



12 Rules of Delegation

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Delegation is one of the most important skills. Technical professionals, team and business leaders, managers, and executives all need to develop good delegation skills. There are many rules and techniques that help people to delegate. Good delegation saves money, time, builds people and team skills, grooms successors and motivates people. Poor delegation sucks! Ask any employee. It causes frustration, demotivates and confuses people and teams. It is important to develop good delegation skills. These twelve rules of delegation should help you out.

1. Delegation is a two-way street. That's right! Delegation is meant to develop you and the people you work with. Consider what you are delegating and why you are delegating it. Are you delegating to build people, get rid of work you don't like to do or to develop someone?
2. To be a good delegator you need to let go. You can't control everything so let go and trust the people you work with. Hand over those tasks to other people that are stopping you from reaching your full potential.
3. Create a delegation plan. Use a delegation matrix that shows your people and the main task components and how you can develop your people and get the work done. This will help your people understand the expectations being set.
4. Define the tasks that must be done. Make sure that the task can be delegated and is suitable to be delegated. Some things you have to do and others can be done by someone else. Be clear on what the task is and is not. People like clarity when being delegated to. So ensure you are clear. If you are not clear your people will not be and you will be disappointed. Worst, your people will feel like failures. Not cool!
5. Select and assign the individual or team that should take on the task. Be clear on your reasons for delegating the task to that person or team. Be honest with yourself. Make sure you answer the question what are they going to get out of it and what you are going to get out of it? Think of it as listening to the radio station WII-FM (what's in it for them). It's a good motivator.

6. Make sure you consider ability and training needs. The importance of the task may need to be defined. Can the people or team do the task? Do they understand what needs to be done? If not, you can't delegate it to them. If resources are an issue, sit your team down and move things around or develop a mentoring-support program that enables your people.



7. Clearly explain the reason for the task or work that must be done. Discuss why the job is being delegated and how it fits into the scheme of things. Don't be afraid to negotiate points that are discussed when appropriate. Don't say it is because we are told to do it. For your people to own the task you must own the task. Reframe and rephrase it so you have ownership.
8. State the required outcomes and results. Answer questions like what must be achieved, what the measurements will be, and clarify how you intend to decide that the job was successfully done.
9. Be prepared to discuss the required resources with the individual and team. Common challenges arise with every person and team including people, location, time, equipment, materials and money. These are important concerns and should be discussed and solved creatively. However, sometimes it is simply as it must be done. Be prepared.
10. Get agreement on timeline and deadlines. Include a status reporting feature to ensure things are getting done. When is the job to be done? What are the ongoing operational duties? What is the status report date and how is it due?

Make sure you confirm an understanding of all the previous items. Ask for a summary in their words. Look for reassurance that the task can be done. Address any gaps and reinforce your belief in the individuals or teams work. They need to know you trust them.

11. Remember the two way street, well it is most likely a multi-directional intersection. Look around and support and communicate. Speak to those people who need to know what is going on. Check your stakeholders list and make sure you inform them what the individuals or teams responsibility is. Do not leave it up to the individual or team. Keep politics, the task profile and importance in mind.
12. Provide and get feedback for teams members and individuals. It is important that you let people know how they are doing and if they are achieving their aim. Don't get into blame-storming. You must absorb the consequences of failure, create an environment where failure is an opportunity to learn and grow and pass on the credit for success. Pay it forward if you can.

Delegation used as a tool develops you and your people. The better you are at delegation the better the people around you and your teams will do. It is part of command skills and should be used to let go and trust in your people. The difference between success and failure is often a matter of letting go and delegating.

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