

4 Roadblocks on the Road to Small Business Empowerment

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***Note:** This is a guest post by John Tschohl, the “Guru of Customer Service.” He’s a best-selling author who has been instructing and motivating managers and CEOs for almost 40 years. We’re honored to have him on our blog.*

Imagine a business strategy so powerful it will create loyal customers who will drive a business – and its revenues – to great heights.

That strategy is empowerment, or allowing employees to make a decision on the spot in favor of the customer.

There are two problems with this: **First, CEO’s think their employees are empowered**, but the reality is they are afraid to make even the smallest decisions. **Second, there is a lack of support** from most employers on the topic of empowerment.



90% of all empowered decisions will cost a company less than \$50, and more importantly it turns frustrated customers into happy ones, bringing them back time after time. As simple as it sounds, there are four roadblocks that must be removed in order to develop a truly empowered workforce.

- 1. Fear** Employees fear they will be fired for making an empowered decision, while employers fear that customers and employees will abuse empowerment. When you train your employees and support their decisions, you will eliminate that fear and allow your employees to be creative, yet responsible, in serving customers.
- 2. Distrust** Employers must trust their employees to make decisions that will keep their customers – and their money – coming back. Employees must be able to trust that their employers will not deride or, even worse, fire them if they make a mistake in an attempt to solve a customer’s problem.
- 3. Micromanagement** Nothing will kill empowerment more quickly than micromanagement. When you micromanage your employees, you destroy their capacity for even the most basic creative thinking and problem solving. Let your

employees know what you need from them, then get out of the way and let them do what you've asked them to do.

4. Lack of Recognition The need for recognition is universal. Everyone needs to be told when they are doing something well, but all too often the only time employees get feedback is when they have made a mistake. The more you recognize the empowered decisions and achievements of your employees, the more likely they will be to use their creativity in dealing with situations in the future.

Eliminate these four roadblocks and you'll have an empowered team that will drive your business and crush your competition. Empowered employees will also save your business tens of thousands of dollars over the course of the year, because customer problems will not have to progress up the chain of command in order to be solved. When customer service decisions are made on the front line, management is freed up to address big-picture issues.

About the Author



John Tschohl is a customer service strategist, has been instructing and motivating employees, managers, supervisors and company CEO's for 39 years. He's called the "Guru of Customer Service" by *USA Today*, *TIME* and *Entrepreneur* magazines. He is a best-selling author of [Empowerment: A Way of Life](#), and president of [Service Quality Institute](#), the global leader in customer service training and development. For more information, visit johntschohl.com or customer-service.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@johntschohl](https://twitter.com/johntschohl)

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