

CAREER POWER-UP SERIES

FUTURE-READY MANAGERS



Effective Delegation

Delegation is of one of the most important management skills.

WHY DELEGATE?

Delegation helps managers focus on their most important responsibilities. It helps staff development and growth, saves time, provides for succession planning, is a motivator, provides experience to take on higher responsibilities, and fosters leadership.

WHEN SHOULD YOU DELEGATE A TASK /PROJECT / ACTION?

Criteria:

- If it is not your strength and someone else has more skill
- Requires a lower level of expertise
- Is a task that will recur, in a similar form, in the future
- Will take more time than you can afford and someone else has the time
- Would be a good development opportunity

Check:

- Do you have enough time to delegate the job effectively? (ie what is the timeframe, to provide training, coaching support, opportunities to check progress, and for rework if that is necessary)
- Is this a task that I should delegate? (What is expected for the project/task and quality? What would be the consequences if these are not met?)

KEY STEPS

1 Identify the task (given the above)

2 Select the individual or team

What are your reasons for delegating to this person or team? What are they going to get out of it? What are you going to get out of it?

Some criteria to consider

The experience, knowledge and skills of the individual as they apply to the delegated task.

- What knowledge, skills and attitude does the person already have?
- Do you have time and resources to provide any training needed?

The individual's preferred work style.

- How independent is the person?
- What does he or she want from his or her job?
- What are his or her long-term goals and interest, and how do these align with the work proposed?

The current workload of this person.

- Does the person have time to take on more work?
- Will delegating this task require reshuffling of other responsibilities and workloads

Gender, cultural and diversity factors.

Delegate to the lowest possible organizational level. The people who are closest to the work are best suited for the task, because they have the most intimate knowledge of the detail of everyday work. This also increases workplace efficiency and helps to develop people.

3 Explain the reasons why it is important

- ❑ Explain why the job or responsibility is being delegated to the person or people?
- ❑ What is its importance and relevance?
- ❑ Where does it fit into the bigger picture or strategies/plans?
- ❑ How it can contribute to the person's success?

4 Describe task and state required results

- ❑ What is the task? What must be achieved?
- ❑ Clarify understanding by getting feedback from the other person.
- ❑ How will the task be measured? Make sure they know how you intend to decide that the job is being successfully done.

5 Clarify and give the person the authority they need to do the job.

Where are the lines of authority, responsibility and accountability?

Should the person:

- Wait to be told what to do?
 - Ask what to do?
 - Assess and decide with the supervisor?
 - Recommend what should be done, and then get approval to act?
 - Recommend what should be done, and then act (unless told otherwise)?
 - Recommend, act, and report results – immediately or periodically?
 - Recommend, act and manage fully? (Usually a change in job role is required here)
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- ❑ Match the amount of responsibility with the amount of authority while remembering you are ultimately accountable.
 - ❑ Allow the person to contribute their own ideas on how to proceed.
 - ❑ Be aware of and sensitive to gender, cultural, diversity and disability access factors. Make sure others know the person has the authority to complete this task.
 - ❑ Think about who else needs to know what's going on and inform them.
 - ❑ Alert the person about any sensitive matters of politics or protocol.
 - ❑ Inform your own supervisors if the task is important, and of sufficient profile.

6 Consider resources required

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

7 Agree deadlines

When must the job be finished? Or if an ongoing duty, when are the review dates? When are the reports due? And if the task is complex and has parts or stages, what are the priorities? Check for understanding by asking the other person to:

- Summarize their understanding of the task, expected results, checkpoints and deadlines.
- Encourage the person to ask questions.

This helps facilitate success, confidence and buy-in.

Methods of checking and review must be agreed with the other person. Failing to agree this in advance will cause this monitoring to seem like interference or lack of trust.

8 After Delegating: Provide ongoing support, communication and feedback on results.

- ❑ Follow-up at agreed times or task review points.
- ❑ Give positive and constructive feedback.
- ❑ Make yourself available.
- ❑ Accept risk—avoid perfectionism.
- ❑ Limit standards to what is acceptable and expect a learning curve.
- ❑ Let the person know how they are doing, and whether they have achieved their aims. If not, review with them why things did not go to plan and discuss challenges and problems.
- ❑ Back the staff member if there are mistakes and failure, and pass on the credit for success.
- ❑ Focus on results – on what is accomplished rather the work that should be done.
- ❑ Allow freedom for the person to use their own methods and processes as this facilitates success and trust.
- ❑ Balance the need to provide space for someone to do the work and your need to monitor. Avoid micro-management.