

Delegation



Delegation is an important management tool, it helps develop your team, can increase engagement and also frees up your time – if done correctly.

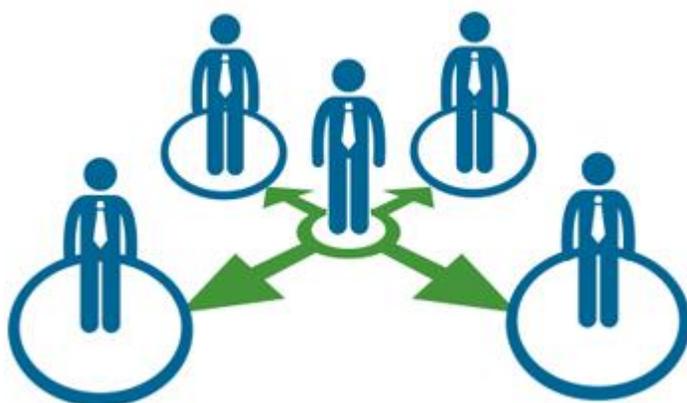
Delegating is when you as a manager give a task which you are ultimately accountable for, to a member of your team to complete on your behalf. The important thing to note here is that although you have given the task to another and they are responsible for completing it, you as manager are still ultimately accountable for the results.

First of all it is important to establish if a task is suitable to be delegated. Ask yourself:

- *What will be the consequences if the task goes wrong?*
- *Can you put measures in place to minimise these risks?*
- *Is the task achievable?*
- *Am I comfortable releasing control of this task?*
- *Is it appropriate for someone else to carry out this task?*

If the consequences of a task going wrong are manageable or you can minimise them, if the task is realistically achievable by another individual, if you are happy to not be in the driving seat and if the task is suitable for another individual to carry out – then it is okay to delegate!

However if you are in two minds to the answers of any of the above questions, think carefully before you delegate as this task may not in fact be suitable to delegate. It could in fact become demotivating for the learner and make more work for you!





Define the task

Confirm in your own mind the task is suitable to be delegated? Does it meet the criteria for delegating?



Select the individual or team

What are your reasons for delegating to this person or team? What are they going to get out of it? What are you going to get out of it?



Assess ability and training needs

Is the other person or team capable of doing the task? Do they understand what needs to be done? What training and support might they need?



Explain the reasons

You must explain why the task is being delegated, and why to them. What is its importance and relevance? Where does it fit into the big picture?



State required results

What must be achieved, in what time frame? Clarify understanding by getting feedback from the other person. How will the task be measured? Make sure they know how you intend to decide that the job is done well.



Consider resources required

Discuss and agree what is required to get the job done. Consider people, location, premises, equipment, money, materials, other related activities and services.



Agree deadlines

When must the task be finished? Or if ongoing, when are the review dates? If the task has different elements, what are the priorities? Agree methods of checking in. Failing to agree this in advance could cause the monitoring to infer a lack of trust.



Support and communicate

Consider who else needs to know what is going on and let them know the task has been delegated. Do not leave the person to inform your own peers of their new responsibility. Advise them about any potential political issues. Let your own manager know, what has been delegated.



Feedback on results

Let the person know how they are doing. Praise and reinforce learning where appropriate and review what didn't go to plan if needed. Absorb the consequences of failure and pass on the credit for success!

Delegation levels



There is a wide range of freedom that you can offer a person when you delegate a task to them. Below are some examples; level 1 representing the lowest level of delegated freedom and level 10 the highest. It is important with each task you delegate to consider which level would be most appropriate.

<p>Level 1: “Do exactly what I say” “Follow these instructions precisely”</p>	<p>This is instruction – no delegated freedom at all.</p>
<p>Level 2: “Look into this and tell me the situation – I will decide”</p>	<p>This is asking for investigation and analysis but no recommendation or decision.</p>
<p>Level 3: “Look into this and tell me the situation – we will decide together”</p>	<p>Encourages and enables analysis and the decision making is a shared process – great for coaching and development.</p>
<p>Level 4: “Tell me the situation and what help you need from me to handle it – then we will decide”</p>	<p>Opens the possibility of greater freedom and decision making – subject to agreement. Again great for development.</p>
<p>Level 5: “Give me your analysis of the situation and recommendation. I’ll let you know whether you can go ahead”</p>	<p>Asks for analysis and recommendation – but decision making still rests with the person delegating.</p>
<p>Level 6: “Decide and let me know your decision, and wait for my go-ahead before proceeding”</p>	<p>The other person is trusted to assess the situation and is probably competent enough to decide – however the manager still wants to double check. This can be frustrating if this level of delegation is used too frequently.</p>
<p>Level 7: “Decide and let me know your decision, then go ahead unless I say not to”</p>	<p>The other person is now in control – this saves time and the default position is now positive rather than negative. This can be liberating and very effective.</p>
<p>Level 8: “Decide and take action – let me know what you did (and what happened)”</p>	<p>This saves even more time! It also enables a degree of follow up which is necessary when people are being managed at a distance. It is helpful for coaching and development.</p>
<p>Level 9: “Decide and take action. You need not check back with me”</p>	<p>The most freedom you can give someone when you still need to retain responsibility. A high level of confidence is necessary. Feedback and review remain essential but the relationship is more likely to be a mentoring one.</p>
<p>Level 10: “Decide where action needs to be taken and manage the situation accordingly. It’s your area of responsibility now”</p>	<p>Not usually used unless formal responsibility and job role change. Delegation of strategic responsibility. This is delegating part of your job not just a task. Useful for developing successors.</p>