



MANAGEMENT CONSULTING SERVICES

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DELEGATION

“It’s a lot easier and faster if I just do it myself.” I’m sure you have all said this at least once in your career. I know I have and this approach is OK if you are willing to accept that it will severely limit your productivity. It will also keep you engaged in a myriad of low priority, non-energized activities. On the other hand, you can choose to learn how to effectively delegate to others and exponentially expand your productivity and effectiveness.

Effective delegation is perhaps the single most powerful high-leverage activity there is. It enables you to direct your focus and energy to other high-leverage activities that only you can do. This is the primary goal of anyone who aspires to a manager position. Until you master the art of effective delegation you will be limited to being a single producer.

If you dissect any firm you will see that those individuals who are in the top management positions are those who rely upon their ability to effectively delegate to others. Large firms, especially in this industry, started as small firms that grew larger over time. Employees can develop professionally if they will take initiative when opportunities are provided, accept responsibility and be willing to be held accountable for their performance of the assignments delegated to them. This in turn affords the firm the opportunity to grow by expanding the decision-making management capability of its staff.

Consider two (2) types of delegation:
“Gopher” and “Stewardship”

Gopher Delegation is telling employees what to do, how to do it, when it needs to be done and then sitting at their elbow and making sure they are doing what you asked. The opportunity for the employee to develop professionally using this type of delegation is limited.

Stewardship Delegation is focused on results, not methods. It allows the other person to choose how to accomplish the assignment and holds them responsible for the results of their efforts (accountability).

Stewardship delegation requires trust and trust is the highest form of human motivation. It brings out the best in people. But it takes time and patience.

Admittedly, this involves more time than doing the task yourself. This is time well invested, because you are not only investing in the growth and development of an employee, but the firm too. In this process, you are demonstrating your confidence in your staff, which raises their self-esteem and increases your productivity leverage. A 100% win-win proposition for you, for them and for the firm.

Stewardship delegation involves more than contribution, it requires commitment. Keep in mind the distinction between contribution and commitment. (e.g.: Breakfast: Bacon & Eggs – the chicken is making a contribution, but the pig has made a total commitment.)

The following are the essential components of an effective delegation process:

1. Identify the appropriate person(s) to whom you will delegate.
2. Clearly communicate (until understood) the full details of the assignment being delegated, the desired results and any deliverables to be produced.
3. Explain any guidelines/parameters they will need to operate within, including any restrictions or “failure-paths” to keep them out of trouble and to avoid potential problems.
4. Identify all known available resources to assist in successfully completing the assignment, including yourself.
5. Set up accountability standards of performance which define the consequences for exceptional vs. poor performance.
6. Define the level of initiative/authority involved appropriate to the delegated assignment.
7. Create a methodology for monitoring progress to ensure that the delegated assignment is “on-track” and to alert you if it gets off-track.
8. Define a means for measuring the successful completion of the assignment. Basically, has met expectations for the desired results.

So, to enhance your leverage, increase your discretionary time and provide opportunities for growth and development of staff, learn to master the above steps to effective delegation and “only do what only you can do.”