**Tool 7.1. Preparing for Empowerment in your Organization**

Senior leaders can be skeptical about the benefits of empowering employees as an engagement strategy. The following questions can help prepare you and your colleagues in thinking through making a stronger case for empowerment, as well as identifying personal and organizational changes required to support it.

1. Complete this questionnaire yourself, ask your colleagues to do the same, and discuss your answers with each other.
2. In the spirit of true empowerment, do this exercise with your employees, so you can learn more about what they expect and develop a shared understanding of empowerment within your team.

*What is empowerment?*

To empower means to grant authority to another individual to think, make decisions, and act on their own in order to accomplish a particular task.

1. *What would empowerment look like in our team? (or department, organization, etc.) How would the leader and team members behave differently?*

*What can we specifically do on a day-to-day basis to empower our team?*

*2. What are risks related to empowerment? What are our key concerns about empowering our people? (include managerial concerns, as well as employee concerns)*

*Examples could include:*

* + *Can employees be trusted? What if they take advantage?*
  + *This is too touchy-feely. Will they still view leaders as strong and competent?*
  + *Is there a way to balance empowerment and control?*
  + *How can we implement this in our company, especially if it has a history of controlling management?*

*3. How can leaders constructively respond to and mitigate concerns about empowerment*? What changes (personal, team, organizational) need to be put in place to support empowerment successfully within our organization?

1. *How would empowerment benefit our team and the organization as a whole?* (Benefits could include psychological outcomes, material savings or rewards, employee retention, innovation, performance improvements, etc. Include empirical evidence, such as those described in this chapter, or do additional research about best practices in your industry.)

Benefits for individual leaders and employees:

Benefits for the team/department:

Benefits for the organization:

**Suggestion**: Summarize your ideas in a worksheet with 4 columns: a) Empowerment in our Team; b) Risks/Concerns; c) Leader Strategy/Key Changes; d) Benefits.