Effective Delegation Tips and Techniques

The following are general delegation tips and techniques designed to help you to effectively delegate to make more efficient use of your time and that of your associates.

What is Delegation?
The objective of delegation is to get the job done by someone else who has the skill, knowledge and authority to complete the task or job, toward facilitating efficient and valuable use of time.

Delegation should not be used as an excuse for dumping on others, shifting responsibility or shifting routine tasks. Remember as the manager you have ultimate responsibility for success and failure -- regardless of who performs the work.

Delegation may be approached differently with different associates. As the manager, you are accountable for the execution of all tasks, so your follow-up will depend upon your comfort level with each associate’s previous results.

When you delegate a task you are empowering and entrusting others with your authority, as well as your success. If used effectively it can be a powerful tool for motivating and training your associates to act with initiative and to assume responsibility for certain tasks.

If delegation is not done effectively it can result in a waste of your time and the time of your associates.

What are the Benefits of Delegation?
When performed effectively delegation can:
Develop your associates to take care of tasks that are not cost-effective or time-effective for you to do.

- Transfer work to associates whose skills in a particular area are better than yours.
- Increase job satisfaction by developing your associates to assume a greater level of responsibility and ownership for their performance.
- Spend more time planning and improving the overall efficiency and results of your department.
How to Delegate:

Decide what is suitable for delegation. Identify tasks that are not required to be performed by you or that don’t require a certain level of authority that can’t be assumed by others.

Try to balance the distribution of more mundane task with those that are more exciting in order to keep your associates motivated.

Select the right person for the right task. What and how much you delegate will depend on the ability, experience and knowledge of your associates. If your associates do not have the required knowledge or skill you will need to invest time upfront to train, coach and mentor them through the task.

Focus on task delegation rather than task assignment. Do not just delegate the work activity of a task, delegate the responsibility and establish ownership of it and delegate the complete task.

Communicate effectively. Effective delegation means providing the associate with the appropriate information. Ensure they know and understand:

- The required level of performance and result
- The priority and importance of the task
- The constraints of the task
- The decision-making and authority levels needed to complete the task
- The deadline or timeline for completion
- When and how they are to report progress
- How the task fits the with overall goal of the team and department

Follow-up but don’t hover. Once you have provided the communication, training and guidance needed, don’t interfere with progress. Review progress within an agreed reporting schedule and assist only when it is required. Accept that the associate may perform the task differently than you; the focus should be on achieving the needed result. If the associate has not previously provided you with positive results, then set the expectation up front that there will be more follow-up than usual.

Delegate the right to be wrong. Expect mistakes, use them as a coaching and learning opportunity.

Avoid reverse delegation. Accept only complete and accurate work. If you accept incomplete or incorrect work, then you will find you are spending more time correcting or completing the work of others. In addition you will be sending the message that you do not feel they have the capability to perform the task or that work that does not meet requirements is acceptable. Provide additional guidance and training and then have the associate accurately and completely perform the task.

If you find the associate is not capable of performing the task, even with your guidance and training, you will need to make a decision as to how it impacts their performance and your time.
Define and Communicate Levels of Authority: To minimize high-risk mistakes define and communicate checkpoints and levels of authority. The following Delegation – Levels of Authority can be used as a guide:

### Delegation - Levels of Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Get all the facts report them to me and I’ll decide what to do and explain why.</td>
<td>The associate is new to the job/assignment and you need to retain control of the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identify the situation. Determine an alternative solution, the pluses and minuses of each and recommend one for my approval.</td>
<td>The associate is being developed and you want to see how he or she approaches the situation and makes decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Examine the situation. Let me know what you intend to do, but don’t take action until you check with me.</td>
<td>You have confidence in the associate, but do not want action taken without your approval due to constraints or the significance of the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Solve the problem. Let me know what you intend to do, then do it, unless I say not to.</td>
<td>You have full confidence and respect for the associate’s ability and judgment, and only want a final check before action is taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Take action on the matter, and let me know what you did.</td>
<td>You have full confidence in the associate and have no need to be consulted before action is taken. You just want to know the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Take action. No further contact with me is necessary.</td>
<td>You have full confidence and the associate has full authority to act without reporting to you.</td>
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