

### Empowerment and Email

I am fed up with a lot of organisations.

Is it just me?

Do others find too many simple basic mistakes are being made these days by organisations?

These mistakes are also being repeated many times and do not seem to get corrected.

Why is this?

One of my theories is that, email is the means to create the mistakes whilst the expected end result is empowerment.

Let me amplify.

These days external connection is possible to most internal levels within an organisation.

The power of the internet can deliver messages to anyone.

Those receiving emails are now able to handle and deal direct with customer requests.

And by "empowerment" this will also enable decision making at any level.

People are now therefore able to take decisions and deal direct with queries.

Now clearly there are numerous advantages to this, but there are some disadvantages also.

My fear is that these disadvantages may be getting camouflaged and disguised by the use of emails and by the aura of empowerment.

It is fine allowing decisions to be taken at low levels, but these have to be correct ones and have to be taken responsibly.

They can now also be taken invisibly to the senior management.

Therefore when decisions are wrong, the consequences may not be apparent.

The result can then be a spiral of confusion and frustration.

Those on the receiving end may have little chance for recourse or correction of handed down decisions that have been wrongly taken (and effectively taken sub optimally).

Another result is that some customers at the receiving end will "walk," others will complain to "deaf ears," and some may report their displeasure to senior management; however senior management may be dismissive as "we do not have this problem with others".

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The fact is they do have problems, but it has become invisible to senior management who in their desire to empower junior staff, have made themselves separate from what is really going on in the organisation.

How do we prevent this?

Simply by returning to a principle of management visibility

Good managers are supposed to keep their fingers on the pulse.

Requests from and responses to customers should be seen.

Support and guidance should be given to junior staff when required.

A manager must ensure they know exactly what is happening in their department and they must delegate effectively whilst retaining accountability and responsibility.

Why cannot this be done? Why do we allow email to "bypass" such best practice?

It now it seems with email and empowerment, that whilst the "e" can certainly stand for efficiency, it does not always stand for effectiveness.

Efficiency is however found as messages are quickly dealt with, however non effectiveness is found as the correct result does not always follow.

So we are maybe doing the right things, we are not always doing it right.

But worst of all, what is being done maybe invisible to those who can change things.

However it is clearly visible to those customers who walk.

Is it just me who is fed up?

Ps: for those great organisations that do not do the above; well done and thank you!

Stuart Emmett is a freelance independent trainer and consultant who trades under the name of Learn and Change - Stuart believes that in times of change, it is only those who consciously learn, that will inherit, a successful future

Stuart has operational and strategic experience in varied commercial service industries - gained in the UK and Nigeria - and is particularly interested in the "people issues" of management processes, as well as logistics and supply-chain management. He has worked on 6 continents, in over 30 countries and delivered to over 50 nationalities.

Stuart can be contacted at [stuart@learnandchange.com](mailto:stuart@learnandchange.com) or by visiting [www.learnandchange.com](http://www.learnandchange.com)