



Resilience Building Resource Hub
A Shilp Initiative

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HOW CAN YOU DELEGATE TO DEVELOP YOUR TEAM?

Do you find it hard to delegate tasks to your team members? Do you feel it is easier to do a task on your own rather than delegate? Do you want to get better at delegation?

If yes, this is the right place for you. In this self-paced learning module, we will talk about delegation and its benefits.

Delegation is the act of empowering someone else by giving them additional responsibilities. Leaders are always delegating to their team members, sometimes consciously and sometimes without giving any thought. When used effectively, delegation can be an excellent development tool for your team members. Happy reading!

This module will help you understand:

- the importance of delegation
- ways to delegate effectively
- self-assessment tools to help assess yourself
- additional resources to help you get to an expert level
- self-reflection and action planning
- some DIY tips to get you started on this journey

So, let's get started!

What is Delegation?

Delegation is the assignment of responsibility or authority to another person (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities. However, the person who delegates the work remains accountable for the outcome of the delegated work.

Delegation is an important leadership process, yet few leaders are able to delegate effectively. When done right, delegation can empower your team members, foster trust, build team members' capabilities, and free up time for you to focus on more strategic issues.

How to delegate effectively

1. Decide what and how you will delegate. That is, you can delegate by task, project, or function.
 - a. Delegating by task
This is the easiest approach and a good place to start. You assign specific tasks or subtasks to staff members.
 - b. Delegating by project
A project involves a group of tasks designed to achieve a specific objective. Delegating by project increases the scope of the delegation assignment. It requires a staff member who can handle a wider range of responsibilities.
 - c. Delegating by function
If you have large numbers of direct reports, you may choose to delegate assignments by function. "Function" refers to groups of tasks and projects that are related to one ongoing activity — such as project management, training, or fundraising. In this delegation approach, each function is delegated to one staff member, who provides you with regular updates on activities within that function.
2. Decide what to delegate.
 - a. Assess your workload and identify tasks, projects, or functions that don't require your specific set of skills and authority.
 - b. Identify work that could easily be done by other staff members or outside resources.
 - c. Identify work that could be done by others with a minimum of coaching or on-the-job training.
 - d. Identify work that could be completed by a staff member if additional training or coaching were provided by you or one of his or her peers.
 - e. If a task, project, or function is too important to delegate to someone else, think about sharing responsibility. You may be able to subdivide work so you handle one part and delegate the rest.
3. Be aware of when not to delegate – avoid delegating if:
 - a. You can't precisely explain what you want the other person to do. If you can't articulate what problem needs to be solved or what exactly needs to be done, it is best to wait to assign responsibility for the work until you can clarify these things.
 - b. You'll put your own development or ability to lead in jeopardy by delegating. For example, suppose you need to develop your interpersonal skills so you can interact more effectively with your team members. Avoid delegating work that requires extensive interaction with your team, such as leading meetings or talking with employees to learn about their career goals.
 - c. You'll undermine a project's success by delegating. For instance, let's say you have extensive experience in project management and you were hired for these skills. Your organisation is working on a new project and the project management plan will prove critical to its success. In this case, you should retain responsibility for defining the strategic elements of the plan, but you can delegate its tactical components.
4. Decide whom to delegate to
It is usually best to delegate responsibility for an entire task, project, or function to one person rather than dividing it among a number of people. This helps eliminate confusion. It also encourages initiative, problem solving, and a sense of ownership of the assigned work. If the person then involves others in the assignment, everyone still knows who is ultimately responsible for the outcome.

- a. First, analyse the work to determine the skills that are required.
 - What kinds of thinking skills are needed for this job? Does the work require problem-solving ability, logical thinking, decision making, planning, or creative design?
 - What are the activities that must be performed, and what systems or equipment will be needed? Do the activities include creating a new database, organizing, training, or coding?
 - What interpersonal skills are needed to complete the assignment? Will the assignee need to speak with suppliers, negotiate for resources, or consult with experts?

- b. Next, select the right person

Given the skills required to handle the assignment, ask yourself which of your direct reports is the right person for the job. Compare the skills required with the characteristics and capabilities of each of your staff members.

Consider these factors:

- Ask yourself who has shown initiative and requested new challenges, and has the desire for development that the work can address.
- Avoid choosing an employee whose work on another project would be interrupted.
- Try to delegate tasks among all staff members, to avoid overburdening a particular person or giving the impression of favouritism.
- If an employee would need a lot of assistance and you don't have enough time to provide it, that individual may not be the best choice.
- Avoid overloading new employees with delegated assignments until they're comfortable with their jobs.
- You can also consider the possibility of dividing the work, if a project is easy to divide. For instance, if it has a writing and a design component, and there are individuals on your team that have the required skills, splitting up the work may be a good approach for matching the right person to the task.

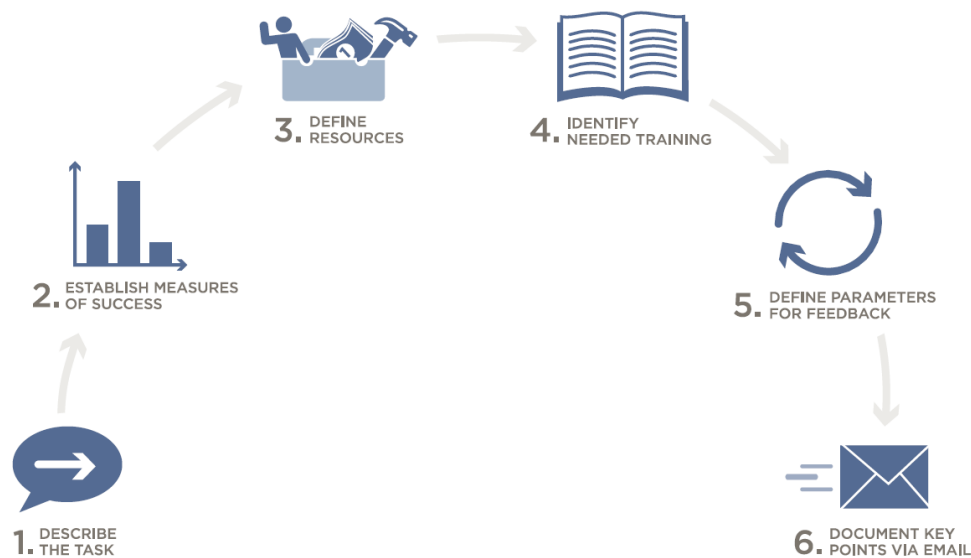
5. Communicate the assignment

Once you've identified the right person for the delegated work, communicate the proposition. If at all possible, do this in a face-to-face meeting. If that's not possible, use video- or web conferencing technologies so you and your employee can see each other and review materials relevant to the delegated assignment together.

When explaining a task, open communication and trust are critical. To achieve both:

- a. Clearly describe the task, project, or function you're delegating.
 - Define the purpose and importance of the assignment.
 - Review the scope of the employee's responsibilities.
 - Identify other personnel who will be involved, if applicable, and describe their roles.
 - Discuss feasible deadlines for completion.
 - Pass along any information the assignee needs to get started.
- b. Establish agreed-upon standards of performance and measures of success.
 - Set firm benchmarks for such things as quality, time, and cost.
- c. Define the resources and support that will be available.
 - Identify any materials, equipment, space, tools, and other resources needed to complete the assignment, and confirm their availability.

- If necessary, allocate additional staff to assist in meeting the assigned goals.
 - Ask the employee what support he thinks he may need from you throughout the assignment.
- d. Identify the need for any special training or coaching, and describe how it will be given.
- If the assignment requires the staff member to develop new skills, agree on an appropriate plan for training.
 - Discuss the need for coaching, and set up a schedule agreeable to both parties to provide the needed support.
 - Agree on a date to review progress, and assess the need for additional training or continued coaching.
- e. Agree on parameters for follow-up and feedback.

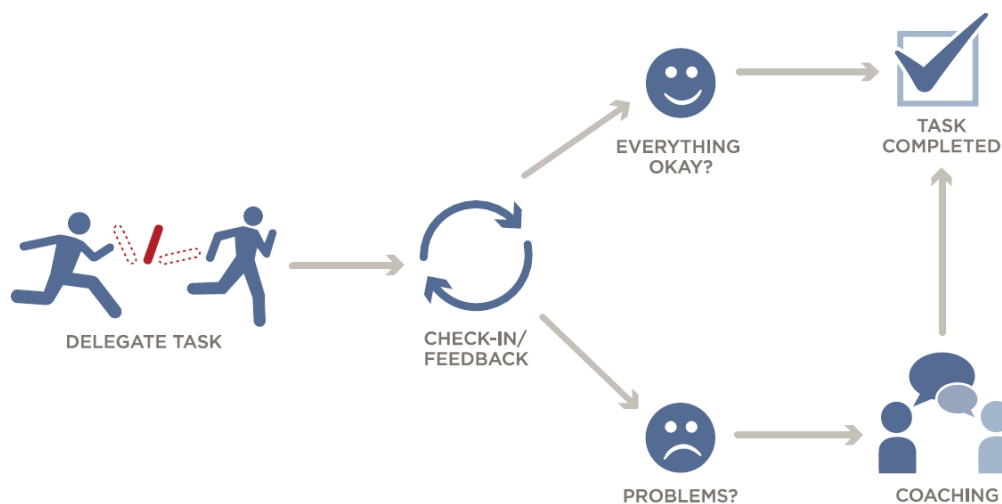


- Establish a system for reporting progress regularly such as monthly reports, or weekly or monthly meetings.
- Agree on parameters for providing ongoing feedback as needed. Your feedback will be seen as less intrusive if you and your staff member concur ahead of time about when and how you will provide it.
- Determine how and when you will become involved if the expected goals of the delegated work are at risk or if other major problems arise.

- f. Document the key points.
- Follow up the meeting by documenting key points in writing.
6. Monitor and support the work
- a. Track delegated assignments to monitor progress, ensure the employee succeeds, and watch out for early signs of trouble, especially when deadlines are missed or serious mistakes start to occur.
- Depending on the number and complexity of the assignments you've delegated, you can use one or more of the following techniques for monitoring:

- Work updates to a project wiki.
- Quick, standing meetings to deliver updates and handle questions.
- Progress updates during regular staff meetings.
- Weekly status reports on the delegated assignment.
- Project management and tracking software.

- b. Provide support when needed, but without micromanaging the person. Remember that your employee's completion of the task is more important than your idea of how it "should" be completed To strike the right balance:
- Review resource needs and ensure that resources are available.
 - Continue supplying needed information, such as reference materials or reports.
 - Make clear when you want to get involved; for example, when it looks like a commitment won't be met or when a major problem arises.
 - After work begins, intercede with advice or directions only if the person asks.
 - Point out any difficulties you anticipate based on your experience with similar projects, and offer ideas for handling them.



7. Handle reverse delegation

"Reverse delegation" is when someone you've delegated an assignment to wants to return the job to you or expects you to solve problems that come up.

When you see signs of reverse delegation, resist any temptation to take back the delegated assignment or solve the problems your employee brings to you. Instead, take the opportunity to build trust and confidence in your employee:

- Provide positive reinforcement for the work done so far.
- Help her assess the situation.
- Confirm your confidence in the employee's ability to make decisions.
- Encourage her to come up with a solution.
- Provide coaching as needed to help her strengthen her new skills. (See the module on *Coaching*.)

Self-assessment and Practice tools

1. How Well Do You Delegate?
Take this assessment to help you understand where you stand with regard to delegation.
Duration: 10 mins
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_60.htm
2. Delegation Self-Assessment
This questionnaire will help you assess how well you delegate tasks to your team.
Duration: 15 mins
<https://consult-smp.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Delegation.pdf>

3. Delegation Steps Worksheet

This form prompts you to think about the important aspects of effective delegation. For simple tasks each of these aspects may be a simple mental check off. For more complex tasks it may be beneficial to actually fill out the form in conjunction with the person to whom you are delegating.

Duration: 20 mins

<https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/36893/delsteps.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Additional Resources:

Delegating: The Only Time Management Tip You Need:

The purpose of delegating is to enable you to focus on your core genius, the tasks and projects that ONLY you can do; the revenue generators. If you are being busy with many of the back end, admin tasks, you not using your expertise to the best of your ability; thereby further impairing your business advancement and opportunities. You're potentially hindering your own growth. Read this article to understand how you can delegate to manage your time better

Duration: 10 mins

Article

<https://www.business2community.com/leadership/delegating-time-management-tip-need-01754727>

Delegation Of Authority: Why Is It Important?

Delegation helps divide the workload and encourages employees to be more productive because they're not overburdened. Read this article to understand how delegating authority makes teamwork more efficient.

Duration: 15 mins

Article

<https://harappa.education/harappa-diaries/delegation-of-authority>

Effective Delegation of Authority, with Hassan Osman

In this podcast episode, Hassan and Dave discuss the three stages of delegation, the critical importance of planning, and how to leverage delegation as a development opportunity.

Duration: 40 mins

Podcast

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcY5wb2RjYXN0bWlycm9yLmNvbS9jb2FjaGluZy1mb3ltbGVhZGVycw/episode/aHR0cHM6Ly9jb2FjaGluZ2ZvcmxlYWRIcnMuY29tLz9wb3N0X3R5cGU9cG9kY2FzdCZwPTQ5OTkz?sa=X&ved=0CAcQuIEEahgKEwi4gPec897tAhUAAAAAHQAAAAAQggQ>

Why Delegating Doesn't Work

Delegation usually doesn't work because the person who is delegating is making a few mistakes. When you think about what needs to be delegated you need to look a couple of different things. A lot of people struggle with prioritizing and determining which tasks to focus on. This episode helps you create a more efficient way to delegate effectively using a four step delegation system

Duration: 12 mins

Podcast

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuc3ByZWFrZXluY29tL3Nob3cvMTk3Nzc5Ni9lcGlzb2Rlcy9mZWVk/episode/aHR0cHM6Ly9hcGkuc3ByZWFrZXluY29tL2VwaXNvZGUvMjMjMjAzMTQ>

Self-reflection and action planning:

1. Before you define an action plan, rate your current ability to delegate.
If you're not sure about your ratings, consider asking your peers or seniors to provide their observations regarding your current abilities. [Rating: 1 = Low, 5 = High.]

a) I effectively determine what to delegate and whom to delegate it to.	①	②	③	④	⑤
b) I communicate delegated assignments effectively and secure commitment to the work.	①	②	③	④	⑤
c) I monitor and support assignments I've delegated to my direct reports.	①	②	③	④	⑤

2. What proficiency level do you want to reach in the next six months?
3. Identify 2-3 specific things that you will do over the next six months to practice becoming better at delegating.

DIY Tools:

1. For the next task that you consider delegating, analyze the capability and willingness of the potential people to whom you can delegate and then assign the task.
2. Write down all the tasks that you currently perform. Then categorize them under: 1) Cannot delegate; 2) Can delegate with some training and support; 3) Can delegate immediately. Try and move items out of category 1 into the other two.
3. Do not try and take on tasks that can be delegated to your team. Identify potential members in your team to whom you can delegate work
4. 3 steps to decide what to delegate:
 - a. Identify tasks only you can do. Take a look at your workload and identify tasks, projects, or functions that require your specific skills or level of authority.
 - b. Sort the rest. Take a look at everything else on your list and determine what others can easily do, what requires coaching for others to do, and what needs outsourcing.
 - c. Keep what makes you happy. Don't give away the things that you most enjoy even if others can do them. Delegation should increase your job satisfaction, not detract from it."

“The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling while they do it.”

– Theodore Roosevelt, 26th U.S. President

From a young age, I learned to focus on the things I was good at and delegate to others what I was not good at. That's how Virgin is run. Fantastic people throughout the Virgin Group run our businesses, allowing me to think creatively and strategically.

- Richard Branson

Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere as long as the policy you've decided upon is being carried out.

- Ronald Reagan