

Effective Delegation

Many managers operate on the mistaken belief that they have enough time to do everything. This is indeed a myth, because we are working in an era where what is asked of us by stakeholders is typically greater than our own personal capabilities. Those managers who survive and succeed eventually learn they have at least 3 options for dealing with demand overload – *do it, delegate it or defer it*. But delegation does *not* mean abdicating your responsibilities.

Delegation is one means by which you as a manager can achieve results through empowering and motivating your staff to perform some of your tasks, for which you still retain accountability. Effective delegation offers many potential benefits to all of the partiesincluding cost-efficiency, trust building, improved flexibility, succession planning insights and the development of staff. Never-the-less, many managers must initially overcome some anxiety associated with delegation.

• Remain Alert For The Opportunity For Delegate

As a manager you must be able to recognise opportunities that lend themselves to the delegation of responsibility. Regularly, you may find it worthwhile to ask yourself the following questions about tasks for which you are accountable.

1. Can someone do the task better than you can - are you capitalising on your staff's expertise?
2. Is there someone who, whilst doing the task slightly differently from you, or in slightly more time, can still achieve an acceptable level of performance?
3. Is there someone who would benefit from doing the task, in terms of their development?

How To Delegate

Delegating effectively is a two-way process, involving both the manager and the employee. It requires both parties reach a common and shared understanding of:....

- * the nature and scope of the task involved
- * the results to be achieved, and the method to be used for assessing performance
- * the time scale for completion, and the timing of interim checkpoints with the manager
- * the nature and extent of authority that can be exercised by the employee.

Developing your ability to delegate effectively takes time, practice and reflectionthese guidelines may perhaps help you :

- ✓ Find the right person - in terms of their existing skills, potential capabilities, attitude, interests
- ✓ Consult first: seek input from your staff in deciding what tasks could be delegated.
- ✓ Think ahead - don't wait for a crisis to occur and then delegate - try to delegate in advance.
- ✓ Delegate whole tasks: where possible, delegate a complete task to an employee, rather than just a small section of a task.
- ✓ Take sufficient time to clearly explain what outcomes are expected from the employee.
- ✓ Take your time: especially if you have been under-delegating or are dealing with less experienced staff. A gradual transfer of responsibility will allow both you and your staff member to learn what is involved.
- ✓ Learn to let go: If you know that your employee is both confident and capable with the task, then leave it to them - however if you are not yet sure, or if you are using it as a development exercise, then make sure that you agree some checkpoints to review & guide their progress
- ✓ Ensure your staff member receives due acknowledgement and credit on effective completion.