a self-management initiative will depend on total management support.

Preparing the company as a whole for the cultural change of self-management is vital. The company can begin this process by providing the necessary resources (which include human, time, and money). Significant time and effort must be supplied in order to develop a proper implementation plan.

Statement of Purpose

By looking at current studies on the subject of change, a clear link will be drawn between a thoroughly developed and communicated implementation plan and the success of a self-managed work team. The

purpose of this study is to investigate the design and implementation of a formal empowerment plan based on the needs of the company and employee.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change is coming faster and involves more dramatic transformations in management styles and employee participation. Empowerment and self-management are just two of the business theories currently discussed and implemented. It seems that just as corporations involve their employees in one new idea another one is developed to replace it. In many cases the success or failure of a new idea is based not on its validity but on the management of the change required by the concept.

Clearly, the real challenge confronting American business is not the issue of corporate structure. It is the failure of its leaders and managers to understand change -- and to manage it. (Want 21)

To understand how to manage change, business leaders must first understand how change works. According to Jerome H. Want, in his article "Managing Radical Change", there are five basic types of change. In order to properly manage change, business leaders need to know what kind of change in which they are dealing.

Delayed change is the first type. This usually involves a company that has reached maturity. The company must now decide new directions of growth to keep the market share for their product or service. The second type is operational change. It "reflects change on two levels: the need to improve or alter operations . . . and dissent within the business culture" (25). This type of change revolves around keeping up with your competition's improvements and/or pricing. The third type is directional change and is a result of the current business strategy failing in the marketplace. Fundamental change is the fourth and reflects a failure in the mission or leadership of the business. Employees (at all levels) begin to resist the direction given from top management, which can result in internal conflicts (25-26). The final type of change is referred to as total change. "Total change can reflect extreme stages of alienation and business failure within the culture or it can reflect a planned and total turnaround of the business" (27).

Just by looking at this brief discussion about the types of change, a clear understanding change is a key to managing change. And, managing change is critical to the success or failure of new business ideas including self-management. Managing change and communicating change are the front and back of the same coin. A successful business or manager must see and understand both subjects if change is to be successful. Because

of the additional responsibilities placed on the ordinary worker by the self-managed philosophy, managing and communicating this cultural change is critical. A well defined and communicated implementation plan aids in the successful management of change.

Managing Change

In the late 1920's several studies were conducted at the Hawthorn plant in Chicago. These experiments were designed to study employee productivity by introducing change in the environment. The three major experiments (the Illumination Experiments, the Relay Assembly Room Study, and the Bank Wiring Room Study) were conducted to study worker behavior. Behavior was studied by introducing managed change into the work environment (Vecchio 14-15).

All three tests produced unexpected results. In the Illumination Experiments, the researchers found that no matter how the intensity of the lights was altered the production increased. This led to the development of more elaborate studies designed to determine the true reason for the increase in production (14).

The Relay Assembly Room Study also provided surprising results. This experiment gave a small group of women lunch breaks, shorter work hours, and a shorter work week. Overall the researchers expected to find

"some conditions increased productivity while others decreased it" (14). However, the results to the study showed a gradual increase in productivity as all conditions changed. It was the workers psychological reaction to the study itself that influenced the production (15).

The study that provided the greatest insight into the psychological aspects of employee work groups and relationships were the Bank Wiring Room Study. This experiment studied the workers daily actions in a normal setting. The main result of this study showed how the men involved developed an unwritten production norm. They were paid by individual output, yet each man produced the unwritten standard number. Verbal and physical harassment was used on anyone not complying to the norm. The desire for increased pay was weaker than the desire to remain free from harassment (15-16).

These studies give business' and leaders a wealth of insight into managing change. Even when logic and documented support indicate embarking on a given course of change, the psychological reaction and physical attributes associated with change must be managed (for example, the lighting in the Illumination Study). There is a basic tendency to resist and fear change.

Maryl Reis Louis, in the study "Entering Unfamiliar Organizational Settings", discussed how employees react to their new organizational

setting. The model Louis created was based on the new employee's reactions, but there are definite applications to any employee entering a new organizational setting. For this discussion, only the first half of the model will be used.

It is proposed that change, contrast, and surprise constitute major features of the entry experience. Although all refer to differences associated with entering new settings, they focus on separate types of differences. (235)

In managing change, leaders must be aware of how employees could react, not only how they expected them to react. A plan to address these reactions on an individual and corporate level needs to be developed. By understanding the situations the employee faces in a new setting (change, contrast and surprise), leaders will be better prepared to deal with the results of these situations.

Change, in Louis' study, referred to the "difference in a major feature between the new and old settings" (235). How much the employee must cope with the change depends on how many elements have been changed between the old and new setting (235).

Contrast is felt on an individual basis (236). Even though the actual change may be the same throughout the organization (i.e., moving to a

new building), the contrast will be different for each employee (being near a window in the old building but not in the new).

Contrast is, therefore, person-specific rather than indigenous to the organizational transition. That is to say, for two people undergoing the same change . . . different contrasts will emerge. (236)

Comparisons may be drawn during the contrast experience. As an employee seeks to understand the new setting, he or she may base the understanding on how the old setting worked (237). "Or the newcomer may try to incorporate aspects of the old into the new role or resist the new role in favor of the old role" (237).

The third experience in Louis' model is surprise. Surprise would be felt anytime the employee's anticipation and actual experiences differ (237). This could occur quite often depending on how drastic the setting has altered.

Surprise also encompasses one's affective reactions to any differences, including contrast and changes. Surprise may be positive . . . and/or negative. The subject of anticipation and, therefore, surprise may be the job, the organization, or self. Anticipations may be conscious, tacit, or emergent; either overmet or undermet anticipations can produce surprise. (237)

When a cultural change such as self-management occurs, the experience each employee faces mirrors that of a new employee to a company. Self-management changes an employees role, responsibilities, and relationships within his/her team and with other teams. Having action plans in place for these experiences will give the company leadership a better chance to manage the change; not, crises manage the employees reactions.

It is a general assumption that change will be met with a degree of resistance. Jeffrey Goldstein discussed resistance to change in his article "A Far-from-Equilibrium Systems Approach to Resistance to Change".

To be sure, whenever change is introduced into an organization, resistance to that change also appears. Overcoming resistance to change is therefore a critical issue -- whether that resistance occurs at the level of a single work group or an entire organization. (16)

Goldstein's discussion revolves around the nature of resistance; and, whether resistance is good or bad.

The term 'resistance,' though, conjures up a picture of employees acting stubbornly, rebelliously, and obstinately. Indeed, employee responses to change often appear to be a willful opposition to anything new. However, this "negative" model of resistance typically leads to the counter-response of pushing back against the resistance that much harder! (17)

According to Goldstein, resistance is an example of a survival mechanism and should not be viewed as willful opposition to organizational change (17). Goldstein develops a new model of resistance that focuses on the constructive elements of resistance not the negative. Much of his model is based on "cybernetic concepts concerning homeostatic" and "equilibrium-seeking mechanisms" in organizational autopoiesis (table 2). The term autopoiesis applies to living organisms whose reaction to change goes beyond simple homeostasis (17). It is by applying these terms to organizations that Goldstein's model focuses on the positive attributes of resistance to change. This new model is a "far-from-equilibrium" organizational reaction to change (21).

This new approach to change encourages organizations to look beyond mere reaction to change and shift their focus to anticipating and encouraging change. By continually adding new information into the organization, the system is being driven beyond equilibrium. This new information should not just come from the outside the organization. "Instead, the system itself must be induced to generate more information about itself" (23)..

Table 2:
Equilibrium Versus Far-from-Equilibrium Systems

	<u>Equilibrium System</u>	<u>Far-from-Equil. System</u>
Response to change	Fluctuations are deamplified through system	Fluctuations may be amplified and spread
Relation to	Closed	Open
Amount of information	Low	High
Potential for reorganization	Low	High
Nature of resistance	Unchangeable	Amenable to difference questioning

SOURCE: Organizational Dynamics. Exhibit 3 from "A Far-from-Equilibrium Systems Approach to Resistance to Change," by Jeffrey Goldstein (22).

When organizations create a vision that focuses on future goals and anticipated change, it promotes a far-from-equilibrium condition. This type of organizational culture prepares employees and management to expect, not fear, necessary operational changes.

The psychological effects of change are supported and discussed further in the article by Goodstein and Burke, "Creating Successful Organizational Change". The purpose of the Goodstein and Burke study was to address "large-scale, fundamental type of organizational change" (7). Self-management is just such a change. Moving towards self-management generally affects an employee's thinking and behavior at virtually every level and aspect of corporate life.

As previously discussed, each employee may react to the same change along a wide behavioral spectrum. When a corporation is facing

large-scale change it is critical that employees see some things as constant while openly addressing those things that will change.

The principal here is that for people to be able to deal with enormous and complex change – seeming chaos – they need to have something to hold on to that is stable. (8)

Goodstein and Burke explain several methods of implementing change. Although none of these methods are new, perhaps they have not been properly communicated and implemented in the cases of organizational change failure. Change implementation should include the following methods.

- * Setting up a comprehensive training program (individual change strategy).
- * Modifying the structure, individuals' jobs, and/or work procedures (technostructural strategy).
- * Conducting a company survey to assess organizational culture for the purpose of using the data to pinpoint required changes (data-based strategy).
- * Collecting information from organizational members about their views regarding what needs to be changed and acting accordingly (organization development strategy).
- * Combining two, three, or all of these methods. (9)

Change can occur, within an organization, on three levels. The resistance to change is based on the type of change occurring. An organization participates in 1) changing the individual, 2) changing the structure and systems within the organization, and 3) changing the climate or interpersonal style of the organization (10). The resistance to these changes vary on the degree of change required and how personally it affects the employee.

Goodstein and Burke studied change by analyzing British Airways move from government owned to privately owned. This was a radical change for the airline. It involved every facet of the organization. Downsizing, upgrading of equipment and services, and implementing a new customer focus were the main challenges faced. Much of this was accomplished through a more participative management system supported by intensive training for all employees (11-13).

Organizations need to be willing to accept "the disorganization and temporarily lowered effectiveness that characterizes the transition state" (14). Many organizations still focus on short term goals, namely the bottom line, when encouraging change. Many philosophies are tossed out prematurely because of the temporary drop in profits and productivity. Managing the transitional stages (including a temporary drop in productivity and profits) during complex organizational change is critical

In moving from a known present state to a desired future state, organizations must recognize that. . . the intervening transition state requires careful management, especially when the planned organizational change is large and complex. (14).

Self-managed teams, for survival, must be able to face change without unnecessary fear. If change elicits the equilibrium factor in employees then resistance will automatically occur. Change will usually fail in this situation. Moving towards self-management causes fear both for employee and for managers. Employees will be faced with making, and taking responsibility for, decisions their supervisors once made. And, management is faced with loss of traditional responsibilities and learning how to be a facilitator and mediator for individual teams. Without a fully developed implementation plan, that takes into consideration what change is and how it affects individuals, it will be difficult for self-management to succeed.

To be fair to current change facilitators and organizational managers, a 1993 study by W. Warner Burke and Allen H. Church resulted in an overall grade of B in understanding and managing change. Although each group had its strengths and weaknesses, the authors designed this study not only to see where US corporations are in regards to managing

change but also to reinforce the importance of understanding change (310-318).

Communicating Change

Go to virtually any US company and ask the employees what would help them perform their jobs better. Clearer and more consistent communication would be near the top of almost all the wish lists (better pay would probably be number one). Even many managers would cite communication as a constant challenge. To make matters even more interesting communication goes beyond the spoken word. There are three basic forms of human communication: written, verbal, and non-verbal (body language). When a company is faced with change, all forms of communication become even more important. The nature of change and possible reactions to change has already been discussed. Communication can be an effective tool in the battle against resistance.

Moving from a traditional style of management to a self-managed team environment is radical change and must involve thought, thorough preparation, and clear communication. Almost everyone is familiar with the basic communication model, yet virtually everyone should become a better communicator (and receiver of communication). The basic communication

model includes the sender, the message, and the receiver. Ineffective communication can occur in any area of the communication model.

If one accepts the basic assumption that communication is important in stable business conditions, then it becomes essential in changing business conditions. A key element, then, in managing change is the proper, and consistent, communication of the change being implemented.

Mary Young and James E. Post pursued an in-depth study of 10 leading US companies regarding balancing the need for change with the employees need for security. Their findings were reported in the article "Managing to Communicate, Communicating to Manage: How Leading Companies Communicate with Employees". The basic reaction to change is resistance due partially to insecurity by those being asked to change (especially in radical change such as self management). This study showed that these companies "preserve or improve productivity" during times of change "with a familiar concept: communication" (31).

These companies illustrate that organizations can convert employees' concerns into support for the major changes if they effectively address employees' fears about restructuring and reorganization. On the other hand, if communication is inadequate, employees will be more resistant to change. (31)

The study consisted of surveying senior human resources and communications managers that were employed by companies that recently had undergone major change. From the responses they identified companies within diverse industries that had shown good internal communication practices. Ten companies were selected from this list by meeting the following criteria: 1) recent change, and 2) above average communication practices (33).

Young and Post had a two phase purpose to their study. First, "to identify and compare communications practices at these organizations" (34). They measured this in three ways: 1) by seeing how management rated the change process, 2) by the level of turnover during the change process, and 3) by the general morale of all employees (management and non-management). Second, to focus on two exceptional companies. The study of these two companies "confirmed that certain communication practices significantly improve the ability of any senior management to make large-scale organizational changes" (34).

Through this study eight key elements (table 3) were proposed to be key influences in the effectiveness of employee communication. Although all eight factors seem very logical and important to effective communication, factor eight is the most significant when looking at

designing and communicating a self-management implementation schedule.

Table 3: Eight Factors That Determine the Effectiveness of Employee Communication

1. The Chief Executive as Communications Champion
2. The March Between Words and Actions
3. Commitment to Two-Way Communication
4. Emphasis on Face-to-Face Communication
5. Shared Responsibility for Employee Communications
6. The Bad News/Good News Ratio
7. Knowing Customer, Clients, and Audiences
8. The Employee Communication Strategy

SOURCE: Organizational Dynamics. Exhibit 1 from "Managing to Communicate, Communicating to Manage: How Leading Companies Communicate with Employees" by Mary Young and James E. Post (34).

Those companies viewed in the Young and Post study as excellent communicators in times of change were found to look at communication in a unique way. "Our conclusion is that, among leading companies, employee communication is viewed as a critical management *process*" (40). The idea that communication is a process and not a product was seen as key to the success of change communication. Young and Post found that five "consensus ideas" were developed from the *communication*

process and make up the Employee Communication Strategy. A brief discussion of these five ideas helps define the purpose of an implementation plan (40).

Communicating "not only what is happening, but why and how it is happening" (40) is the first idea. This principal deals with the fact that employees are no longer satisfied with just implementing a change, they want to understand WHY management felt is necessary to change in the first place. Employees, especially baby-boomers, feel it is their right to know and not just a management option (40-41). With the uncertainty facing many employees (especially when down sizing, consolidation, and other restructuring methods are being used), security is increased when information is provided and explained.

The second idea is timeliness. Timeliness is communicating "what you know, when you know it" (41). It is critical to give employees a general knowledge of what is happening as it occurs. What is less critical are the details involved. A greater sense of trust is built between management and employees (and between upper management and lower management) when information is provided on a regular basis. Without this timely communication, management runs the risk of "disaffection, anger and loss of trust" (41).

Continuous communication is the third idea in the communication strategy. This point is closely tied to the previous one. The study showed

that any updated information is received better than waiting till final decisions or details are available. In addition, it was found that "in an information-rich climate, employees are more forgiving of the occasional error" (41) in the information provided.

The fifth consensus idea is linking the "big picture" with the "little picture" (41). Employees need to understand how the changes they are being asked to make effect the overall goals of the company at large. If employees see no direct link between what they are doing and the corporate strategy, then resistance to change may increase. "Changes in the economy, among competitors in the industry, or in the company as a whole must be translated into implications for each plant, job, and employee" (41).

The final idea making up the communication strategy is allowing each employee to "feel" about the change their own way. Each person deals with change individually and it is a significant error for managers to tell people how they should feel.

Veterans of communication wars say such efforts usually fail and often provoke antagonistic responses. It is more effective to communicate "who, what, when, where, why and how" and then let employees draw their own conclusions. (41)

Young and Post drew three basic conclusions from this study of exceptional communication practices during times of change:

1. Employee communications is a critical management process, not a set of products.
2. Effective employee communications practices should be consistent under all organizational conditions.
3. Every manager is a communicator. (42)

Even though Young and Post only studied companies that had recently undergone radical change, their conclusions on good communication practices apply to all business conditions -- not just times of change.

In a related study, Robert J. Marshak looked at communicating change by analyzing the words used to explain the change. In his work, "Managing the Metaphors of Change". Marshak looked at managing change by consistent and accurate use of metaphors to describe the type of change facing the company and employees.

This discussion advances the proposition that these underlying, usually unarticulated understandings about a situation are often shaped and revealed metaphorically. Furthermore, because these understandings are critical to how people assess the need for change -- and indeed, their conception of change itself -- paying attention to managing the metaphors of change becomes a critical competency for leaders and change agents. (44)

A metaphor is a word or phrase that implies a symbolic meaning rather than a literal translation of the word or phrase. Marshak feels strongly that proper selection and management of change metaphors affect the reaction, and possible resistance, to change by employees.

Marshak deals with four types of corporate change and the related metaphors. Table 4 shows how the image of these four types of change relate to the image of the change agent -- the company or representative of the company such as first line managers.

Table 4:
Metaphors of Change and Change Agents

<u>Image of Change</u>	<u>Image of Change Agent</u>
Fix and Maintain	Repair Person, Maintenance Worker, Mechanic
Build and Develop	Trainer, Coach, Developer
Move and Relocate	Planner, Guide Explorer
Liberate and Recreate	Liberator, Visionary, Creator

SOURCE: Organizational Dynamics. Exhibit 1 from "Managing the Metaphors of Change" by Robert J. Marshak (49).

Marshak deals with four types of corporate change and the related metaphors. The "Fix and Maintain" change is the approach that something must be broken if you are changing it. Developmental change looks at the past and builds or enhances what is already there. Transitional change describes a move from the current practice to another practice or condition. The final change is transformational and deals with becoming a

"fundamentally different kind of organization" (47-48). Table 4 shows how the metaphor depicts a specific image not only of the change but also of the change agent. How a company describes the change will effect the employees metaphorical idea of the type of change he or she is facing. The problem occurs when employees are misinterpreting the change because the metaphors used to describe the change does not truly match management's intent of the change. This creates confusion for both the employees and management. It may seem that the employees are not "buying into" an idea when the employees, because of mismatched metaphors, are reacting appropriately to the type of change the metaphor implies.

When the underlying metaphors are different, conflict over what to do and how to do it is common. Thus one person may be trying to "fix the machine," while another wants to "move the organization," and still another doesn't want to "tear down what we've spent so much time building up." In such situations, people may fight over the causes and cures to the problem without ever realizing that their differing, unexpressed, metaphorical reasoning may be preventing them from really understanding one another. (52)

By developing an implementation plan, the type of change required and the metaphors to use should become apparent. This process should clarify the ultimate goal of the change as well as help to communicate the

change. If after the plan is developed, there is still significant confusion, then perhaps it is not the "fault" of the employees, but rather a weak or poorly defined change or implementation plan.

Case Studies

There is no fail-safe empowerment implementation plan to guarantee success, but by looking at case studies some basic success principles surface. It is by combining academic research and industry tried principles that a basic empowerment implementation plan can be developed.

Brian Mostal looks at one success story in his article "Pawley's Quest for the Elusive Grail." Dennis K. Pawley is the executive vice president of Chrysler Corporation's manufacturing division and is credited with changing Chrysler's vision to quality manufacturing. He has done this through empowerment and team building. Pawley's experiences with William E. Hoglund (executive vice president at GM) and Takashi Itoh (former chief Japanese advisor for Mazda's Michigan plant) helped form his ideas on empowerment and quality manufacturing (26).

His belief in empowerment, quality, teamwork, and working relationships with the United Auto Workers (UAW) has dramatically lowered Chrysler's cost of

manufacturing and improved the quality reputation of its products. (26)

One of the basic principles Pawley used to prepare for the culture change was to empower "both the hourly workforce and the management workforce" (qtd in Moskal 26). Empowerment must run through all levels of the organization according to Pawley.

True empowerment is, 'O.K., I trust you in this group of 10 people so much that I'm going to pull the supervisor out and you will be self-directed. Here's the work that has to get done. You folks understand what the quality levels are and make sure you continuously improve it. Understand that we have to continuously improve productivity. You're responsible for that. Develop your own reward systems and how you are going to recognize each other's performance, control absenteeism, and schedule vacations.' These are things the foreman used to do. (qtd in Mostal 26-27)

Pawley's working definition of empowerment quoted above leads to additional principles including: constantly improving quality goals; measurement and reward systems; and, team personnel management (absenteeism, scheduling, etc.).

Pawley recognizes that a move towards empowerment and self-management takes time. He has been executive vice president of manufacturing since 1991 and has increased productivity and quality over the past three years. During those years, cars manufactured benefited

from the new system but it was not until the Neon that a car was developed completely under the empowerment system and teams. "And the Neon is light-years better [in quality] than the [Dodge Ram] because the total organization was involved from the beginning of Neon development" (qtd. in Moskal 35).

Colgate-Palmolive Co. subsidiary Hill's Pet Nutrition is another empowerment success story. Just as Chrysler, Hill's Pet Nutrition chose a new organizational direction to meet specific production goals.

The result is a showcase facility that incorporates many new design features: a 'socio-tech' work environment built specifically for team management; computer-integrated manufacturing; human-food sanitation standards; flexible production; lines for quick changeovers; and just-in-time (JIT) production and shipment. (Swartz, Vanderpool and Mendenhall 93)

One of the key principles in the success of Hill's operation was training. The new plant was to open in 1991. Before beginning operation, all personnel completed an eight week training program in "team building, communications, and an overview of the business as well as job-specific skills" (Swartz, Vanderpool and Mendenhall 94).

Along with training, Hill's empowerment plan included a three level organizational structure. "Structured in just three levels -- strategic,

coordinating, and operating -- the site organization is notably 'flat'" (Swartz, Vanderpool and Mendenhall 94). All employees fall under one level but function in a specific team and/or ad hock team. Teams address specific problems that result in process changes.

A recent example of this is the 'Bottleneck Elimination Team,' BET for short, formed by the Continuous Flow Manufacturing (CFM) Team to eliminate packaging bottlenecks associated with routine changes in volume and/or product line. (Swartz, Vanderpool and Mendenhall 95)

As a result of empowerment and teams, not only have processes improved but worker's compensation claims decreased 230% from 1991 to 1992 with the trend continuing in 1993 (Swartz, Vanderpool and Mendenhall 94).

One of the most interesting empowerment success stories is that of W.L. Gore & Associates. Frank Shipper and Charles Manz studied W.L. Gore's empowerment philosophy in their article "Employee Self-Management Without Formally Designated Teams: An Alternative Road to Empowerment." W.L. Gore & Associates is the founder of the Gore-Tex product line.

Gore held several positions with DuPont from 1945 to 1957. It was his discovery of how to coat PTFE on ribbon that led to his company,

founded on January 1, 1958. DuPont had made it clear it wanted to remain a supplier of raw materials not finished products, such as Gore's discovery. His new business focused on the insulated-wire and cable business (49).

From the beginning, W.L. Gore & Associates only used employee titles where required by law.

The titles of president and secretary-treasurer are used only because they are required by the laws of incorporation. The Gore management style has been referred to as 'unmanagement,' an approach to management that has its roots in Bill's experiences on teams at DuPont and that evolved over time to adapt to current needs. (50)

Gore's "un-management" is based on six themes according to Shipper and Manz. These themes define and support Gore's type of empowerment and unstructured work teams (50).

The first theme is the "culture and norms supporting employee empowerment and success" (52). The foundation of the culture is the lack of a formal management structure which Gore felt would smother the company's creativity. A "sponsor" program was started to help new employees (and those moving to new responsibilities) get needed support. After the formal new hire training program, the sponsor would take over (52).

The sponsor tracks the new associate's progress, providing help and encouragement, and coaching the new member to correct weaknesses and concentrate on strengths. Sponsoring is not a short-term commitment. . . . As associates' responsibilities grow, they may acquire additional sponsors. (52)

There are also four guidelines that support the culture. These are 1) "try to be fair," 2) "use your freedom to grow," 3) "make your own commitments, and keep them," and 4) "consult with other Associates prior to any action that may adversely affect the reputation or financial stability of the company" (53). These guidelines encourage the formation of self-developed teams.

The second theme deals with the lattice structure of the organization which is "the keystone to the team approach without formally designated teams" (53). The lattice structure is characterized in six ways.

1. Lines of communication are direct -- person to person -- with no intermediary.
2. There is no fixed or assigned authority.
3. There are sponsors, not bosses.
4. Natural leadership is defined by followership.
5. Objectives are set by those who must 'make them happen.'
6. Tasks and functions are organized through commitments.(53-54)

In its simplest terms, this structure utilizes the informal interpersonal communication channels to get the job done. These channels exist in all

organizations but are not generally the primary source of ideas and support. From this structure self-developed teams form naturally from need or creativity.

The third theme is that there are no managers or bosses but many leaders. "Leaders are not authoritarians, managers of people, or supervisors who tell us what to do or forbid us from doing things; nor are they 'parents' to whom we transfer our own self-responsibility" (55). In this organization pay directly depends on contributions not on how many people you supervise (55).

The fourth theme is that associates can be successful without structure and management. Because this type of organizational structure does not promote a direct chain of command it is difficult to move an existing organization into this philosophy. Not all employees can work under this structure either. But, those that adapt to un-management can be very successful (56).

Themes five and six deal with increased creativity and un-management's limitations respectively. All employees are encouraged to find new ways of using PTFE. New research and development ideas come from all areas of the company (57).

There are critics to un-management. Some feel that the lattice structure does not function well in crisis situations because it takes too long

to form a plan of action with no supervisors. Others have a problem with the fact that there are no titles. Critics site a lack of comfort when they cannot consistently deal with the same employee since there are no titles or chain of command (58-59). W.L. Gore & Associates seem to have met these challenges and are constantly re-evaluating and developing un-management to meet changing needs.

Elements in the Implementation Plan

Managing change and communicating change will greatly increase the potential success of a self-management initiative. Now the question is what issues should be addressed in the formal implementation plan. The key to any implementation plan is clarity and simplicity. It needs to be developed and written with all employees in mind.

Strategic planning is the process by which the guiding members of an organization envision the organization's future and develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future. The vision of the future provides both a direction and the energy to move in that direction. . . . Successful strategic planning is characterized by organizational self-examination, confronting difficult choices, and setting priorities. (Pfeiffer, Goodstein, and Nolan 56)

Teams involved in self-management will have a higher rate of failure if the goals and objectives of the company, and individual teams, are not

clearly defined. This is supported not only in the academic research on change management, but also by the case studies cited. Not only do they need clarity, but they need to be based on performance -- measurable standards that move the team towards a performance goal.

Teams thrive on performance challenges; they flounder without them. Teams cannot exist for long without performance-driven purpose to both nourish and justify the team's continuing existence. . . . In other words, unclear thinking and practice explain more about such disappointments than whether teams are appropriate units of performance to get something done. (Katzenbach and Smith 22)

A clear statement of purpose for self-management must be the first element in the implementation plan. This should then translate to individual team performance driven goals. The second element in the plan should be a thoroughly developed action plan of how the team will reach the goal(s). This would include stages of necessary training for both the team leaders (formerly "supervisors") and team members. "Seminars are sufficient for concept understanding, but practical training is mandatory to understand the details of application" (Levetto 15).

Team members should acquire training in problem solving so that when they meet regularly to receive progress reports, they can define the next steps to be taken. . . . Only this kind of persistent attention

accomplished the business-oriented and clearly perceived results that the team strives to achieve. (Jessup 67-68)

The first two elements seem simple enough. The problem can occur when the order is reversed. If training is started before a clear vision or purpose being defined, the reason for the training is lost. The training element should be well thought out and ready to go once the move towards self-management is decided. Every team will progress at its own pace so training may not follow a set pattern for every team. Appropriate and necessary training must be available when the team needs it.

Finally, there needs to be a tool in place to measure the effectiveness of the teams performance objectives. The company must be able measure whether the team(s) is moving towards its goal(s) -- which should support the greater corporate goal(s). These measures must be in place early for an appropriate performance reward system to be developed. Since most self-management situations base salary increases on completed specific personal and team goals, measurement is critical in the early stages.

When designing pay-for-skill or pay-for-knowledge compensation programs, be sure to include objective criteria for advancement. Competency-based training should be developed for each group of skills (or "skill cluster"). Satisfactory achievement on written or

performance tests (the latter whenever feasible) should be required for promotion to the next higher grade. (Hughes 46)

The basic outline of the implementation plan need only include three steps. These three steps form a basic flow that can be found in almost every successful book, speech, game plan, or implementation plan. The three steps are 1) the Specific Purpose Statement -- corporate and team specific goals, 2) the Action Plan -- elements required to reach the Specific Purpose Statement (training and resources), and 3) the measurement tools developed to determine movement towards the reaching of the Specific Purpose Statement. Not only is this implementation plan required to start the self-management process, it must be continuously revised and updated as the needs and goals of the company and team change.

Summary

The move from traditional management to self-management is at its core, change. By studying the mechanical and psychological elements of change it becomes clear why some business initiatives, including self-management, fail. Considering the academic evidence discussed in this chapter, resistance to change is one of the major deterrents to successful change. Resistance must be understood and managed for a self-

management initiative to succeed. The primary method used to fight resistance is communication. Communication that clearly explains why the change is occurring, how the change will be implemented, and how each employee's changed tasks and responsibilities effect the overall goal of the company.

The case studies show that there is not one "right" way to successfully develop empowered self-managed teams but that critical elements should be included in formation of the final implementation plan: production goals, management support, realistic implementation expectations, and an understanding of limitations of the philosophy to name those that came up in all case studies.

A properly developed implementation plan is essential to the success of self-managed teams because it will provide a clear understanding of the company and team goals, the action plan used to reach the goals and the tools to measure success (which are vital in the effort to reduce employee resistance to change).

Chapter III

METHODS AND EVALUATION

Materials

The research and case studies in the previous chapters clearly show the importance of providing direct, complete, and understandable information when implementing any change into the work place. Miscommunication and confusion about the goals and reasons for implementing a change can lead to failure. It is the responsibility of the corporation to implement change in the most positive and non-threatening way possible. The *Empowerment Implementation Plan* was designed to outline the reasons, methods, and timing of the empowerment culture change.

The *Empowerment Implementation Plan* outlines the scope of the change by taking the reader from the company philosophy and goals to the focused team philosophy and goals. It shows each employee, no matter where he is in the organization, that he can directly impact the success of the company's goals. Without a good understanding of the goals of the business, the employee will not be able to relate the impending change to his or her job and responsibilities. Clearly explaining the strategic plan of

the organization, and how empowerment supports that strategy increases employee support for the change. Without that connection, it is difficult for the employee to feel personally about the change. The success or failure of this, or any, change can be directly related to the support it has from all levels of the organization. It would be a great mistake to underestimate the power of the front line employee's support, or lack of support, for the change.

The *Empowerment Implementation Plan* (Appendix A) consists of the following four sections and one exhibit:

1. Strategic Plan
 2. Responsibilities
 3. Training and Support
 4. Team Reporting/Evaluation
- Empowerment Time Line (exhibit)

Section one, the *Strategic Plan*, covers the empowerment specific purpose statement discussed in chapter two. It introduces the employee to the corporate strategic goal and to empowerment. This section defines what empowerment means to the company and how teams and individual employees support this company initiative, including empowerment.

Requiring a definition of empowerment forces the initial planning committee to agree on what empowerment means to the company. If the

definition cannot be clearly stated there will be confusion at all levels of the organization.

The second section, *Responsibilities*, outlines the responsibilities of groups and individuals in the organization. It starts with the company officers and empowerment planning committee, moves to those directly involved with the implementation and training, and ends with teams and team members. An employee's level of comfort increases directly in relation to his understanding of group and individual responsibilities.

Section three, *Training and Support*, outlines how and when the information is given to the organization. The timing of the announcement and its delivery method to the different company groups will reduce resistance and increase excitement and support.

In addition, this section deals with the training needs of each employee group. Each group should be evaluated for the amount and type of training it needs. When training it is provided is critical to the successful development of individuals and teams. Training is of little use if it is not provided when needed. This section is the action plan of the *Empowerment Implementation Plan*.

The final section, *Team Reporting/Evaluation*, is the evaluation stage. This section outlines the importance of goal setting. Leading a team through the goal setting/evaluation process is key to the continued

success of the team and the company as a whole. Goals must be regularly evaluated and adjusted in order to measure the success of the team and its individual members.

As an exhibit to the *Empowerment Implementation Plan*, the *Empowerment Time Line* gives an outline of target time frames for each step in the process. This helps management and employees visualize how the company will go through the different stages of team development. It is important to make sure enough time has been allotted for each phase of the plan. If the company is large, it is possible that some of the phases may overlap. An overlap in phases could occur when teams develop at different rates.

There are several benefits of using the *Empowerment Implementation Plan*. First, it forces upper management to decide the level of empowerment it wants to reach. This is critical. If there is confusion within upper management in regards to the definition or level of empowerment the company wants to reach, there will be confusion for the front line employee level. Second, it provides basic definitions. This relates to terms (such as empowerment) as well as job titles and descriptions (facilitator, trainer, and team). Third, it outlines how the corporation will get from the current culture to the empowerment culture. Finally, it will answer basic questions and stimulate employees at all levels

to question the purpose of empowerment and how each employee will effect its success.

Subjects

Two evaluators reviewed the proposed implementation plan. The evaluators were chosen on the basis of education, business knowledge, and direct experience with empowered work teams.

Jayne Sharpe has twenty years of business experience in the information technology industry. Her area of expertise is in training and documentation. Sharpe has both a BSBA and MBA from Central Missouri State University. She has been a faculty instructor at two major universities.

Over the past twenty years Sharpe has held information technology management positions at several Fortune 500 companies including Farland Industries, United Telecom (US Sprint), Citicorp, The Principal Financial Group and National General Insurance (General Motors).

Sharpe has been involved in technical training through designing curriculums for all levels of the technical staff as well as end users. She has been a speaker at several national conferences and is a reference to several universities.

Lori Whiting has eight years of mortgage banking experience. Five of the eight years focused around process and staff management. Whiting has a BA degree in political science from the University of Kentucky.

For two years Whiting was heavily involved in a corporate culture move towards empowered work teams at GE Capital Mortgage Services, Inc. She completed empowerment, team building, and facilitation training in preparation for her department's move from a traditional processing environment to an empowerment environment. Her team became one of the most empowered teams in the company.

Prior to her moving to new responsibilities in the company, Whiting's team became highly involved in process mapping and improvement teams. She also participated in the hiring, training, and evaluating of team members.

Both Sharpe and Whiting brought business and management experience to the review process. Sharpe brought specific expertise in project design and implementation, as it relates to technical and user training. Whiting's brought personal experience with the facilitation and development of an empowered work team.

Instrument

The *Empowerment Implementation Plan* (including the Time Line exhibit) was evaluated by using the written questionnaire method. The evaluation form (Appendix B) was broken down into three sections that correspond to the following key elements necessary for a successful implementation plan:

- Physical layout and presentation
- Clarity and understandability
- Completeness

There were a total of 27 questions. A monadic rating scale was used for the questions on the evaluation form. Each question deals with only one of the three key elements listed above. A balanced scale of five categories was used for each question. The categories were:

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree Or Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

In conjunction with the scale evaluation a free form comments area was provided for comments pertaining to the specific questions in that

section. The comment sections provided the opportunity to gain specific experienced-based information on the strengths and weakness of the plan.

Procedure

A written response method was used for the evaluation. The written method was chosen so the evaluators could complete the questionnaire at their convenience. It was also chosen to eliminate the potential for inconsistencies in evaluation delivery that can occur when using the interview method. Each evaluator was solicited in person or by phone to participate in the project. A cover letter was sent as confirmation of the verbal conversation (Appendix C).

Each evaluator was provided with a package containing a cover letter, a copy of the *Empowerment Implementation Plan*, the *Time Line* exhibit, and the evaluation tool. The instructions, provided on the cover letter, were to read the *Empowerment Implementation Plan* and follow the directions provided on the evaluation tool. No additional instructions or answers to questions pertaining to the interpretation of the directions or questions were provided.

The evaluators completed the evaluation on their own and returned the entire package upon completion.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are provided in two ways. First, according to the three sections of the evaluation that correspond to the following key elements in the Empowerment Implementation Plan: (1) physical layout and presentation; (2) clarity and understandability; and (3) completeness.

Second, according to overall totals. Survey totals are shown by questions/categories and ranking. A monadic rating scale was used throughout the evaluation with "strongly agree" being the best ranking and "strongly disagree" being the worst ranking. Space was provided for free form comments. There was no reduction in the evaluator population.

Tables 5 through 7 provide response information by key element. Table 8 provides ranking totals by question and category. Figure 1 shows total survey responses by ranking.

Table 5 shows the results for section one of the evaluation. The evaluators were asked to evaluate the physical layout and presentation of the Empowerment Implementation Plan.

There were seven questions in this section. Each evaluator gave a "strongly agree" rating to five out of seven questions and an "agree" rating

for two out of seven questions. The evaluators gave the same ranking for each question. There was one free form comment in this section. One evaluator felt that, "excellent examples [were] provided."

Table 6 shows the results for section two of the evaluation. This section dealt with evaluating the clarity and understandability of the Empowerment Implementation Plan.

There were ten questions in this section. Each evaluator gave six out of ten questions a "strongly agree" ranking and four out of ten questions an "agree" ranking. The evaluators were split in rankings "strongly agree" and "agree" on four of the questions. No free form comments were provided by the evaluators in this section.

Table 7 shows the results for section three of the evaluation. This section dealt with evaluating the completeness of the Empowerment Implementation Plan.

There were ten questions in this section of the evaluation. Out of the twenty responses possible, five were "strongly agree", twelve were "agree", two were "neither agree or disagree", and one was "disagree." There was one free form comment regarding questions 20, "all unknown terms are explained." One evaluator noted that JIT was not defined in the Empowerment Implementation Plan.

Table 8 shows the total number of responses by ranking for each question. There were 54 total possible responses in the survey. 29 of the responses received a "strongly agree" ranking, 22 received an "agree" ranking, 2 received a "neither agree or disagree" ranking, and 1 received a "disagree" ranking. 94% of the total responses fell in the "strongly agree" and "agree" rankings.

Figure 1 shows the overall survey totals by ranking. 94% of the total responses fill in the "strongly agree" and "agree" rankings.

Table 5: Section One: Physical Layout and Presentation

Question	Evaluator	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	A	X				
	B	X				
2	A	X				
	B	X				
3	A	X				
	B	X				
4	A		X			
	B		X			
5	A	X				
	B	X				
6	A		X			
	B		X			
7	A	X				
	B	X				
Totals		10	4	0	0	0

Table 6: Section Two: Clarity and Understandability

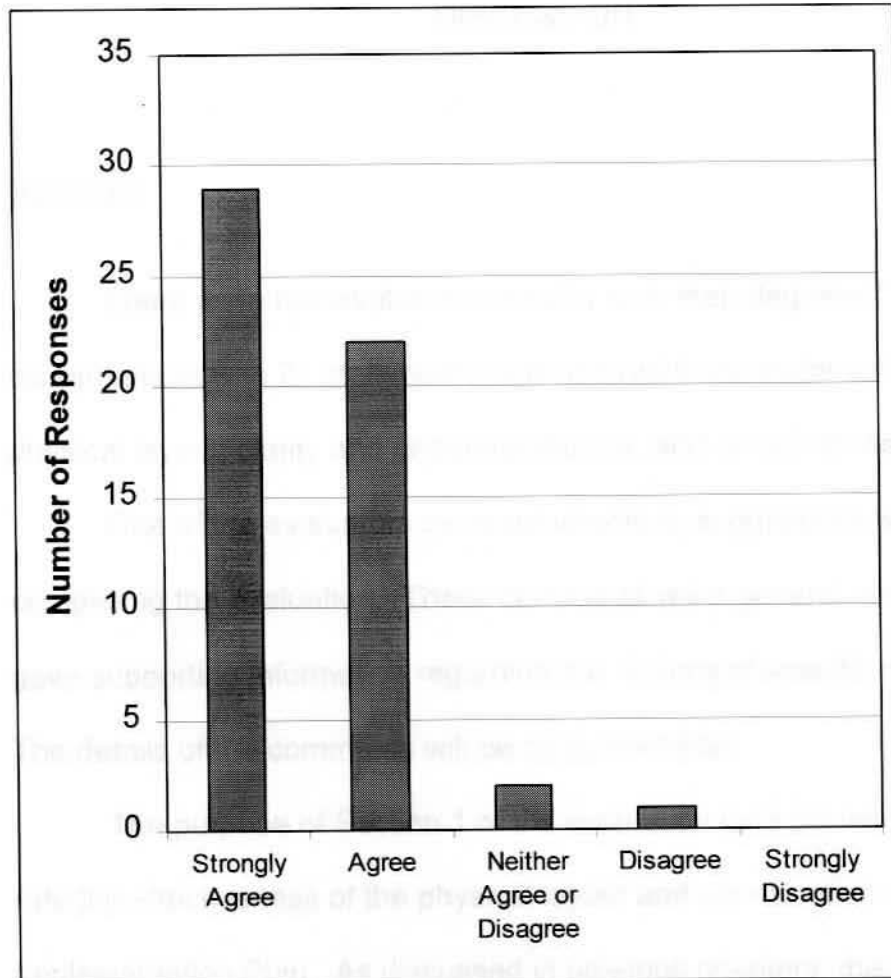
Question	Evaluator	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	A		X			
	B		X			
9	A	X				
	B	X				
10	A	X				
	B		X			
11	A		X			
	B	X				
12	A	X				
	B	X				
13	A	X				
	B	X				
14	A		X			
	B		X			
15	A	X				
	B		X			
16	A	X				
	B		X			
17	A	X				
	B	X				
Totals		12	8	0	0	0

Table 7: Section Three: Completeness

Question	Evaluator	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18	A		X			
	B		X			
19	A		X			
	B		X			
20	A				X	
	B			X		
21	A		X			
	B			X		
22	A	X				
	B	X				
23	A	X				
	B	X				
24	A		X			
	B		X			
25	A		X			
	B		X			
26	A		X			
	B		X			
27	A		X			
	B	X				
Totals		5	12	2	1	0

Table 8: Total Rankings by Question

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2				
2	2				
3	2				
4	2				
5		2			
6	2				
7		2			
8	2				
9	2				
10	1	1			
11	1	1			
12	2				
13	2				
14		2			
15	1	1			
16	1	1			
17	2				
18		2			
19		2			
20			1	1	
21		1	1		
22	2				
23	2				
24		2			
25		2			
26		2			
27	1	1			
Totals	29	22	2	1	0

Figure 1: Total Responses by Ranking

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Summary

There were two evaluators used to rank their degree of agreement/disagreement with 27 statements that covered three major categories: physical layout, clarity and understandability, and completeness.

One of the evaluators gave comments or suggestions when completing the evaluation. These comments were general in nature and gave supporting information regarding the ranking of specific questions. The details of the comments will be discussed later.

The purpose of Section 1 of the evaluation (see appendix B) was to rate the effectiveness of the physical layout and presentation of the Implementation Plan. As discussed in previous chapters, the physical layout of the plan can greatly effect a reader's willingness to carefully read and interpret the information given.

There were seven questions in this section and an area for comments. One general comment regarding the examples in the plan was given. The evaluator felt that "excellent examples [were] provided." This comment was given in the Section 1 although none of the examples given

in the plan were layout related. This comment applies to Section 2 where examples are specifically addressed in the evaluation.

The following layout items were covered in Section 1 of the evaluation.

1. The format was easy to follow.
2. The font size was easy to read.
3. The plan followed the Table of Contents.
4. The page layouts were consistent throughout the plan.
5. The length of the plan was appropriate.
6. The use of bullet points and boxes made the plan easier to follow.
7. The Time Line layout was easy to follow

If any one of these layout items were rated poorly by an evaluator it would indicate a potential problem for those employees being asked to read and comprehend the Implementation Plan. Since most people tend to resist change, adding a poorly designed document could lead to the failure of the proposed change.

Any distraction, such as a font that is too small or section headings that don't match the Table of Contents, can distract the reader and greatly reduce comprehension. Providing the information in an overview and in

detail, such as the Time Line and the Plan, give information in both conceptually and in detail.

Both the evaluators "strongly agreed" with items 1-4 and 6, and "agreed" with items 5 and 7. The only comment was that the examples provided were excellent. This comment really relates to section two which deals with clarity and understandability.

Based on the rankings, improvements will be made in the length of the document and the Time Line in the next revision of the Implementation Plan. Both the Implementation Plan and the Time Line will be reviewed and adjusted based on the evaluations.

The purpose of Section 2 of the evaluation was to rate the clarity and understandability of the Implementation Plan. The importance of clear and understandable information, especially relating to change, is critical to minimizing resistance. The research discussed in Chapter II clearly shows that resistance is reduced when information regarding any change is provided clearly and in terms that are easy for all levels of the organization to understand. There were ten questions in this section and an area for comments. The evaluators gave no free form comments in this section. However, the comment regarding examples (given in Section 1) directly applies to the Section 2.

The following items were rated in Section 2 of the evaluation.

1. The direct correlation between reaching the corporate goal and empowerment is clearly shown.
2. The examples used were understandable.
3. The importance of goal setting was clearly communicated.
4. The correlation between team goals and reaching corporate goals was explained.
5. Examples used clarified the discussion.
6. Examples were used in appropriate places.
7. The plan explained the importance of management support for empowerment.
8. The plan was applicable across multiple industries.
9. The responsibilities of groups and individuals were clearly explained.
10. The language used in the plan was understandable.

In Chapter II, communicating change was discussed in detail. In this discussion it was concluded that for change to be communicated effectively it must be: stated clearly, given in a timely manner, have direct impact on each employee's responsibilities, and use appropriate language (minimize mixed metaphors). The statements in Section 2 of the evaluation deal with language use in the Implementation Plan.

Any chance for misunderstanding by the reader is a potential problem in implementing the change. The written document must be clear

and understandable, and give enough supporting information to make the change applicable to each reader no matter how many times he/she may review it.

Both evaluators "strongly agreed" with statements (as numbered above) 2, 5, 6, and 10. Both evaluators "agreed" with statements 1 and 7. They were split between "strongly agreed" and "agree" on statements 3, 4, 8, and 9. Based on these ratings, there is potential for misunderstanding by the reader on six of the statements. The comment given in Section 1 related to the examples used in the Implementation Plan. Examples help clarify information to the reader and aid in the planning for those charged with managing the implementation. The evaluator felt the examples used were "excellent."

Based on the results of the evaluation the revision of the Implementation Plan will include a more thorough discussion of: (1) the direct impact empowerment will have on reaching the corporate goal(s); (2) the importance of goal setting to each team and the company; (3) the correlation between achieving team goals and reaching corporate goals; (4) the importance of management support in the successful implementation of empowerment; and, (5) the specific responsibilities of groups and individuals. In addition to these changes, the entire plan will be

reviewed for its applicability across industries. Adjustments to the plan will be made based on the review.

Section 3 of the evaluation dealt with the completeness of the Implementation Plan. The following topics were covered in the 10 statements in this section:

1. Management's role was adequately discussed.
2. Individual team member roles were adequately discussed.
3. All unknown terms were explained.
4. Term explanations were complete.
5. The plan proceeded in logical order.
6. The examples used were complete.
7. The training suggested was adequate to provide teams with goal setting skills.
8. The plan provides for the resources required to support training needs.
9. The training suggested is adequate to provide teams with tracking and reporting skills.
10. The Time Line adequately visualized the Implementation Plan.

Since the Implementation Plan will be used by companies as the blue print for planning and managing the change, completeness is critical to a successful implementation. If key elements are left out, unknown terms are not defined, or training suggestions are incomplete the

management communicating and supporting the change will not be able to plan thoroughly. The studies discussed in Chapter II show the importance of communicating completely during each phase of a change. This does not mean complete disclosure of all information, rather it means that when new information is provided it is with complete definitions, examples, and support (if needed).

Both evaluators either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with 8 of the 10 statements. One evaluator "disagreed" and one "neither agreed or disagreed" that all unknown terms were explained. One evaluator noted in the comments section that *JIT* was not defined in the Implementation Plan. This will be defined in the revision to the plan. In addition one evaluator "neither agreed or disagreed" that term explanations were complete. All terms will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly in the revision.

In addition to a term reviews/revisions mentioned above, the elements relating to training will also be reviewed and adjusted where needed. Both evaluators "agreed" with those statements regarding training but left room for improvement. Training is so critical to the success of empowerment that a thorough review of these parts of the plan is needed.

The revised Implementation Plan will address the required elements to be included in a plan as stated at the end of Chapter II. The changes suggested by the results of the evaluation will make the revised plan easier

to understand, make the action plan more complete, and make sure all employees have the tools and skills needed to measure their success.

Limitations

While completing the research portion of the study, finding studies on the empowerment theory was more difficult than expected. The information found on empowerment tended non-scientific studies but rather observations relating to a specific company that tried implementing empowerment. The focus of the information switched from empowerment specific to change implementation in general. This delayed the completion of the *Literature Review* section of the study.

No major design flaws were found in the Implementation Plan itself according to the evaluation results. But, after reviewing the results of the evaluation, I determined that the evaluation tool was flawed. The tool consisted of statements that the evaluators ranked according to their level of agreement/disagreement, and an area for free form comments. Only two free form comments were received. The tool was flawed in that it relied too much on comments to find the specific areas of weakness. Without the support of the comments it was difficult to narrow down specific weak points in the plan.

In addition, the statements were all stated in a way where the positive ranking was "strongly agree" and a negative ranking was always "strongly disagree." This means that all the statements were stated positively and may have influenced the high occurrence of "strongly agree" and "agree" rankings. Using a greater sample size would have made it easier to see an evaluator bias based on the statements' construction.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are several areas for future study based on the results of the evaluation and on the evaluation limitation stated previously. First, use a revised Implementation Plan (taking into consideration the areas indicated by the evaluations that could be improved). This study would determine if the improvements in the plan alone lead to an increase the "strongly agree" responses.

Second, use a redesigned evaluation tool. The tool would be changed to include negative statements and statements that would encourage more free form comments. This would address the tool limitations stated earlier. It would also show whether using only positive statements skewed the evaluator responses. This study would see if rephrasing the statements to encourage more comments would actually get more comments. Comments are vital to narrowing down specific

terms, examples, and discussions that need improvement in the Implementation Plan.

A third study would be a delivery method study. In this study the questionnaire was delivered to the evaluators with instructions. The evaluators reviewed the Implementation Plan and completed the evaluation tool on their own. This study would have half of the evaluations delivered in this same manner and half delivered in an interview method. The same tool would be used for both delivery methods, but in the interview method comments would be asked for at the end of each section of the tool. Would there be a correlation between the delivery method and the rankings and the delivery method and the number of comments?

A fourth study would address the sample size only. This study would see if increasing the sample size changes the ranking outcome. Also, would increasing the sample size increase the number and quality of comments given.

The four studies above deal with evaluating the plan prior to using the plan to actually implement the empowerment change. Additional areas of study should include evaluating the effectiveness of the Implementation Plan after it's use in a company.

Would the making the changes to the Implementation Plan suggested in this study lead to the successful implantation of the

empowerment theory in a real world setting? The real world application of the Implementation Plan is the only true measure of its effectiveness.

Appendix A

Empowerment Implementation Plan

Table of Contents

- I. Strategic Plan
 - A. Statement of Corporate Strategic Goal (CSG)
 - B. Corporate definition of Empowerment
 - C. Statement of Empowerment support of CSG
- II. Responsibilities
 - A. Planning Committee
 - B. Internal Trainers
 - C. Managers
 - D. Teams
 - E. Individual Team Members
- III. Training and Support
 - A. Announcement of Empowerment Initiative and Time Line
 - 1. Phase 1 announcement
 - 2. Phase 2 announcement
 - B. Management Training
 - 1. Initial - after Phase 1 announcement
 - 2. Continuing - after Phase 2 announcement
 - C. Front Line Employee Training
 - 1. Initial
 - a. Content
 - b. Timing
 - 2. Continuing
 - a. Content
 - b. Timing

IV. Team Reporting/Evaluation

- A. Goal Setting
- B. Tracking and Reporting
- C. Evaluation/Adjustment of Goal

I. Strategic Plan

A. Statement of Corporate Strategic Goal (CSG)

Statement should be simple, clear, specific, and measurable. Avoid "buzz" words and phrases which generally encourage multiple interpretations.

Example: *To become the number one ranked single family mortgage servicer by increasing the number of loans serviced by 20% per year, for the next 3 years, while reducing the cost per loan by \$10.00 per loan, for the next 5 years.*

B. Corporate definition of Empowerment

Statement should clearly and simply define the scope, or level, of Empowerment to be achieved within the organization.

Example 1: *To encourage and assist in the development of skills and knowledge to allow each employee's natural abilities produce process improvements within his or her team under the direct leadership of the team facilitator.*

Example 2: *The systematic move of decision making authority and accountability to front line employees, to include: process improvement, team rules, personnel management (hiring, appraisals, corrective action, scheduling, and termination), team goal setting, and liaison functions within and outside the company.*

C. Statement of Empowerments support of the CSG.

Show direct correlation between Empowerment and the achieving of the CSG. The direct relationship between Empowerment and the CSG will show employees why the new business philosophy is needed.

Example: *The move toward Empowerment will directly effect the success of the CSG in the following ways:*

1. *Provide training necessary for employees to understand and complete their tasks which will increase production and reduce costs required to reach goals in the CSG.*
 1. *Use the full range of creative problem solving and process improvement skills from all levels of the organization to reach both production and cost goals in the CSG.*
1. *To encourage individual and team production and expense accountability in light of the cost and production goals in the CSG.*
 1. *To provide the knowledge and skills needed for all levels of employees to confidently make decisions effecting the production and cost numbers in their teams.*

II. Responsibilities

A. Planning Committee

Outline the key players (generally top level), specific responsibilities, and time table for task completion.

Example:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
CSG	Planning Committee	3-15-95
Divisional Goal	Joe Smith, Mary White	4-15-95
Implementation	Lisa Moore, Larry Conners, Jill Brown,	5-10-95
Time Line	Lori Bryant	

B. Internal Trainers

Name internal trainers and their specific responsibilities.

Example:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Trainer</u>
Training Coordinator	Sally Knight
Initial Management Training.....	ally Knight
Continuing Management Training	Sally Knight
.....	Mark Jones
Initial Front Line Employee Training	Jackie Allen
.....	Sharon Mitchell
.....	Michael Andrews
Continuing Front Line Employee Training	Jackie Allen
.....	Sharon Allen
.....	Michael Andrews
.....	TBA

C. Managers

Detail the roles of managers in an Empowered environment. This should be specific and clear.

Example:

Managers will be:

- 1. Business knowledge resources*
- 2. Process knowledge resources*
- 3. Team facilitators*
- 4. Resource for personnel management*
- 5. Responsible (with trainers) for helping employees gain the skills and knowledge necessary for successful task(s) completion*

Managers will not be:

- 1. Primary process decision makers*
- 2. Responsible for resolving personnel issues*
- 3. Solely responsible for hiring, appraisals, promotions, and terminations*

D. Teams

Detail the responsibilities of a team.

Example: *Teams, as a whole, will be responsible for the following upon successful completion of training required to perform the task:*

- 1. Conducting weekly team meeting*
- 2. Developing team production goals and measurements*
- 3. Provide a monthly report to management on status goal(s)*
- 4. Developing the skills and knowledge necessary to perform personnel tasks (hiring, corrective action, appraisals, promotions, and terminations)*

E. Individual Team Members

Detail the responsibilities of the individual employees making up a team.

Example: *Individual team members will be responsible for the following upon successful completion of training required to perform the task:*

1. *To be an active participant in all team meeting*
2. *To be an active participant in team goal setting*
3. *To be an active participant in all training necessary to fulfill team responsibilities*

III. Training and Support

A. Announcement of Empowerment Initiative and Time Line

The announcement should be handled in two phases.

Phase 1 - the announcement to management. This should include specific information regarding the changing role of management. The Empowerment Time Line should be provided at this time. Between Phase 1 and 2 announcements, initial management training should occur.

Phase 2 - the all employee announcement. This should announce the Empowerment Initiative. Provide Empowerment Implementation Plan (including Time Line).

Explain purpose for Empowerment and how it supports the achievement of the CSG. Training for front line employees will begin after the Phase 2 announcement.

B. Management Training

1. Initial

Management training should include, but not be limited to, modules relating to the following topics:

- *Why the move to Empowerment*
- *The managers new role*
- *Dealing with change*

2. Continuing

Post Phase 2 announcement training should include, but not be limited to, modules relating to the following topics:

- *The manager facilitator-responsibilities of facilitator*
- *Team building - how manager/facilitator supports the process*
- *Goal setting*
- *Tracking and reporting methods*
- *Project management*

C. Front Line Employee Training

1. Initial

Post Phase 2 announcement, training should include, but not be limited to, modules relating to the following topics:

- *Empowerment & Teams to cover:*
 - A. *CSG and how the company definition of empowerment supports it*
 - B. *What empowerment means to managers and front line employees*
 - C. *Team development*
- *Dealing with Change*
- *Team Building (facilitator/manager should attend with team members) - should cover the following:*
 - A. *Roles and responsibilities of team members,*
 - B. *Communication skills*
 - C. *Conflict resolution*
 - D. *Process accountability*
- *Conducting productive Meetings*

2. Continuing

After initial training, two to four months should be given for acclimation to new department structure. Each team may progress to a "comfort level" at its own pace, but all teams should be ready to progress to the next stage of training by four months. This stage of training should provide process improvement skills necessary to support team and company goals. Training should be provided on a JIT basis. Skills are retained when used, so providing training prior to the teams actual need may result in loss of skills. Training should include, but should not be limited to, the following modules:

- *Goal Setting*
- *Process Assessment and Mapping*
- *Defining Process Improvement Issues*
- *Project Management*
- *Tracking and Reporting Methods*

- *Budgeting*
- *Cost Justification (for personnel, equipment, systems enhancements...)*
- *Interviewing Skills*
- *Employee Evaluation Skills*

Note: Some of the training modules respective to management and front line employees will overlap. In some cases, these modules should be attended together (facilitator with his/her team).

IV. Team Reporting/Evaluation

A. Goal Setting

Effective goal setting is the cornerstone to a successful team. Without clear direction, a team will not understand its purpose or how it effects the corporate mission. Training goals setting is critical and should be given as soon a possible. Once clear and measurable goals are set, tasks and responsibilities can be given to individual team members. This will give each team member the security of knowing what he or she is accountable for while developing additional skills that will enable a greater degree of participation in the development of his or her tasks (present and future).

B. Tracking and Reporting

Tracking and reporting of team goals must be completed in order to determine if the goals were appropriate and whether or not all team members are performing up to the standards necessary to reach team goals. If goals are not trackable, they are not clearly defined. Training on tracking and reporting must be provided.. With management acting as facilitator rather than supervisors, it is critical that the team is able to accurately track and report team progress to management. Tracking and reporting on an individual team member level must also be available for performance reviews and salary compensation.

C. Evaluation and Adjustments to Goals

The team should determine when goals will be reviewed for progress and or adjustment. This could be quarterly or semi-annually. Annual review during the initial team development stages is not as effective as quarterly or semi-annually. Newly formed teams will not be as proficient at developing and tracking goals and will therefore need to adjust goals, or how they are tracked, often. The team, and its facilitator, need to schedule an adequate amount of time to review all the tracked information on every team goal to determine the success or failure of goals. Adjustments to the goals should occur as well.

Once a goal is successfully reached, it should be adjusted to encourage process improvements and production increases when possible.

Exhibit: Implementation Time Line

Months 1-5 High level decision	Strategic Plan Developed
Month 6 Middle mgnt decision	Responsibilities Defined
Month 7	Phase 1 Announceemnt- Initial management training provided
Month 8 1-3 days dependind on company size	Phase 2 Announcement
Months 8-9 7 weeks total	Initial front line employee training
Months 10-13	Adjustment phase
Months 14 on	continuing managment training
Months 14 on	Continuing fron line employee training
Month 16	Individual team goals ser and measurementd developed
4-6 months after goals are set	Goals reviewedfor progress and/or adjustement

Appendix B

Evaluation Form

Directions: Please circle the number that best answers each statement. Please choose only one answer for each statement. Comments can be made in the comments section.	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
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Section 1

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The format used in the plan is easy to follow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Font size is easy to read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The plan follows the table of contents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The page layouts are consistent within each topic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. The length of the plan is appropriate to cover all items. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. The use of bullet points and boxes makes the plan easier to follow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The Time Line layout is easy to follow. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Section 1 comments

Appendix C

Cover Letter

November 19, 1997

xxx S. Van Buren Ave.
Kirkwood, MO 63122

Dear :

As agreed in our last conversation, I have enclosed the following:

- The Empowerment Implementation Plan
- The Implementation Time Line (exhibit to the Plan)
- The Empowerment Implementation Evaluation

Please read the first two documents and complete the evaluation tool and return it to me as soon as possible. It should take approximately thirty minutes to complete the evaluation form.

Directions:

1. Read the Empowerment Implementation Plan and Implementation Time Line documents.
2. Complete the Empowerment Implementation Evaluation by circling the number that best answers each statement (only one answer per statement please) and making any free form comments in the comments section at the bottom of each page.
3. Do not put your name on the Evaluation form.
4. Return the entire package (all three documents) to me using the self-addressed postage paid envelope.

Thank you for your participation in this project, I look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,

Julia E. Meeker

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