

Life is interdependent. Transition to Employee Ownership. Bring work to life.



**Your weekly blog on all things EO
with Barry Horner**

Episode 5 | Series 1

“Nothing much changes. Don’t let the lawyers fool you about employee ownership.”

So, the ink is dry. The T’s are crossed, the I’s dotted. Congratulations, you are now part of an employee-owned business. And then comes the uninformed lawyer, with their reassuringly bland pronouncements: ‘Legally speaking, nothing much changes.’

Don’t let that carefully crafted and utterly soul-crushing statement lull you into a false sense of continuity.

While the fundamental legal structure might have shifted with the stroke of a pen, the very DNA of your workplace has undergone a seismic transformation. To suggest otherwise is either blissful ignorance or, frankly, a deliberate downplaying of a revolution.

“Nothing much changes” Really? Suddenly, the collective ‘we’ isn’t just a marketing slogan. It’s the truth. Every single person who contributes their time, energy and

expertise now has a tangible stake in the outcome. The profit you help generate isn't just funnelled upwards to some distant, faceless shareholder. It starts to come back to you. To your colleagues.

Tell me, how can that possibly equate to “nothing much changing”?

For years, perhaps decades, you have operated under a traditional hierarchy. Decisions were made at the top, trickling down like a lukewarm waterfall. Your efforts, while hopefully valued, ultimately enriched someone else's pockets more significantly than your own. Now? The script is flipped. Your dedication directly impacts your share of the rewards. That's not a minor tweak, but rather a fundamental shift in motivation, in engagement, in the very reason you show up every day.

The lawyer might be focused on the Companies House filings and the nuances of the trust deed. They are looking at the framework. But you, the employee-owner, are now living within that framework. There is a newfound sense of collective responsibility, a shared purpose that transcends simply drawing a salary.

Suddenly, those water cooler conversations about company performance take on a new weight. The success of that big project isn't just a line on a spreadsheet as it directly influences the profit share. That suggestion you had in the team meeting - Now, it might get implemented because it benefits everyone.

The lawyers are trained to minimise risk and emphasise continuity. Change, in their world, can be messy and unpredictable. But employee ownership is change. It's a deliberate disruption of the status quo. It's a bet on the power of people, on the idea that when individuals are truly invested, they will go the extra mile.

So, the next time you hear the phrase “nothing much changes,” politely but firmly push back. Acknowledge the legal transition but then articulate the profound human shift that has occurred. You are no longer just an employee - you are now an owner. Your voice matters more. Your contribution is more directly rewarded. The success of the business is now inextricably linked to your own.

Embrace the change. Champion the difference. And let the lawyers stick to the small

print while you and your fellow owners build something truly remarkable, together. Because in the world of employee ownership, everything has changed for the better.

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

For more information or to discuss anything in this latest Know-How;
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