



## The Art of Delegation

Every person from every walk of life has 24 hours in a day to accomplish all that he or she can. As any successful entrepreneur or executive will attest, the art of delegation can dramatically increase productivity at the most critical level.

While most business owners and executives know they should spend time in areas that will deliver maximum return on invested time to business operations, many of the most well-intentioned people wind up focusing on what is priority – not what actually improves profits or productivity.

This syndrome of working “in” your business rather than working “on” your business is common, yet there are many ways to proactively take charge of your time. One is learning to systematically delegate tasks that can be performed by someone other than the chief decision maker.

The art of delegation follows these eight steps:

1. **Eliminate before you delegate.** Some tasks are not necessary. Before making your list of tasks to delegate, make a list of those you can eliminate entirely. For instance, if you are filing paper documents that you have electronically filed elsewhere, and these paper documents are not required for legal reasons, you may be better off eliminating this task.
2. **Plan your delegation.** Make a list of routine tasks that do not gain value by you performing it. Easy tasks often stay on busy owner and executive desks because they are quick and easy perform. Systematically delegate to-do items with your overall schedule in mind. Do not to haphazardly give out tasks without knowing what you hope to achieve from delegating these duties.
3. **Set realistic standards.** Not everything has to be performed 100 percent perfectly. While your standard may be very high, consider a lower, yet acceptable standard for tasks that can be performed by others. For instance, if you can perform a task in 15 minutes, but it takes another person 20 minutes to do the same task and the result is the same, is your time better spent elsewhere?
4. **Assume others enjoy responsibility.** Many high-achievers assume that others do not enjoy taking on added responsibility or that others simply will not take the job seriously. In many instances, this thinking is not true. Look for others who perform their duties with a similar work ethic and begin delegating appropriate tasks.
5. **Set clear expectations.** Once you’ve identified a person you trust with task(s), be sure to be clear in your communication of what your desired outcome is. People often want to succeed, yet when left to their own judgment can fall short of your vision.
6. **Let freedom ring.** While you may have been doing a task for many years, a fresh perspective may offer a faster solution or a new insight on an old issue. Give those that you delegate to the freedom to offer solutions that may save your company time and/or money.
7. **Pay the price.** Invest short-term time in training to gain a long-term increase in productivity. While there are associated opportunity costs related to delegation, the long-term payoff can significantly pay you back.
8. **Know your role.** Delegation means that others will take duties from you to perform, but it doesn't mean that they assume full responsibility without some type of follow-up. Continue to manage the process at arm's length and allow all parties to do their share of the work.

When it comes to delegation, keep your eye on the real prize. The ultimate goal of delegation is to free up more time for you to spend on higher level activities that will, ultimately, add to your bottom line. If delegation means improving processes to make it easier for all involved, consider the big picture before making your final decision. As performance management professionals, we can help streamline processes for improved productivity and profits. Give us a call today to make 2004 your best year yet.



*Our mission is to provide information and strategies to business owners and managers for improvement in the effectiveness of its business management so that key objectives can be realized.*

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