

## DELEGATION: USING THE POWER OF YOUR TEAM

Delegation is a key tool for the effective management of time, people, and resources. Using the power of your team is a mutually-empowering approach that has many benefits. Delegating supports team members' growth and development, and increases confidence, trust, and accountability.

### Why It Matters

Although it can be tempting to try to do everything yourself, learning to delegate is one of the most important tools a manager has at their disposal. Successful delegation increases:

- **Capacity** – Your success is limited by hours in the day, by location, and by your brilliant, but single, perspective! Delegation allows much more work to be done in less time.
- **Capability** – Empowering and trusting your team to take on responsibilities and tasks will build their skill and expertise. As they overcome challenges and solve problems, they will gain a sense of accomplishment, contribution, and confidence.
- **Diversity** – Delegation leverages others' strengths and brings many perspectives to one task. No one person can be good at everything.

Despite the many benefits of delegation, it can be difficult to put into practice. The two primary obstacles to overcome are **time and trust**.

**Time** - In order to delegate, whether a task or an entire project, you must allow for time to clarify your expectations and provide feedback. How often and how much time is required depends on these factors:

- **Complexity** – Is it a simple task or a strategic initiative? Do you need a PowerPoint for a meeting or a project lead for a new client?
- **Experience and skill** – Do you have the time and need to build capability by challenging someone, or do you want someone who is experienced and can get it done now?
- **Deadlines** – The sooner it is due, the less time there is for learning and/or collaboration. Sometimes there truly is no time for delegation. It's important to know when to do it yourself.

**Trust** - This is often the bigger of the two obstacles because it means letting go. The secret is **you don't need to give up control**. In fact, you can retain control without being controlling by setting clear consulting expectations and decision rights. Consider:

- **Consulting** – Clarify when you want progress reports and when you would like to be consulted, i.e., weekly updates in staff meetings, after the first draft of a project plan, or before the draft goes to the work team for input, etc.
- **Decisions** – Define decision rights. For example, you might require that purchases over 25K be approved by you, or state that you only need approval before a brochure is published, etc. The more experience and skill someone has, the more decision rights you can turn over.

## How It's Done

### When, How, and to Whom to Delegate

To answer these questions, think about the three benefits described above: capacity, capability, and diversity.

**When** – Delegating is a win-win when done well, however, some work should not be delegated to others. Delegate when:

- You can take the time to clarify expectations and give feedback.
- Someone on your team can do it well with little or no supervision (capacity.)
- The project could benefit from a fresh perspective (diversity).
- There is an opportunity to grow and develop another's skills (capability).

**How** – Delegating is a process that requires good communication and being on the same page.

Here are a few key success factors:

- Plan for the time you will need to communicate (more or less depending on experience level).
- Clarify your expectations, deliverables, and deadlines, and ensure the delegate understands and agrees.
- Define decision rights and reporting requirements.
- Stay focused on the benefits you want to gain (capacity, capability, and/or diversity).

**Who** – Deciding who to delegate to is an imperative consideration. Factors to consider include:

- The relevant strengths, experience, knowledge, and skills of the individual.
- The benefits you are seeking (capacity, capability and/or diversity).
- The team member's current workload and if they would need to re-prioritize other work.

## PRACTICE

- Even if you think you can do it better (and we always do), when you delegate and allow others to discover and show off their strengths, you'll be positively rewarded.
- Consider time and trust as real factors when considering delegating work.
- The better you know your team members, including their strengths and developmental needs, the more effective you will be as a manager.
- Build capacity, capabilities, and diversity through delegation to achieve your business goals.
- When you trust, challenge, and invest time in your team members, they will be more motivated to give their best.

## RESOURCES

- [How to Delegate More Effectively in Your Business](#) Forbes
- [More Success by Doing Less](#) The Startup
- Podcast: Coaching for Leaders, [Episode 413: Effective Delegation of Authority](#), with Hassan Osman