

EPowerment:

Achieving Empowerment in the E World

By Izzy Justice

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Chapter 1

Why EPowerment and Why Now?

Sixty percent of U.S. organizations report that they plan to focus more on high-potential employees.¹

Empowerment means allowing people at appropriate levels of an organization to know that they are capable of, *and* accountable for, making business decisions without having to fight through layers of bureaucracy and inefficient business processes, both formal and informal ones. Who does not want to feel empowered? What could possibly be wrong with this concept?

When the term *empowerment* found its way to the workplace, it generated a lot of excitement. The expectation was that adults would be treated as adults, high expectations would be set and achieved, and decision-making and innovation would be accelerated. But putting it into practice proved to be easier said than done, and the excitement soon fizzled out.² Why do we fail to achieve empowerment?

The problem isn't with the concept itself or even with support for the concept. There are two fundamental reasons why empowerment hasn't been successful in the past twenty years in our organizations.

First, the information necessary to make decisions never quite finds its way to those front-line managers, leaders, and employees supposedly empowered to make decisions. Either the data is not accessible in real time or it becomes diluted as it trickles its way down from upper management, rendering the information less useful. In some cases, the data is even outdated, causing the decision maker to either make the wrong decision or defer the decision entirely.

The second reason is that without proper training and the right information at the right time, the front-line employees find it too risky to make decisions and throw them back upward. They have not had the opportunity to learn to be resourceful. Both the organizational culture and the level of individual courage fail to support empowerment. Organizational rewards and incentive programs have historically not been aligned with empowerment either. Why risk the visibility of poor decisions and adversely impact one's career? This risk-taking fortitude, or lack thereof, is the core component of Emotional Intelligence, introduced in chapter 3.

As a result of these two factors, empowerment failed to live up to its promise. Companies continued to struggle with poor decisions, too much micromanagement, workplace dissatisfaction, and the "it's not *my* problem" syndrome. Empowerment was not organically supported in the ecosystem of the organization, nor were the inhabitants ready for it.

"Many companies are attracted by a fantasy version of empowerment and simultaneously repelled by the reality. How lovely to have energetic, dedicated workers who always seize the initiative (but only when "appropriate"), who enjoy taking risks (but never risky ones), who volunteer their ideas (but only brilliant ones), who solve problems on their own (but make no mistakes), who aren't afraid to speak their minds (but never ruffle any feathers), who always give their very best to the company (but ask no unpleasant questions about what the

company is giving them back). How nice it would be, in short, to empower workers without giving them any power.”³

But we are in the second decade of the new millennium now. Organizations have undergone significant changes that bode well for empowerment. The workforce itself has also changed in ways that create a readiness for empowerment. What if empowerment were ready for a comeback? What if now is not only the best time to realize it, but also the most necessary time to realize it? When it was first introduced, perhaps it was just another nice business management concept. Today, empowerment is a business imperative. *Harnessing the individual and collective potential of employees is the singular imperative of this decade.*

In this book, we will present some very compelling arguments as to why empowerment is finally achievable. *More importantly, we will argue why empowerment in 2010 and beyond should be the number one priority of all organizations. We will also discuss how to achieve this empowerment state at both the individual and organization levels.*

We will introduce a new term—**EPowerment**—an amalgam of **E**mpowerment, high **E**motional intelligence (EQ), and harnessing the power of the e world (**E**lectronically-enabled accessibility to knowledge, irrespective of where it exists, whether organically in a person, a community, or inorganically in easily accessible sources of knowledge). Collective human knowledge, which allows all of us to live and perform better, is becoming easier to access and will very quickly become freely available.

EPowerment involves:

- (1) *Eliminating* barriers to the access of knowledge and information.
- (2) Creating a fearless, *emotionally intelligent* workforce that is willing to expand its own potential.
- (3) Building a culture that practices, nourishes, and rewards employee *engagement*.
- (4) Developing business practices that are *environmentally* responsible and in tune with an age that is coming to terms with global learning.

But why now? Why is now the time for EPowerment?

We will share several reasons, but it is worth noting that, based on the collective set of changes and trends, empowerment has never been more achievable and more necessary than now.

The Changing Face of the Workplace

That Was Then

The generations following World War II carved out what was then a new workplace. People went to work and stayed with the same company for years. The cubicle world was born, sometimes resulting in huge rooms filled with faceless workers hunched over typewriters that were eventually replaced by computer screens.

Organizations were marked by rigid hierarchical structures. Careers were considered in terms of climbing the ladder. We measured success by attaining ever-more-impressive titles, expanding our number of direct reports, and, if we were blessed, by finally establishing a foothold in the corner office. Job satisfaction was less important than stability, investing for retirement, and making sure that we never lost our place in line. Staying visible became so important that many people would work for years without even taking a vacation.

Today, things have changed dramatically. The modern employer expects the employee to work within more abstract, undefined parameters, and the employee expects to have all the tools necessary to make better decisions. Waiting for this to occur is no longer feasible: both sides want EPowerment *now*.

Fifty-six percent of employers in the United States are experiencing a leadership shortage that is impeding their organization's performance.⁴ This is not a secret. Fifty-two percent of employees said there were not enough qualified managers in their organizations today and 78 percent reported either that they aren't sure that their companies have enough qualified people to fill future leadership jobs or that they firmly believe that they do not (45 percent of those were of the firm opinion that businesses were going to face a shortage of qualified managers in the future⁵).

If you look at the world today and the world twenty-five to thirty years ago, the rate of change has increased. It's not that things were never changing. The rules were set and established, and if you wanted to be successful in your career or in business, you learned the rules, got good at them, and that was it. That being said, there is a basic set of leadership competencies that continue to be useful and important. They haven't gone away. However, one of the biggest changes is that for many reasons, such as the development of new technologies and the growth of the global economy, the rate of change has continued to accelerate. A world has been created in which the rules are constantly changing. Leaders need to deal with complexity, ambiguity, and rules that aren't clear. The winners will be those who create new rules. There have always been entrepreneurs at the birth of some new technology, but the speed at which this is happening and the constancy of it is astounding. The old model was *innovation-plateau-stability-innovation*, but now we are in a period where the change is constant and exponential. Our new world requires a whole new level of thinking and operating on the part of leaders in order to thrive in an environment like that.

—Bill Hodgetts, VP of corporate leadership development, Fidelity

It is predicted that, moving forward, the average tenure of an employee in an organization will be around five years—this is a *rent* model. Both employees and employers are essentially renting each other. This is quite different from the *ownership* model of the past. We all know just how different it feels when you rent something versus owning it. The sense of commitment and ethic is different. Leaders will have to figure out how to create an *ownership* culture in a renter's world to maximize performance, innovation, and collaboration. They will have to create an empowerment culture. Jane Luciano, VP of global learning and organization development at Bristol-Myers Squibb says to her employees, “While I cannot promise employment, I can promise you employability—you will learn and acquire new skills here that will further your career.”

Globalization

Traditionally, the term “globalization,” from a business perspective, has meant that multinational companies have offices and employees all over the world. The meaning of the term then transitioned to incorporate outsourcing. Outsourcing meant that jobs were transferred from domestic locations in the West to other parts of the world because employing workers in other locations was, in most cases, cheaper, faster, and, in some cases, actually better.

Now, globalization is an important issue in a much different context from that of the past fifteen years. Today, globalization must incorporate yet another dimension. It is the idea that we can now instantly connect with more people in more parts of the world with more frequency and in a geographically boundless manner. In many cases, it is not unusual to communicate and collaborate with co-workers, suppliers, vendors, and customers from all over the world on a daily basis in much the same way we historically did when working with fellow employees on a different floor of the same building. And because the playing field (in the context of skills and performance) is somewhat leveled now, there is a tremendous amount of reliance on the ability to work effectively with this tremendously diverse workforce, whose members are all competing for similar goals. So globalization brings diversity. The companies that are going to be most successful will be those whose leaders and teams are best able to work with people from a broad variety of cultures and countries-of-origin in a mobile workforce.

In this century of a global workforce where we interact with not just more people, but more people with diverse backgrounds, our ability to navigate through the complexity of human behavior is paramount. Ruth Kennedy, director of organization development at VF Corporation says, “Leaders will have to have a way to deal with an increasingly global focus. That requires a lot of going with the flow. They must have a foundation to deal with that.”

That foundation is our emotions. Embedded in all forms of diversity is the one thing we all have in common—emotions. All humans have the same basic set of emotions that govern thought and behavior. Leaders who understand how to deal with emotion and focus people on a shared strategy will be best able to engage and lead in this flatter global workforce. This will be discussed at length in chapter 3.

Implications of Generational Differences

Any discussion of the nature of work must factor generational changes into the equation. Baby boomers will exert one of the largest demographic influences on the nature of work. This is partly due to their numbers, given that they make up more than 38 percent of the workforce.⁶ More importantly, they aren’t going anywhere, at least not yet.

The 2008–2009 recession saw huge losses in investment portfolios and retirement accounts worldwide. During that time, major U.S. equity indexes were sharply negative, with the S&P 500 Index losing 37 percent for 2008.⁷ As a result, only 13 percent of workers say they are very confident about having enough money for a comfortable retirement, the lowest percentage ever recorded.⁸ Consequently, huge numbers of people who had planned to retire earlier are now holding on to their jobs for far longer than they had planned. Investment firm T. Rowe Price calculates that the oldest boomers will have to delay retirement by nearly nine years in order to recover what they lost in the market⁹. Research by the Employee Benefits Institute found that just 23 percent of boomers age fifty-five and older have more than \$250,000 in savings and investments.¹⁰

Retirement used to come in steady waves, allowing for smooth transitions as sixty-somethings left the workforce, making room for younger workers. This time, though, the unemployment rate hovered near, and in some states, surpassed 10 percent for the first time in decades¹¹ — in part because the normal retirement cycle had been disrupted.

Boomers are holding on to their jobs en masse, blocking younger workers from advancing in the workplace. According to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, employment rates for teens and twenty-somethings this past decade have fallen, while the number of Americans aged

55 and older who have jobs has gone up.¹² Just 20 percent of 2009 college graduates who applied for a job during the recession actually found one.¹³

The “War for Talent,” discussed heavily prior to the recession, has lost much attention. But studies continue to show that delayed retirement is just that—a delay. There still will be more than seventy million baby boomers who *want* to leave the workplace and go do something more meaningful with their lives, which in many cases means getting away from corporate America and all the emotional stress that has piled up from that world. These baby boomers still want to be active and even work, but they want to do so under their terms. Flexibility is the key here: 87 percent of boomers say that having flexible work options is important; 83 percent of boomers say that work/life balance matters to them; and two thirds want to work remotely.¹⁴ The boomers’ departure from the workplace will have a significant impact on businesses everywhere. Their presence will be missed, creating a void of knowledge, experience, and wisdom. The change will be deeply profound and impact empowerment at both the individual and organization levels. What substitute is there for the hands-on experience and meaningful relationships that take years to cultivate?

By 2019, Generation X (born between 1965 and 1978) will have spent nearly two decades in the workplace. They will be leading a workforce that will have transformed almost beyond recognition. There will be more younger employees in management and leadership roles than ever before. Younger leaders will be occupying roles with an average of nine years less experience than the previous generation.¹⁵ A thirty-year-old must be able to not just tactically perform as a forty-year-old, but to also make sound decisions with the maturity of a forty-year-old. These less experienced professionals will need to find ways to develop this kind of wisdom quickly. Those individuals and organizations that do so will have an upper hand.

Generation Y (born between 1979 and 2000) are just as numerous as the boomers, but that will not prevent the imminent dilemma. Generation Y realizes it is now pointless to put in long years of effort at any one company in exchange for a series of raises and promotions. “Paying your dues, moving up slowly, and getting the corner office—that’s going away. In ten years, it will be gone,” says Bruce Tulgan, head of the New Haven, Conn. consulting firm Rainmaker Thinking and author of *Not Everyone Gets a Trophy*. It will be less common to discuss success in terms of rank, seniority, or power. Instead, success can be anything that matters to you personally. Moreover, companies are changing as well, making room for more short-term independent contractors, freelancers, and consultants—and fewer traditional employees.

Empowerment for the younger generation is no longer a perk or luxury, it is an expectation. Make no mistake—the best workers will gravitate, consciously or subconsciously, to people and organizations that meet this expectation. This is already happening and is in part what has led to a burst of social entrepreneurship within generation Y. Steve Fritz, president of VF Outlet, part of VF Corporation, recommends, “You need to hear Generation Y out and give them a platform to present ideas.” The younger generations are actually smarter and infinitely more resourceful.

The Flynn Effect describes the rise in IQ test scores over generations, across time. This is a worldwide effect representing changes in not only intelligence, but also in certain types of memory. Over the past sixty years, IQ scores have risen by twenty points. This means that a child of average intelligence back in the 1930s would be classified as mildly retarded today.¹⁶ The leading explanation is that environmental changes arose from effects of modernization, things like intellectually demanding work, more use of technology, and more attention paid to children. This means that people get more practice at manipulating abstract concepts. We are evolving to adapt to complexity!

Gen. Y may not know how valuable they are today. However, it is precisely due to their higher EQ that they will figure out their value much more quickly than the other generations will and may outpace the Gen Xers for key roles in businesses if the Gen Xers do not adapt quickly.

—Todd Harrison, director of leadership and associate development, WellPoint

The Future of Work

Susan Richter, Food Lion, LLC

If you look at the future of work, people are asking for something very different from what we are accustomed to. The way we work, how we work, and the jobs we do are all changing. Recently, we honored associates who have worked here for thirty years, and I don't see that happening in the future. Careers will still be thirty years, but not at the same company. Employees will, primarily, use the knowledge they gain to better their careers, even if it means leaving the company that has taught them this. So now the question is, "How do we harness this investment? How do we motivate people to stay—without imposing binding contracts? If we know we will only keep them for three to five years, how do we use that to our advantage—in selection, retention, and empowerment?"

Given the workforce of the future, the way we develop people will be different than it has been in the past. In the past, high performance was all about metrics, and we rewarded people who were able to execute—those who got the most sales and achieved profitability got the rewards. There was nothing there about developing people, and we didn't give much thought to the collaboration involved in that effort. Now we are working with fifty years of history and focusing on leadership development. The vision is to have trusted, caring connections that energize everyone—today, tomorrow, together. The goal is to create a culture of high performance. We are raising the bar and bringing out the best in every associate and not accepting mediocrity. Success will now be measured by questions such as, "How do I engage the associates on my team, have I set the context, do they understand why we are doing this? Do employees see the connection between satisfied customers, higher profits, and their work environment? Do they see the big picture?" To cope with the new world, we are at a pivot point where we are completely changing the way we are doing things and how we are recognizing and rewarding people.

The Emergence of Women in Leadership

The presence of women is one of the forces changing the nature of work as women come to play increasingly important roles in leadership. Their more relationship-oriented leadership is perfect for nurturing the collaboration of knowledge workers and creating a culture of empowerment. Women are consensus builders, conciliators, and collaborators, and they employ what is called a transformational leadership style—heavily engaged, motivational, and extremely well suited for the emerging, less hierarchical workplace.

Within just ten years, we'll see a more fluid and more virtual workforce that demands the type of management skills that women tend to possess. Women will move rapidly up the chain of command to where emotional intelligence skills will become even more beneficial.¹

Women manage more cautiously than men do.² They focus on the long term, while men thrive on risk, especially when they are surrounded by other men. How different will our workforce be when leadership has a more strategic perspective and a more inclusive style, and uses it to communicate transparently with an empowered workforce?

I am a work in progress. I am a leader, but my leadership philosophy is to lead from behind. As part of this servant leadership mentality, I use a lot of different tools and techniques that I'll never get credit for. I lead fifty clients. If my clients are successful thanks to my help, then I have been a success. I am not there for the glory, I am there for them.

—Anne Feller, Cox Communications

In today's marketplace, the female leadership style is not only distinctly different but also essential. Women's long-term focus is already having an impact on organizational results. The workplace-research group Catalyst studied 353 *Fortune* 500 companies and found that those with the most women in senior management positions had a higher return on equities—by more than a third.³ The empowerment model embedded in the natural female style is clearly a major success factor.

One of the greatest lessons in leadership I have ever learned is that leadership is not about me, but rather about those that I serve. To become a truly great leader, we have to put others before ourselves. If we don't, we may lead for a little while, but ultimately we'll turn around and find that no one is following us anymore.

—Caz Matthews, president of the WellPoint Foundation

Changes in Corporate Culture

Knowledge workers thrive on collaboration and participation in decision-making. The last years have seen many experiments in organizational structure and functioning to encourage collaboration, and ultimately, empowerment.

I send a message to employees that they are important, that I care about them, and that I trust them. To achieve that, I empower them accordingly. I push decisions down as much as possible.

—Bob Zierk, VP of human resources, Black & Decker

When a company gives employees freedom, productivity goes up. Capital One does not mandate office time from their knowledge workers and neither does Best Buy.⁴ Best Buy's corporate office implemented a system called ROWE—results-only work environment—and found that productivity skyrocketed by 40 percent. Similarly, Gap also piloted ROWE⁵ and found productivity increased 21 percent, quality improved 15 percent, engagement scores spiked from 67 percent to 86 percent, and work/life balance scores rose from 72 percent to 82 percent. In a results-only work environment, the metrics of performance are not the inputs, but the outputs. This means that employees can work whenever, wherever they choose, as long as deadlines are met and outcomes are achieved. Organizations will no longer have an incentive to fill buildings with cubicles of workers who do lots of work without much result. Flexibility is no longer a benefit; it's a compelling business strategy. But thriving in a flexible environment will not come easily or without adaptation.

Leaders of organizations will increasingly face the demand to create open, collaborative environments. Those who grew up in a top-down, hierarchical style of leadership will find that they can no longer just tell people what to do and expect them to do it. Knowledge workers need a deep understanding of corporate goals and strategy, and they thrive in conditions that allow them to exert their influence on corporate thinking.

I have grown into my current leadership philosophy, and if I were to comment on this ten years ago, you would be reading a very different answer. I view leadership as a privilege as opposed to a right. It is a privilege that is earned. It is gifted by those you are given the honor and accountability to lead. The notion is that other people (those you are leading) give you the authority to lead them. They give it to you willingly and generously, as opposed to you mandating their followership through your authority because you have been named a leader by the title on your business card.

—Kevin Henry, chief HR officer, Coca-Cola Bottling Consolidated Co.

People engaged in leadership development and talent management are already looking for ways to identify and develop the leadership skills necessary to nurture collaboration. Tomorrow's leadership development must feature more effective strategies than today's event-based training schedules. The personal changes necessary for developing a collaborative leadership culture mandate a fundamental shift in how we select and train leaders in the future. The traditional workshop approach to development may be enough to impart information, but it does not begin to produce the personal insights and profound change necessary to manage or lead in a collaborative environment.

There are several universal and enduring traits that contribute to effective leadership. Effective leadership is comprised of technical competence, communication, interpersonal skills, and technological savvy. There is a growing interest in transparency and sustainability. Social networks will reshape business and how we connect.

—Effenus Henderson, chief diversity officer, Weyerhaeuser

Changes in the Nature of Work

To visualize the workplace of the next few years, first consider what work is going to be like. The capability to connect to both people and information by technology from anywhere and at anytime will transform the way we work.

If there was any benefit to the recession, it was the reality check it provided. We discovered that if we focus on *what* must get done rather than *where* or *how* it gets done, more will get done. The traditional way is coming to an end. We are at an inflection point. The sooner that this is discovered and integrated with how things were done before, the more opportunity for success there is.

Such a change in work can only be driven by the collaborative technologies enabling living and thriving in the e world. Having the tools is necessary but not sufficient. An ability to create the necessary personal and communal comfort and trust will be just as relevant.

A New Approach to Leadership

Agility/Adaptive Leadership—Do not get attached to the way things are. Guaranteed, they will be different tomorrow. The world is not static, and thus requires continuous adaptation to different people, experiences, and circumstances. Adaptive leadership allows for adjusting to such factors while still maintaining a focus on the core values and strategies. Such leadership requires the ability to empathize with others with whom you share a vision. When a leader can manage the needs of multiple stakeholders in complex situations is when a leader can make a true difference in today's world. But the knowledge to do so does not and will not come from a book or a seminar. It takes years of self-learning, supplemented by outside wisdom.

The release of traditional methods will mean an increasing emphasis on hiring people on a project basis. The management, scientific, and technical consulting services industries (all industries with a high percentage of contract work) are projected to increase by 82.8 percent between 2008 and 2018.⁶ Jobs of the future will have very little to do with processing words or numbers or running errands. Instead, the focus will be on essential, high-potential people solving strategic problems and doing collaborative work. The remainder of the work will be outsourced and contracted. These are two very different skill sets, by the way. The areas of talent management and workforce planning require a new set of skills for human resource practitioners as well.

Conservative, moderate, and aggressive estimates of the number of U.S. jobs that could potentially be moved offshore in the coming decades are roughly 22 percent, 26 percent, and 29 percent, respectively, according to Jagdish Bhagwati and Alan S. Blinder, authors of *Offshoring of American Jobs*. That corresponds to thirty million to forty million jobs.⁷

Largest employment declines from 2006 to 2016

Occupation	Decrease in Demand
Stock clerks and order fillers	-131,000
Cashiers, except gaming	-118,000
Packers and packagers, hand	-104,000
File clerks	-97,000
Order clerks	-66,000
Telemarketers	-39,000
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, weighers	-35,000
Computer operators	-32,000
Driver/sales workers	-24,000
Word processors and typists	-21,000
Switchboard Operators	-15,000
Data entry keyers	-15,000

The most desired jobs will be those that include interaction with people—managing customers, organizing fans, engaging others in social media. The need for designers and creativity will not go away. We will still need to brainstorm.

But this work can be done virtually. It is too expensive, too slow, and plainly, too inefficient, for a couple of hundred people to congregate at one central physical location. Instead of aggregating people and sharing tactical information, we will move toward capturing meaningful knowledge and sharing human connections.

Consider that it takes an average of twenty-four minutes to refocus our attention after an interruption. And interruptions eat up 28 percent of the work day.⁸ In a virtual setting, we can sign off or put up an “away” message in order to focus on priorities—conserving precious emotional energy.

The e world makes working as a team, synchronized to a shared goal, easier and more productive than ever. But, as in a three-legged-race, you’ll instantly know when a teammate is struggling because that will slow you down as well. Many people will embrace this new high-stress, high-speed, high-flexibility way of work. They’ll go from a few days alone at home, maintaining the status quo, to urgent team sessions, sometimes in person but often online. It will make still other people yearn for jobs like those in the old days, when we fought traffic, sat in a cube, typed memos, took a long lunch, and then sat in traffic again.

There will be an evolution of skill sets. Knowledge is doubling, yet it takes ten years to become an expert. People will rely less and less on knowledge in their

heads and instead on skills to find the knowledge. We'll be integrators—ability to analyze, think, research, collaborate (EQ is a huge component of one's ability to collaborate). People who have the skill set to keep up with the advances in technologies will experience success.

—Karie Willyerd, CLO, Sun Microsystems

Recession Recovery: The Future is Already Here

As a result of the 2008–2009 economic recession, companies in all industries and across various geographic regions have been seeking to do more with less. Leaders are hunting with a vengeance to find cheaper and better ways to do more than they were doing before.

It has become more and more apparent, thanks to the crisis that self-awareness, inclusion/diversity, self-management, and holistic/systems thinking will be the key skills to success.

—Troy Heflin, VP of organizational development, Volvo

There was something alarmingly different about this recession that the previous three economic slowdowns of the past twenty-five years. When budgets are tight and layoffs mandated with grim frequency, people naturally think about how to cut back. But this time around, the malaise has been so communal, so prevalent, and so very personal (whose retirement fund did not shrink by half?) that these themes have developed new meaning. We all started saving instead of spending. This time, the need to do more with less was more than wishful thinking—it has become our new reality.

The recession hit everyone so hard that it is making most people say, “let's not put ourselves in this situation again.” Rather than just waiting for a recession to end so that we can get back to normal, businesses are establishing a new normal. And whether they realize it or not, they are embracing EPowerment.

Every expenditure and priority must now be examined with this “new normal” in mind. This has resulted in a paradigm shift in talent development. The days of sending managers and leaders off to exotic locations for week-long seminars or conferences are gone. Throwing in golf and spa amenities is being viewed as a career-ending move instead of an attendance-enhancing technique. Off-site learning and development will continue to exist but not in the manner to which we've been accustomed. Leaders in organizations want to see a tangible ROI—they want to see how that \$7,500 trip resulted in something clearly beneficial for the individual or the corporation. They also want to be able to track it and explain it. What did people learn? How will they transfer their new knowledge to improve the organization? How will this training lead to EPowerment?

The economy that we experienced in late 2008 and all of 2009 has had a fundamental and paradigm-shifting impact on not just the working professional but also on the organization. Most of us have been hurt in some form or another. Whether it was watching our savings literally disappear, losing a job, being overworked, or reducing traditional spending and consumption, in some way, we've all been affected by this recession. The impact has not just been a financial or vocational one; it has been a profoundly emotional one. We can compare it to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—the emotional stress experienced by veterans of wars or survivors of other traumatic experiences. The trust in employers, in institutions, in government, in leaders, and in some basic truths about workplace behavior has eroded. Consider that just 36 percent of employees believe that top managers at their company act with honesty

and integrity.⁹ Survival mode behavior has indeed taken its toll. So, as we exit the recession, organizations and leaders have to be emotionally ready to deal with an apathetic and fatigued workforce. This is again why EQ is more relevant now than ever.

Talent management will continue to be a major human capital issue over the coming decade. Just prior to the recession, in 2007, the Department of Labor had predicted a shortage of about three million workers in 2012. Though delayed now, we anticipate that the shortage will still occur. As discussed, baby boomers will begin to make their anticipated exit. The knowledge economy will dominate the Western world as the globalization trend of outsourcing blue-collar needs continues.

These fundamental changes in the nature of work itself foretell radical changes in what we do and how we do it. But this book is not intended to be futuristic. Instead, this book explores *how* we will work, not *what* we will be doing in the not too distant future.

The ability to collaborate and authentically engage with others will be the key competency of the future. Bring your own potential but also be able to suspend it to allow others to collaborate. Adaptability and resilience are really important so you can learn and adapt as business needs you to.

—Kelli Price, senior vice president of people, Premier, Inc.

Nobody is immune from misreading the future. In 1899, Charles H. Durell of the U.S. Patent Office said that everything that was going to be invented had already been invented. In 1951, Cambridge mathematician Douglas Hartree said that the three computers then in existence did math so quickly that no more would ever need to be manufactured. “No one else will ever need machines of their own or be able to afford them.” In 1968, the notable journal *Business Week* went so far as to state, “With more than fifteen types of foreign cars already on sale here, the Japanese car industry isn’t likely to carve out a big share of the market for itself.” Even the notable business giant Bill Gates is reported to have once said that no one would ever need more than 640 kilobytes of memory. Soothsayers operate at their own risk.

Nevertheless, we’ll examine how advances in technology, the availability of social networks, changes in demographics, and our refined understanding of human beings and work combine to foretell how we will work in the coming years. More importantly, you will learn what your business should already be doing today, as well as what you need to be doing to prepare for the future.

As you read, you will find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Is your business taking advantage of opportunities described in these pages?
- What do you need to be doing individually to make this happen?
- How do our findings affect your business today?
- What will happen to your company’s competitiveness if you don’t adequately take our findings into account in planning for the future?
- Are you EPowered? Are your employees? Is your organization?

In the next three chapters, and before we get to *how* to achieve EPowerment, we will dive more deeply into the three Es that comprise EPowerment: technology (e world), emotional intelligence (EQ), and empowerment. Having this context will allow you to fully understand just how powerful these components are for the next decade, and it will provide better meaning for the five principles we will

present as critical to achieving EPowerment. These five principles can be used to transform yourself and your organizations (the “how to”), and should be considered foundational to every individual and organization that wants to not only survive but thrive in the coming years.

Summary and Key Points

- Empowerment failed to fully live up to its promise.
- Empowerment fizzled out due to lack of training, not enough management support, diluted messages from company leaders, insufficient access to up-to-date information, and the degree of risk involved in making decisions in an unsupportive environment.
- Organizations have undergone significant structural and cultural changes.
- EPowerment is empowerment enabled by technological connectivity and emotional intelligence.
- The global economy and a diverse workforce make EPowerment all the more relevant.
- Younger generations take to new technologies naturally and expect empowerment.
- Women are more prominent in the workplace, naturally leading with an empowerment style.
- The rise of knowledge workers makes empowerment essential.
- These changes make empowerment a business imperative.
- Harnessing the individual and collective potential of employees is the singular imperative for all organizations during this decade.

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