Effective delegation

Effective Delegation

Delegation is the act of assigning tasks and responsibilities, together with the necessary authority to carry them out, to your employees. Effective delegation can save you time and motivate your team by demonstrating that you trust them and value their abilities.

Common mistakes managers make when delegating:

• Don't give enough freedom

• Don't communicate clearly

• Aren't open to new ideas

How to delegate.

First concentrate on the most important matters yourself. You should be doing activities that only you can do (that involve a high level of skill) and, ideally, that you enjoy doing. When delegating, set broad controls and allow your team to make mistakes.

1. Communicate clearly

Take the time to make your requirements known to your team member. Give a clear picture of the results you expect, the time limits involved and the authority being transferred to that team member. Also make sure other people in the organisation know about the delegation so they can support it.

2. Encourage participation

Employees are least satisfied and least motivated when they can't inject their own ideas into the project. They need to be able to display their own talents and

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ingenuity. Encourage an environment that welcomes and acknowledges input from all team members.

3. Examine results not methods

An effective delegator needs to accept differing approaches to achieve results. Since no two people approach a solution in exactly the same way, you need to concentrate on whether the desired results are being achieved – not whether they are being achieved your way. A poor delegator says, "This is what we want to achieve and this is how we will proceed". An

effective delegator says, "Here is the result we have agreed we want to accomplish – give me your best recommendations as to how we can get those results.

4. Show trust

Allow your team members to get the job done without micro managing. Excessive checking will convince the employee that they are not really responsible for the job.

5. Delegate credit only

You cannot delegate blame. Remember that you bear the final responsibility for the actions of your team.

6. Know your team

You need to know what and how much you can delegate to a person. You should gradually increase the level of responsibility and importance of the tasks as results are successfully achieved.

Things to avoid:

- Don't let the chain of command get too long. If there are too many levels of responsibility some information will never trickle all the way to the bottom.
- Don't ask one subordinate to report to two people. It will be impossible for the subordinate to decide whose work comes first.
- Don't make fuzzy job assignments. Grey areas between positions simply invite overlap, conflict and duplication of effort.
- Don't be too rigid. Try to maintain flexibility to provide for situations that inevitably crop up and need nonstandard solutions.

Exercise

Make a list of three things you are doing today that you should be delegating. Identify who you will delegate them to and write down how you will go about doing so. Then delegate.

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