



TO DELEGATE

is to “entrust (a task or responsibility) to another person, typically one who is less senior than oneself

Unfortunately, many managers practice a form of delegation that is better described as dumping, fobbing-off, neglecting, or abdicating.

Think of it this way: when you delegate work, you don't reduce your accountability for its successful completion. Even if you didn't do the work yourself, you are still responsible for the final product. What knowledge do you need to pass in delegating the task to feel confident that the person on the receiving end is set up to succeed and that their work will reflect positively on you?

Faced with this proposition, many managers choose to forego delegation and to do the work themselves. The justifications range from “if you want it done right, do it yourself,” to “I don't have time for this. It'll be faster if I just do it.”

That's not a good choice.

Delegation serves an important purpose by allowing you to focus on adding managerial value (anticipating, planning, allocating, measuring, coaching, course-correcting). The more time you spend working as an individual contributor, doing work that others could learn to do, the less time you have to do the things that only you can do.

Delegation is also important for your direct reports. When you delegate properly, it provides a safe opportunity for team members to practice new skills and take on more responsibilities while still benefitting from your support and oversight. Most people like to be entrusted with things, it's good for engagement and provides a sense of value and worth.

Use this checklist on the following page to make sure you are delegating effectively.

DELEGATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to confirm that you are setting the delegate up to succeed.

- I am confident this task does not need to be by me (or someone at my level)
- I am delegating to someone who has the capability to be successful
- I have provided context on why this task is important (strategy, context, and what's at stake)
- I have described the nature of the task clearly (objectives, desired outcomes)
- I have characterized what success would look like and also what would not be acceptable
- I have specified where this task fits in with other priorities
- I have provided timelines (final deadline, milestones)
- I gave thresholds to define what's within acceptable limits and what is "off track"
- I have specified when to escalate to me (and what they can manage independently)
- I described the stakeholders and their roles (decision-makers, influencers, people to consult)
- I have used open-ended questions to ensure that the delegate understands the expectations
- I left room for the person's unique style

FOLLOW-UP

- I checked-in with open-ended questions to gauge progress
- I provided feedback about the impact of choices
- I shared all changes I made to the delegate's draft work
- I gave credit for the person's contribution