

THE NINE STEPS OF DELEGATION

Delegation is when one person gives responsibility and authority to others to complete a task.

Delegation can be difficult. However, there are basic approaches to delegation. Here are the nine steps of effective delegation*:



Step 1: Delegate the whole task to one person

This gives the delegatee the responsibility and increases the level of motivation.

Step 2: Select the right person

Assess the skills and capabilities around you and assign the task to the most appropriate person. Never underestimate a person's potential. Delegate slightly more than you think the person is capable of handling and expect them to succeed.

Step 3: Clearly specify your preferred results

Explain the task clearly. Give information on what, why, when, who, where and how. If need be, write down a schedule with review dates, stage completion dates and final deadlines. Summarize the key points and let the delegatee be flexible, creative and innovative with the actual methodology.

Step 4: Delegate responsibility and authority

In general, the golden rule is to delegate the task, not the method. Make sure the person has the authority to do the job. If not, you're setting the delegatee up for failure.

Step 5: Ask the delegatee to summarize back to you

Make sure you're both on the same page and understand the objectives. Clear communication is key here, especially with expectations. You want to be sure that the communication happened without sounding condescending, so be mindful of your non-verbals, such as body language and tone.

Step 6: Get on-going, non-intrusive feedback about progress on the project

While the delegatee may complete the work, you still maintain accountability. The best way is through feedback from the delegatee and others. Nothing is static, and things often change in real-time. So gather ongoing feedback from all involved.

Step 7: Maintain open lines of communication

Don't hover over the delegatee yet be aware of what they're doing. Continue to encourage and support them as needed. Assess progress and provide assistance while maintaining boundaries.

Step 8: If you're not satisfied with the progress, don't immediately take the project back

Continue to work with the delegatee and ensure the person perceives the project as their responsibility. Analyze difficulties regularly and deal with them immediately.

Step 9: Evaluate and reward performance

Praise and acknowledge a job well done. Evaluate results, not methods. Finally, incorporate learning into future projects.

*Source: *Delegation and Team Building: No Solo Acts Please* (Management Review, September 1992, pp. 58-61), by Thomas R. Horton: