

delegation

delegating authority skills, tasks and the process of effective delegation

Delegation is an extremely important management skill. In this article, we will discuss the logical rules and techniques that will help you to delegate well (and will help you to help your manager when you are being delegated a task or new responsibility - delegation is a two-way process!). Effective delegation saves managers valuable time, develops you people, grooms a successor, and motivates. Conversely poor delegation will cause you frustration, demotivates and confuses the other person and fails to achieve the task or purpose itself. So, it's a management skill that is worth improving. For delegation to work in this document we will discuss the simple steps to follow if you want to get delegation right, with different levels of delegation freedom that you can offer.

This guide deals with general delegation principles and process, which is applicable to individuals and teams, or to specially formed groups of people for individual projects (including 'virtual teams').

Delegation is a helpful aid for succession planning, personal development - and seeking and encouraging promotion. It's how we grow in the job - delegation enables all of us to gain experience to take on more responsibility.

Delegation is vital for effective leadership. Effective delegation is crucial for management and leadership succession. For the successor, and for the manager or leader too: the main task of a manager in a growing thriving organization is ultimately to develop a successor. When this happens, everyone can move on thereby taking on greater tasks and more responsibility. When it fails to happen the succession and progression becomes dependent on bringing in new people from outside.

Delegation can be used to develop your people and yourself - delegation is not just a management technique. Delegation is a tool to free up the boss's time. Of course, there is a right way to do it. These delegation tips and techniques are useful for bosses - and for anyone

seeking or being given delegated responsibilities.

As a giver of delegated tasks, you must ensure delegation happens properly. Just as significantly, as the recipient of delegated tasks you have the opportunity to 'manage upwards' and suggest improvements to the delegation process and understanding - especially if your boss could use the help.

Managing the way, you receive and agree to do delegated tasks is one of the central skills of 'managing upwards'. Therefore, while this article is essentially written from the manager's standpoint, the principles are just as useful for people being managed or supervised.

delegation and SMART, or SMARTER

Remember this simple delegation rule is the [SMART acronym](#)! Better still, SMARTER. It's a quick checklist for proper delegation. Delegated tasks must be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Agreed
- Realistic
- Timebound
- Ethical
- Recorded

Traditional interpretations of the SMARTER acronym use 'Exciting' or 'Enjoyable', however, although a high level of motivation often results when a person achieves and is given recognition for a particular delegated task. This in itself can be exciting and enjoyable, in truth, let's be honest, it is not always possible to ensure that all delegated work is truly 'exciting' or 'enjoyable' for the recipient. More importantly, the 'Ethical' aspect is fundamental to everything that we do. There are other variations of meaning.

The [delegation and review form](#), can be useful for the delegation process.

The [Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum](#) model provides extra guidance on delegating freedom to, and developing, a team.

The [Tuckman 'Forming, Storming, Norming Performing' model](#) is

particularly helpful when delegating to teams and individuals within teams.

Below are:

The [steps of successful delegation](#) - step-by-step guide.

The [levels of delegation freedom](#) - choose which is most appropriate for any given situation.

the steps of successful delegation

1 Define the task

Confirm in your own mind that the task is suitable to be delegated. Does it meet the criteria for delegating?

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?

3 Assess ability and training needs

Is the other person or team of people capable of doing the task? Do they understand what needs to be done? If not, you can't delegate.

4 Explain the reasons

You must explain why the job or responsibility is being delegated. And why to that person or people? What is its importance and relevance? Where does it fit in the overall scheme of things?

5 State required results

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.

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?

At this point you may need to confirm understanding with the other person of the previous points, getting ideas and interpretation. As well as showing you that the job can be done, this helps to reinforce commitment.

Methods of checking and controlling 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 Support and communicate

Think about who else needs to know what's going on, and inform them. Involve the other person in considering this so they can see beyond the issue at hand. Do not leave the person to inform your own peers of their new responsibility. Warn the person about any awkward matters of politics or protocol. Inform your own boss if the task is important, and of sufficient profile.

9 Feedback on results

It is essential to let the person know how they are doing, and whether they have achieved their aims. If not, you must review with them why things did not go to plan, and deal with the problems. You must absorb the consequences of failure, and pass on the credit for success.