

Meaning of Power:

Power is the ability to make things happen according to one's perspective by getting someone else to do it for you. It is mainly beneficial in organizations where the managers assign tasks to different employees and make them do those tasks. Besides, other sources of power are relevant in an organization.

Term 'power' has been derived from Latin word “**potere**” which means “**to be able**”. Power is more concerned with leadership than managership. It is a means to influence attitude and behaviour of followers. Leaders must acquire power and should use it with care to create, modify, and sustain positive behaviour. To successfully influence the behaviour of others, the leader must understand the impact of power on his leadership style.

Definitions:

- “Power as the determination of the behaviour of others following one’s own ends.
- **Kingsley Davis**
- “Power as the probability that one actor (individual or group) within a social relationship in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests”.
- **Weber**

POLITICS:

Politics is the making of a common decision for a group of people, that is, a uniform decision applying in the same way to all members of the group. It also involves the use of power by one person to affect the behaviour of another person.

Meaning of organizational politics:

Organizational politics is a behind-the-scenes process to gain and showcase the perceived power. It refers to the influencing tactics and the activities that are undertaken to retain personal control in the workplace. In most cases, it is seen that employees use organizational politics as a tool to misuse their power, gain extreme popularity and tarnish the image of someone else in their company. An essential fact about work politics is that it generally leads to negativity and loss of productivity in the workplace.

Definitions:

- "Organisational politics refers to intentional behaviours that are designed to enhance or protect a person's influence and self-interest."
- **Drory and Romm**
- "Politics in an organisation refers to those activities that are not required as part of one's formal role in the organisation, but that influence, or attempt to influence, the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organisation."
- **Farrell & Peterson**

TYPES OF POWER

1. **Legitimate power:** Legitimate power comes from position in an organisational hierarchy. Legitimate power empowers the managers to reward or punish. The manager’s direct employees as to what tasks they should perform, whom to work with, what resources can be made use of, etc, like managers, the Employees also have a legitimate power over their boss and co-workers through legal and administrative rights. The employee may say no to his boss if he perceives that the work given is outside the official responsibilities.
2. **Expert power:** Because of the expertise one possesses, one can exercise expert power. One can suggest solutions to the given problems. This type of power comes from knowledge, skills, experience, and information one possesses and accumulates over a long period of time.

3. **Referent power:** Role models possess this type of power. By virtue of their power to influence through their charisma, virtues, values, and ethics, they refer to others how they can also turn to be equally influential. Because of the expertise and experience, one possesses, one can refer the issue to some other expert who can address the problem. Followers who desire to get transformed are always in search of leaders who possess referent power. Technical expertise and personal leadership qualities including their ability to serve as role model become the essential source of referent power.
4. **Reward power:** Senior managers have power to dispense organisational rewards such as pay, promotion. Time off, vacation, schedules, work assignments or benefits to those who achieve targets and comply with organisational rules and regulations.
5. **Coercive power:** This comes from ability to punish others who fail to reach targets, who fail to comply with organisational rules and regulations. The managers at higher levels have power to punish those who violate organisational norms. At times, this punishment may even extend to dismissal. The poor performers will be weeded out.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is a modern management tool to improve the quality of working life for ordinary employees. In an empowered environment, employees feel satisfied and perform better. With renewed enthusiasm they take part in managerial decision making, designing fair payment system, job enrichment schemes and appreciation awards. There is strong association between employee empowerment and employee satisfaction measured in terms of employee turnover, service quality, productivity level and customer satisfaction. The employee empowerment philosophy centres on 'enabling, energising, engaging and enthusing'.

Empowerment is viewed to give employees chances to make decision without consulting their superior. When empowered, employees feel they are given trust and authority by the organisation to make decision. Since empowerment practices start with an employee's knowledge of the job description and thus the employees are clear on their job scope. As part of empowerment, employees are trained to handle customer requests and problems, to handle different situations by making right decisions without consulting their higher-ups.

Decision making is the focus of employee empowerment where employees are given a guideline during their training on what to follow to resolve a conflict, how to make a right decision, etc. Employees' satisfaction is strongly affected by the working environment. Trust is the first stage in empowerment, and this reduces the burden and gaps in management hierarchy. Empowered employees are the energised lot. It is the responsibility of top management to design systems and processes that bring uniformity in bringing consistency in the performance of these energised and empowered employees. This helps in building a long-term employment relationship.

Definition:

- According to **Newstrom and Davis**, "Empowerment is any process that provides greater autonomy through the sharing of relevant information and the provision of control over factors affecting job performance".
- According to **Richard Kathnelson**, "Empowerment is the process coming to feel and behave as if one is in power (autonomy and control) and to feel as if he/she owned the firm."

Characteristics of Empowerment

Organisations with high level of empowerment usually have the following characteristics,

- Empowered organisations put emphasis on delegation, decentralisation and diffusion of power and information.
- Their organisational hierarchy is flat instead of series of levels which command and control the one immediately beneath them
- They appoint fewer managers with wider responsibilities. The span of managers is w above twenty in which manager's role shifts from controller to coach and mentor
- They set unstructured guidelines, so the employees know their decision-making parameters

- Their employee related core value is employee satisfaction.
- They invest a lot of time and effort to ensure that newly recruited employees can handle workplace freedom.

Types of Empowerments

1. **Suggestion Involvement:** It represents a small shift away from the control model. Employees are encouraged to contribute ideas through formal suggestion programmes or quality circles, but their day-to-day work activities do not really change. Also, they are only empowered to recommend, management typically retains the power to decide whether to implement any ideas they generate.
2. **Job Involvement:** It represents a significant departure from the control model because of its dramatic opening up of job content. Jobs are re-designed so that employees use a variety of skills. Employees believe their tasks are significant, they have considerable freedom in deciding how to do the work, they get more feedback than employees in a command-and-control organisations and they each handle a whole, identified piece of work.
3. **High Involvement:** High involvement organisations give their lowest level employees a sense of involvement not just they do their jobs or how effectively their group performs, but in the total organisation's performance. Virtually every aspect of the organisation is different from that of a control oriented one. Information on all aspects of business performance is share horizontally across the organisation as well as up and down the structure. Employees develop extensive skills in teamwork, problem-solving and business operations and participate in work unit management decisions. High involvement organisations often use profit-sharing and employee ownership.

Process of Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment is a long-term process which emphasizes the overall transformation of the organization's values, culture, and decision-making model.

All this cannot be achieved in a day, and its impact can be seen over the years of bringing it into practice.



- **Defining the company's vision and goals:** The managers must make the employees familiar with the company's long-term vision and short-term goals to reach that vision.
- **Changing the management's perception:** It is essential to transform the managements believes and thought process regarding employee empowerment.
- **Determining employee's skills and talent:** To find out about the skills and competency of the employees is the next step for employee empowerment.
- **Figure out the impact of employee's decision:** It is necessary to presume the effect of the future business decisions that will be taken by the employee after getting the authority. It is also essential to evaluate the harm it may cause to the organization.
- **Building up a team:** The managers form a group of employees with the desired skills and talent required to perform a particular task.

- **Sharing complete information:** The managers need to share with the employees the in-depth information related to the organization and the task to be performed by them.
- **Training and guidance:** Proper training and supervision are to be given to employees to perform a specific task and take decisions wisely.
- **Convey expectations:** The managers, instead of enforcing their aspirations, should convey the same to the employees so that they are clear about what they need to achieve.
- **Share feedback:** The last step is to give feedback on the employee's performance in an encouraging manner so that they get charged up to perform even better.

Benefits of Employee Empowerment to the Organization

Empowered employees are the highly motivated, committed, and self-disciplined workforce. It also reduces the workload of top management.

- **Optimum Utilization of Human Resource:** Employee empowerment leads to the motivation of employees, and they tend to perform better by themselves. Thus, the organisation can make the best use of its human resource.
- **Higher Customer Satisfaction:** The employees value the organisation and give their best to fulfil the customer's needs.
- **Fulfils Organizational Vision:** Employees get a clear idea of the organisation's vision, and they streamline their activities accordingly.
- **Increases Productivity:** When employees are allowed to give suggestions, share problems, and ask questions related to work; new ideas and techniques are developed to augment the process and increase productivity.
- **Enhances Quality:** Empowered employees are more focussed and involved with the business process; this improves the overall quality of the business activities.
- **Requires Less Supervision:** A self-disciplined and self-controlled team doesn't need much supervision.

Benefits of Employee Empowerment to the Employees

Employee empowerment is not only beneficial to the organization but also proved to be a turning point in the performance and perception of the employees.

- **Boosts Self-Confidence and Morale:** The employees develop trust and a sense of belongingness towards the organisation, making them more confident and happier.
- **Makes Employee Self-Dependent:** The employees become self-reliant and develop a habit of taking decisions on their own, which ultimately reduces their dependency on others.
- **Higher Job Satisfaction:** The employees feel valued and consider themselves essential to the organisation; this increases the level of job satisfaction in them.
- **Polishes Skills and Competency:** In the process of employee empowerment, the employees get a chance to learn new skills and become more competent in their work.
- **Improves Creativity and Innovation:** When employees are empowered, they are free to think their way, they can explore their creative and innovative side.

Drawbacks of Employee Empowerment

Though, employee empowerment can bring a great deal of success to the organization, if not correctly implemented, it can prove to be disastrous for the organization.

- **Lack of Expertise:** The employees either lack specific skills and expertise to execute the given task, or they are unwilling to learn such skills. This may lead to project failures.

- **Misuse of Power:** Authority of decision making in the hands of employees may be misused by them for satisfying their interest.
- **Security Issues:** Employee empowerment demands to share crucial organisational information and data with employees. Such data can be leaked or misused by the employees leading to security issues.
- **Negative Attitude of Employees:** Employees sometimes have a negative attitude towards the managers and the organisation and may not contribute wholeheartedly to such initiatives.
- **Lack of Supervisor's Support:** Out of jealousy or feeling of superiority, the supervisors may not provide complete guidance and support to ensure the empowerment of their subordinates.
- **Manager's Insecurity:** Managers tend to misunderstand employee empowerment, as they feel that it may harm their position. This insecurity restricts them to participate in the process genuinely.

Strategies for Empowerment:

Here are the strategies for empowerment that make the members of the organisation to work with little guidance in line with organisational vision, mission, objectives and values. The leaders need to train their customer requests and problems, to senior managers to create an environment of empowerment for lifelong association. Here are select strategies for leaders to practice how to empower:

1. **Foster open communication:** Bottom-up or open communication is much powerful when compared to top-down communication. In open communication, employees can present their thoughts, feelings and observations known easily and regularly. Use the feedback effectively and constructively. Never think of antagonising employees for their criticism.
Appreciate and reward the new ideas. Focus on creativity and innovation so that the organisation becomes a buoyant one with high degree of new thinking and different perspectives.
2. **Reward self-improvement:** To overcome complacency and stagnation among the employees, encourage and reward them for self-improvement, have budget and time in place for personal development and training. Motivate employees to set a plan for growth and reward them as they advance. This is one sure way of creating leadership opportunities.
3. **Encourage safe failure:** Let the employees experiment on a continuous basis. Even if they fail, keep on encouraging them to move forward. They should not feel that failure will cost their future. This makes them more risk averse. Promote an environment where they can try new things while protecting the interests of the organisation. Develop laboratory environment to test new ideas and learn from the failures, if any. Unless the employees will gain understanding and feel comfortable, they cannot focus on testing their new ideas on the field and bring innovation in the organisational perspectives. Exhibit high degree of trust and support in the employees' ability to accomplish a work assignment.
4. **Provide sufficient authority and plenty of context:** Delegate adequate authority so that the employees can develop the feeling of "I can do my job" and then address every problem in their work front. Further, give them ideas to experiment. Give them every opportunity to clearly understand the core values, purpose, and direction of the company so that they can easily make consistent decisions and take appropriate action at any junction. Promote shared vision to develop leadership across cadres.
5. **Encourage to work beyond the given role:** The vision of each job needs to be articulated. The employees need to think beyond their job roles and description within their functional area so that they bring dynamism into their own well-defined roles. Also support their independence in the job roles by providing necessary skills and resources. Encouraging cross-learning so that they overcome the silo approach and develop an integrated perspective of the entire organisation by benefiting from each other's skills and knowledge.

6. **Fix accountability for results:** To understand the consequences of failure and need for making an extra effort, every employee need to be held accountable for results. Also keep appreciating and reward their efforts through consistent and diligent measurement of performance for their high morale.

To sum up, employee empowerment is a means by which the employees are given the authority to analyse situations autonomously and take proactive decisions. An empowered employee develops a sense of ownership towards the company and takes up the responsibility to take it to greater heights of excellence.

GROUP

Meaning:

We define a group has two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve common objectives. A group can range in size from two members to thousands of members.

Very small collectives, such as dyads (two members) and triads (three members) are groups, but so are very large collections of people, such as mobs, crowds, and congregations.

Definition of Group:

- “Two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives.”
- **Stephen P. Robins**
- “Any number of people who share goals, often communicate with each other over a period of time, and are few enough so that each individual may communicate with all the others, person-to-person.”
- **G. C. Homans**

Characteristics or Nature of Group

1. **Size:** The first feature of a group is its size. To form a group, there should be at least two persons. A single individual does not form a group. It is important to note that a group does have a minimum limit of persons forming it, but it does not have the maximum limit. There can be any number of persons in a group according to the need.
2. **Interaction with each other:** Every member of a group remains in contact with each other. Everybody needs others. The group becomes meaningful only when all the members of the group work together. Every member of the group influences others with his conduct and in turn himself gets influenced by the conduct of other members.
3. **Common Goal:** A group is formed with the purpose of achieving a collective goal. In the absence of any collective goal, a group cannot come into existence. Every individual has two goals-individual and collective. When an individual happens to be the member of a group, he must give priority to the collective goal over his individual goal.
4. **Norms:** Every group has some norms. These norms are laid down by the members of the group. Normally they are in oral form (or say unwritten). It is obligatory for all the members to observe them. The group puts pressure on all the members to observe these norms.
5. **Informal Leadership:** Every group has a leader. The choice of the leader is not formal, but a particular member is accepted as a leader because of his ability and experience. Whenever a problem raises its head, the members look up to their leader for guidance. So much so that within a group more than one leader can be accepted in respect of different problems or situations.
6. **Cohesiveness:** It is an important characteristic of a group to have some sort of cohesiveness among themselves. It is only this quality that impels individuals to be a member of the group. The group takes care

of the interests of its members. It is because of this that an individual feels satisfied after having become the member of a group.

7. **Interdependency:** All the members of a group look up to each other for the solution of a problem. It can, therefore, be said that the members depend on each other for the achievement of the objectives.
8. **Regularity:** Another important feature of a group is that all its members regularly interact with each other.
9. **Social Pressure:** Groups are formed and prosper in society. It is, therefore, their responsibility to take care of the interests of society along with the interests of their members.
10. **Devotion:** It is an important characteristic of a group. It means that the success of the group depends on the degree of their devotion to the group.

GROUP VS TEAM

Group:

A group is of two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve specific goals.

According to Stephen P. Robins: “two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives.”

Team:

A team is a group of people working and interacting with one another for the purpose of making decisions and achieving objectives that are in the best interests of all.

According to Stephen P. Robbins, “A work team is a collection of people whose individual efforts result in a level of performance which is greater than the sum of their individual contributions”

BASIS FOR COMPARISON	GROUP	TEAM
Description	Individuals with similar ideas, thought patterns or goals who come together for completing an assignment	Individuals with similar or diverse skills come together to achieve a common goal
Meaning	A collection of individuals who work together in completing a task.	A group of persons having collective identity joined together, to accomplish a goal.
Examples	Trade Unions	Leadership Team, Cricket Team
Leadership	Only one leader	More than one
Members	Independent	Interdependent
Process	Discuss, Decide and Delegate.	Discuss, Decide and Do.
Work Products	Individual	Collective
Focus on	Accomplishing individual goals.	Accomplishing team goals.
Accountability	Individually	Either individually or mutually
Members	Independent	Interdependent
Process	Discuss, Decide and Delegate.	Discuss, Decide and Do.
End Results	May not be great as members lack visibility of others work	Better due to high visibility
Conflicts	High as each member may have different thought patterns	Less due to small size and common goal
Development of members	Less scope	More scope due to recognition of individuals

THE DYNAMICS OF INFORMAL GROUPS

What is Group Dynamics?

Group dynamics deals with the attitudes and behavioral patterns of a group. Group dynamics concern how groups are formed, what is their structure and which processes are followed in their functioning. Thus, it is concerned with the interactions and forces operating between groups.

Besides the formally designated groups and teams, as indicated, informal groups in the workplace also play a significant role in the dynamics of organizational behaviour. The major difference between formal and informal groups is that the formal group has officially prescribed goals and relationships, whereas the informal one does not. Despite this distinction, it is a mistake to think of formal and informal groups as two distinctly separate entities. The two types of groups coexist and are inseparable. Every formal organization has informal groups, and every informal organization eventually evolves some semblance of formal groups.

Norms and Roles in Informal Groups:

Except for a single social act such as extending a hand on meeting or responding to an e-mail or text message, the smallest units of analysis in group dynamics are norms and roles. Many behavioural scientists make a point of distinguishing between the two units, but

conceptually they are very similar. Norms are the “oughts” of behaviour. They are prescriptions for acceptable behaviour determined by the group. Norms will be strongly enforced by work groups if they:

1. Aid in group survival and provision of benefits
2. Simplify or make predictable the behaviour expected of group members
3. Help the group avoid embarrassing interpersonal problems
4. Express the central values or goals of the group and clarify what is distinctive about the group's identity

A role consists of a pattern of norms; the use of the term in organizations is directly related to its theatrical use. A role is a position that can be acted out by an individual. The content of a given role is prescribed by the prevailing norms.

Probably role can best be defined as a position that has expectations evolving from established norms. Some informal roles found in work groups include the following:

1. The boundary spanner who acts as a facilitator and bridge between units or groups which would not otherwise interact.
2. The buffer who protects and filters negative or disappointing news or information that might cause group members to be upset and cause morale to suffer.
3. The lobbyist who promotes and tells others how successful and important the group is to outsiders.
4. The negotiator who is empowered by the group to act on its behalf to get resources and make deals.
5. The spokesperson who is the voice of the group.

These informal roles wield considerable power in organizations and are recognized by effective managers. As indicated in the accompanying.

The Informal Organization

Like the formal organization, the informal organization has both functions and dysfunctions.

In contrast to formal organization analysis, the dysfunctional aspects of informal organization have received more attention than the functional ones. For example, conflicting objectives, restriction of output, conformity, blocking of ambition, inertia, and resistance to change are frequently mentioned dysfunctions of the informal organization. More recently, however, organizational analysis has begun to recognize the functional aspects as well.

For example, the following list suggests some practical benefits that can be derived from the informal organization:

1. Makes for a more effective total system

2. Lightens the workload on management
3. Fills in gaps in a manager's abilities
4. Provides a safety valve for employee emotions
5. Improves communication

Because of the inevitability and power of the informal organization, the functions should be exploited in the attainment of objectives rather than futilely combated by management. As one analysis of leadership points out: "Informal social networks exert an immense influence which sometimes overrides the formal hierarchy. Leadership goes beyond a person's formal position into realms of informal, hidden, or unauthorized influence.

DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM AND GROUPS

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team outlines the root causes of politics and dysfunction on the teams where you work, and the keys to overcoming them. Counter to conventional wisdom, the causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. However, they don't die easily. Making a team functional and cohesive requires levels of courage and discipline that many groups cannot seem to muster.

1. Absence of Trust

The fear of being vulnerable with team members prevents the building of trust within the team. This occurs when team members are reluctant to be vulnerable with one another and are unwilling to admit their mistakes, weaknesses or needs for help. Without a certain comfort level among team members, a foundation of trust is impossible. The Role of the Leader here is to Go First!

2. Fear of Conflict

The desire to preserve artificial harmony stifles the occurrence of productive, ideological conflict. Teams that are lacking on trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered, passionate debate about key issues, causing situations where team conflict can easily turn into veiled discussions and back-channel comments. In a work setting where team members do not openly air their opinions, inferior decisions are the result. The Role of the Leader here is to Mine for Conflict.

3. Lack of Commitment

The lack of clarity or buy-in prevents team members from making decisions they will stick to. Without conflict, it is difficult for team members to commit to decisions, creating an environment where ambiguity prevails. Lack of direction and commitment can make employees, particularly star employees, disgruntled. The Role of the Leader here is to Force Clarity and Closure.

4. Avoidance of Accountability

The need to avoid interpersonal discomfort prevents team members from holding one another Accountable for their behavior and performance. When teams don't commit to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven individuals hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that may seem counterproductive to, the overall good of the team. The Role of the Leader here is to Confront Difficult Issues.

5. Inattention to Results

The pursuit of individual goals and personal status erodes the focus on collective success. Team members naturally tend to put their own needs (ego, career development, recognition, etc.) ahead of the collective goals of the team when individuals aren't held accountable. If a team has lost sight of the need for achievement, the business ultimately suffers. The Role of the Leader here is to Focus on Collective Outcomes.

TEAMS IN MODERN WORK PLACE

Today's modern workplace continues to evolve to meet the needs of both employers and employees. New technologies supporting digital workplaces; employees now preferring to work remotely; conformity to culture change shifting; and fresh security concerns are some of the things defining the modern workplace.

“Modern workplace” is a term used to describe businesses who recognize digital collaboration, technology and tools as the way of the future. For example, workplaces that embrace digital technology and tools and 21st-century interior design, with the aim of improving employee productivity and satisfaction.

The vision of the modern workplace is an organization that is more quickly able to respond to industry and economic changes, better able to capture the collective knowledge and expertise of their employees, and capture and leverage that knowledge to innovate ahead of their competitors.

Understanding Modern Workplace

To understand how the modern workplace is today and how it is likely to look like in the future, you need to know the types of spaces and devices or items that dominate it. Just swing by any modern and innovative company, and you will likely find some of these:

- **Private Spaces:**

As the name suggests, these are spaces workers occupy when they need to de-stress, and need some quiet and a moment away from the day-to-day hustle and bustle. Employees who work better when secluded will also find these places very accommodating. Phone booths and private rooms are an excellent example of private places.

- **Hot Desks:**

Also known as hotel desks, they allow you to maximize office space and increase accommodation in your office. For in-office workers, these desks give them the freedom to choose where to sit and work every day. Remote workers will also benefit from hot desks when physically present in the office.

- **Agile Workplaces:**

These places are designed to adapt to accommodate different groups and purposes in the blink of an eye. They are commonly used to hold performance evaluations, pitch a presentation, promote team collaboration, and more. They are normally fitted with appropriate technology such as TVs and printers, are booked in advanced, and managed accordingly. It is common to see these spaces shared by different departments.

- **Collaboration Environments:**

Collaborative environments exist for various purposes, including group projects, brainstorming sessions, and presentations. They can either be dedicated or agile spaces based on a company's needs. Some are as simple as a conference room, while others can be uniquely designed areas.

Examples of collaborative technologies include Microsoft Office and Teams, as well as Google Workplace.

- **Amenities:**

Employees are more concerned about their work-life balance than ever before. This has resulted in the redesign of office spaces purposively to attract and retain talent. It is common today to find nap rooms, gyms, game rooms, and cafeterias in many modern workplaces.

- **Desk Neighbourhood:**

Neighbourhood seating supports an agile work environment and brings about a substantial advantage to the workplace. By grouping employees together, you foster better communication and collaboration, resulting in a better employee experience. The evolution of desk neighbourhood has help phase out cubicle grouping and nurture a better company culture through a broader social work experience.

- **Uniqueness:**

The uniqueness of the spaces in modern workplaces is what sets them apart. They are unique in their own way. From furniture to the types of electronics fitted, a business can make a major impact on a workplace's look and cultural vibe. For example, some businesses furnish their workplaces with designer furniture, while others opt for minimalist design with concrete floors and blocky furniture.

- **Making the Transition:**

Modernizing your workplace doesn't need to be a stressful task if you understand your employees' needs and what your budget can allow you to do. For example, if employees prefer to work in a space with cool amenities, see what you can manage to offer without breaking the bank. You don't necessarily have to offer an all-rounded package.