

Delegation

why?

To learn from the assignment and share the workload with you

when

Most appropriate at the start of a project or task

how

Read and/or discuss during coaching session or other meeting.

who

Staff, peers, boss, teammates, or others



"Delegation is one of the most precious gifts leaders must choose to give."

Max De Pree



Cautions:

- Lack of preparation prior to delegation
- Unclear expectations
- Poorly defined authority
- Inadequate time for questions and troubleshooting

best
resource

De Pree, M. (1992)
Leadership Jazz
New York, NY: Doubleday
pp. 151 - 166

Delegation

Levels of delegated authority

What it might sound like:

Comments

Level One: "Look into the situation. Get the facts and report them to me. I'll decide what to do."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Be sure to communicate the form in which you need to receive the information and the timeframe.3. Ask how the associate will research the issue; support their ideas, then add your recommendations.
Level Two: "Identify the problem. Determine alternative solutions and the pluses and minuses of each. Recommend one for my approval."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Be sure to communicate the form in which you need to receive the information and the timeframe.3. In Level Two, you are asking the associate to do some digging in; to view a situation from his/her unique perspective and perhaps, others' perspectives.4. A peer's expertise might be tapped to help the associate develop the advantages and disadvantages of a particular approach.5. Ask: What assumptions will underlie your decision? Then, add your assumptions to complete the list. Affirm the associate's thinking and ideas.
Level Three: "Examine the issues. Let me know what you intend to do, but don't take action until you check with me."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Be sure to communicate the form in which you need to receive the information and the timeframe.3. Level Three puts the associate in an <u>implementation role</u>.4. During the delegation meeting, be sure to check whether or not the associate will feel comfortable in an implementation role. For reasons you may not be aware of, the associate may be unable to assist during implementation.5. Ask: "What assumptions will underlie your decision and implementation plans?" Then, add your assumptions.

Delegation

Levels of delegated authority cont...

What it might sound like:

Comments

Level Four: "Solve the problem. Let me know what you intend to do, then do it unless I say no."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Be sure to communicate the form in which you need to receive the information and the timeframe.3. Similar to Level Three, but the associate will need some expressed authority over others.4. Ask: "What assumptions will underlie your decision and implementation plan?"5. Level Four requires staying in touch. An associate may proceed with implementation, thinking he/she has your approval when in fact you have lost touch with the schedule or the person, or both.
Level Five: "Take action on this matter and let me know what you did."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Be sure to communicate the form in which you need to receive the information and the timeframe.3. Level Five delegation requires confidence on both the delegator's and associate's part: The delegator is confident the assignment will be handled competently; the associate is confident the delegator is truly "letting go" of the assignment and will not second guess his or her decisions later, or try to take the project back. Failure is not an option.4. This level is generally inappropriate for a project or assignment that has been delegated to you.
Level Six: "Take action. No further contact with me is necessary."	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide the context, reason, and potential impact of the assignment.2. Rarely would a manager delegate at this level without having had considerable and close working experience with the associate.

Delegation

Identifying tasks to be delegated or not delegated

Within the project or team, delegate when...

- Extra resources are needed to meet a deadline.
- An opportunity develops to involve new employees.
- An opportunity develops to broaden ownership and involvement in a project.
- Ask, "What do I do, that you could do, with a little help from me?"

Delegate cross functionally when...

- The impact of a project affects more than one department and when other departments have a potential stake in the outcome.
- Other functions have more knowledge or experience than yours does. The delegated assignment now has the potential of becoming a learning opportunity for you or your group.
- The project is highly experimental or exploratory.
- The project has significant ownership and involvement in a company-wide objective.

Identifying tasks that should not be delegated...

- Tasks that are clearly your responsibility or that have been delegated to you with the expectation that you will complete them.
- Assignments that you don't understand or have not taken the time to define and plan.
- Tasks that require the associate to evaluate the performance of another employee or work unit.
- Tasks with unclear authority levels.

Delegation

Matching people and projects: questions to help

- By job role or responsibility, who should be doing the task?
- Is someone else's work already overlapping with the goals and tasks of this project-or heading in the same direction?
- Who has an interest in this assignment? Who, for their own reasons, might participate?
- Who has the required knowledge? Who has the skills, if not to carry out the entire assignment, to complete earlier or later parts of it? Smaller chunks of it?
- Who might assist your project in a review-only capacity? In a consulting capacity? In a support capacity?
- Who would find the work challenging? Who would this assignment help develop?
- Who has the time? Whose schedule might this task allow for?
- Whose supervisor is likely to support this assignment?
- Who have I not asked to assist with a project recently?

Key skill for delegating effectively: ask questions!

1. What is your experience with...?
2. How have you done in the past?
3. What might you learn from...?
4. What interests you about...?
5. Where might you encounter an obstacle? How will you handle it?
6. Who might be a resource?
7. How would you proceed?
8. What do you need from me?
9. What part can you pilot test and then bring to me?

Delegation

Monitoring the delegated assignment

Be available but don't hover. Demonstrate confidence.

Check in early. Take an early reading if you are uncertain of the person's capabilities or understanding of the project. Schedule a progress report early in the assignment.

Be responsive. Read and comment briefly on progress reports that you have requested. Provide balanced feedback (positive and constructive) in a timely manner. Offer specific comments on what you are and are not satisfied with.

Encourage self-assessment and evaluation. Ask the associate: How do you think it's going? What are you learning?

Review the schedule. If you have concerns about slippage, do a schedule check with the associate. Once a project plan is agreed upon, the associate has the responsibility for deadlines. Be understanding, but firm.

Problem solving. Delegate some or all of the assignment's problem solving to the associate. Encourage the associate to identify blocks, generate options and recommend solutions for obstacles encountered. Ask for re-work if the work has been performed poorly or is incomplete. Resist the temptation to problem solve. Avoid "taking the assignment back" to figure it out or to do it yourself.

Dealing with incomplete assignments.

- If a peer associate must return the project due to competing priorities, ask if he or she can suggest someone else to assist with the assignment, or
- Gracefully thank the person for the effort they have already put in, and ask that the associate meets with you to review remaining steps; then,
- Find another resource to complete the project or complete it yourself.

Reward and recognize!

- Ask the associate to present the results of the decision to the management team or at a staff meeting.
- Publicly thank others for their good decisions, results and outline for others how their decision-making process matched the organization's goals.
- Re-read your employees resumes. Keep an inventory of skills so you know their strengths.

The best delegators are crystal clear on what and when, and more open to how.



- Debrief the process and express sincere appreciation