

## Principles of Effective Delegation

“When in charge ponder. When in trouble delegate. When in doubt mumble.” (Source unknown)  
Delegation is one of the most important management skills that must constantly be improved. It is more than the art of recruiting and wooing willing workers. It is the science of utilizing effective principles that are transferrable, measurable, and repeatable. Delegation is also biblical...

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### I. The Art of Delegation = The Science of Management

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- Moses was rebuked for not delegating (e.g. Story of Metro in Exodus 18) “You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.” Ex. 18:18
- Jesus delegated “Greater things you will do...” John 10
- The Apostle Paul delegated tasks to his less experienced co-workers (e.g. Titus, Timothy, etc.)
- Shepherds are called to equip people for ministry... Ephesians 4:11ff...etc.
- “Delegating means letting others become the experts and hence the best.” (Timothy Firnstahl)

### II. Dumping vs. Delegating

- Dumping = Giving responsibility to others without proper training and active oversight
- Delegating = Giving responsibility to others with proper training and active oversight
- “Delegating work works, provided the one delegating works, too.” (Robert Half)

### III. Effective vs. Ineffective Delegation

- Effective delegation saves time, develops people, grooms successors, motivates and equips others, helps us clarify and refine our own tasks and priorities
- Ineffective delegation causes frustration, de-motivates, confuses, prevents tasks from being completed, discourages, causes the organization to be dependant on new people from the outside.
- “No person will make a great business who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit.” (Andrew Carnegie)

### IV. The Steps of Successful Delegation

Delegated tasks must be specific-measurable-agreed upon-realistic-time bound-ethical-reportable

#### 1. Identify the task

Confirm in your own mind that the task is suitable to be delegated. (Perhaps your supervisor would not approve of you delegating that responsibility.) “Delegate; don’t abrogate.”

#### 2. Clarify the task

Be clear. Be concise. (Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?). Who else needs to know what's going on? Do not leave the person to inform your supervisor or peers of their new responsibility.

#### 3. Select the individual or team

What are your reasons for delegating? Benefits? Liabilities?

#### 4. Assess ability and training needs

Is he/she capable of doing the task? What would they need to have in order to be successful?

#### 5. Explain the reasons for the task being delegated.

Why is this job being delegated? (i.e. Why aren’t you doing it?) Why are you delegating to that person or people? What is its importance and relevance? Where does it fit in the overall scheme of things? How does it fit into the big picture?

#### 6. State the expected results.

What must be achieved? How will the task be measured? How will we know that the task is successfully done.

**7. Consider the resources required for the task to be completed effectively.**

Discuss and agree what is required to get the job done. Consider people, location, premises, equipment, money, materials, other related activities and services.

**8. Agree to specific deadlines, in advance.**

When must the job be finished? If an ongoing duty, when are the review dates? When are the reports due? If the task is complex and has parts or stages, what are the priorities? Methods of checking and controlling must be clearly stated and agreed upon by the other person or this monitoring will seem like interference or lack of trust.

**9. Provide regular support and communicate often.**

Agree on how and when you will communicate (phone, email, memo, face-to-face, etc.)

**10. Give feedback on the results.**

Let the person know how they are doing, and whether they have achieved the expected goals. If not, review with them why things did not go according to plan, and deal with the problems together.

**V. The Levels of Delegation**

The more experienced and reliable the other person is, the more freedom you can give. However, the more critical the task, the more cautious you need to be about extending a lot of freedom without the proper training.

**Basic Delegation**

- |                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. I do it – you watch               | (You ask me questions)    |
| 2. We do it together                 | (I ask you questions)     |
| 3. You do it – I watch               | (I inspect what I expect) |
| 4. You do it alone                   | (I support and encourage) |
| 5. You do it – somebody else watches |                           |

**Advanced Delegation**

Note: Level 1 is the lowest level of delegated freedom. Level 8 is the highest.

**Level 1** "Wait to act until I tell you." or "Do exactly what I say." or "Follow these instructions precisely." Note: There really is no delegated freedom in this level.

**Level 2** "Look into this and tell me the situation. I'll decide what to do." This is asking for investigation and analysis but no recommendation. The person delegating retains responsibility for assessing options prior to making the decision. This level tests the persons ability to assess a situation and tests your level of confidence.

**Level 3** "Look into this and tell me the situation. We'll decide together." This level of delegation encourages and enables the analysis and decision to be a shared process.

**Level 4** "Give me your analysis of the situation (reasons, options, pros and cons) and recommendation. We'll discuss it and I'll back your decision."

**Level 5** "Decide and let me know your decision, then go ahead unless I say not to." Now the other person begins to control the action.

**Level 6** "Decide and take action - let me know what you did (and what happened). "

**Level 7** "Decide and take action. You need not check back with me. I trust you."

**Level 8** "Decide where action needs to be taken and manage the situation accordingly. It's your area of responsibility now." The most freedom that you can give to the other person, and not generally used without formal change of a person's job role.

## **VI. What happens if the expected job doesn't get done according to the plan?**

- Was the agreement and the expectations clear?
- Did something unexpected happen?
- Was this job beyond the person's capability or availability?
- Did I help or hinder the success of this task?

## **VII. What happens if I get blamed for its failure or lack of completion?**

- Delegation means allowing people to make mistakes, even if it means we are called to give an account for that mistake. This requires making a distinction between blame and responsibility
  - Blame – "It's my fault."
  - Responsibility – "It may be somebody else's fault but it is my oversight. Therefore, I am responsible, regardless of who is to blame."
- "You can delegate authority, but you can never delegate responsibility for delegating a task to someone else. If you picked the right man, fine, but if you picked the wrong man, the responsibility is yours -- not his. (Richard Kravfe)

**Concluding Thoughts:** "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it." --Theodore Roosevelt

Any questions?