
Best Practices for Delegating

La Défense Toastmasters | 15 February 2018 | Igor Versteeg



Outline

- **Why delegate ?**
 - You can't afford not to
 - No need to panic
 - It's a win-win
 - **What to delegate ?**
 - Allocation versus delegation
 - Consider the wider spectrum
 - To delegate or not to delegate?
 - **How to delegate ?**
 - Be Specific
 - Communicate
 - Follow-up
-

WHY ?

You can't afford not to

1. You don't want to burn-out
2. You want to advance your skills and your career
3. You want others to have opportunities as well

It is impossible and impractical to take on all of your team's tasks by yourself. Delegation will allow your team to become more efficient and will leave your team members with a sense of accomplishment.

Because you can

Many people resist delegation for misplaced reasons, such as ungrounded fears and incomplete knowledge of the steps allowing for successful delegation.

Check if you impose imaginary barriers on yourself:

- Do you feel like you do not have enough time to delegate right now?
- Will you feel like you are losing control or authority if you delegate tasks?
- If you allow a teammate to complete a task, will you feel like you will not get credit for it?
- Are you afraid that delegation will cause you to give away tasks that you enjoy?
- Do you think that you are the only person who can do the task?
- Do you think that no else can do the task as well as you can?
- Are you afraid that delegation will diminish your job or make it redundant?
- Do you think your teammates are not experienced enough to handle certain tasks?

If you checked any of these questions, you have perceptual barriers to delegation. Make sure you understand why these barriers are not always real and why the advantages will often far outweigh any perceived disadvantages.

In short, the main cause for reticence are:

- **Lack of confidence in the team.** Some leaders simply do not believe team members have the ability to do the necessary tasks.
- **Control.** Sometimes leaders are afraid of losing perceived power.
- **Selfishness.** Some leaders don't want to share credit.
- **Insecurity.** Leaders fear that a team member may do so well that the team member may take their job.
- **Reluctance.** A few leaders are reluctant to ask others to take on additional responsibility. These individuals end up doing all of the work themselves.

Towards a Win-Win outcome

Delegation is a performance boosting strategy; it can reduce your workload; it boosts productivity; it will allow you to achieve MUCH more.

But delegation also taps into the collective resources of the team, boosts everyone's self confidence, empowers and motivates team members to progress, expand their professional horizon, develop their skills, give them new responsibilities... your team will thank you!

WHAT ?

There is a difference between **allocation** (telling people to do a task) and delegation (giving responsibility and autonomy to a person over a task).

A less binary way to assess what should and should not be delegated, is to place delegation on a spectrum, such as this:



This is a relatively recent model, and envisions distributed control in the complex system of organisations. It requires a willingness to let go of absolute control on the part of management, and more radical empowerment of the workforce.

This model makes it a lot easier to rationally discuss and decide where it is most optimal to place responsibility in every kind of situation.

To delegate or not to delegate?

Delegation is necessary and beneficial. But not always - that would be too easy! Here are some (non-exhaustive) pointers for when to delegate and when not :

Delegate



- Recurring task
- Not critical for your personal long-term success
- Enough time to delegate properly
- Someone else can do it better
- It's time consuming
- Someone will enjoy doing it more
- It's a whole, well-defined task
- Good for someone's development

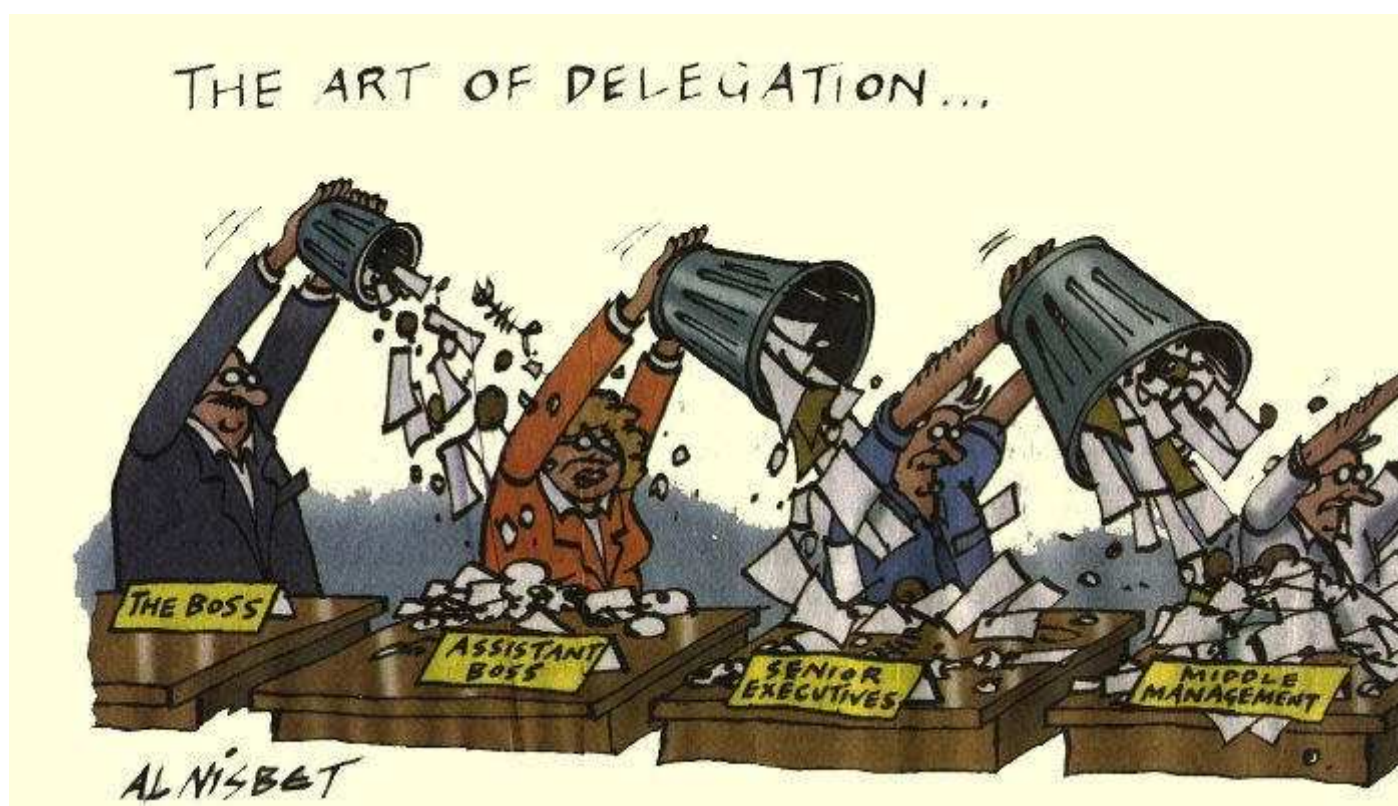
OR

DON'T delegate ?



- In a crisis situation
- Involves key decisions or strategic tasks
- No time to coach the person delegated to
- Concerns confidential information
- Involves major planning responsibility
- The task is not well-defined
- Distributing praise or blame
- The task is not your responsibility

HOW ?



How **not** to do it

Don't commit Drive-by Delegation

Drive-by bosses randomly fire ambiguous delegations over cubicle walls and will act up when the task is late, incomplete or not up to the boss's standards. Sounds familiar?

Better be a stop-by delegator. This is how:

Be specific

- ★ Specify the **task** to delegate. Consider the:
 - Strategic interest of the task (don't delegate snowball fights & relationships)
 - Deadlines required
 - Quality of work needed
- ★ Specify the expected **results**
 - Clearly specify the task & expected outcome
- ★ Specify necessary **resources**
 - Know what resources (time, information, authority, supplies...) are required
 - Provide the necessary resources
- ★ Specify **boundaries**. Where are the lines of responsibility? Should the person:
 - Wait to be told what to do?
 - Ask what to do?
 - Recommend what should be done, and then act?
 - Act, and then report results immediately?
 - Initiate action, and then report periodically?
- ★ Select a **person** who matches the task. Consider their:
 - Degree of autonomy, skills and amount of training that would be required
 - Motivation for the task, work expectations in general, and personal development goals
 - Current workload

Communicate

- ★ Make sure that the person
 - **Understands** the task, desired outcomes & their importance
 - **Accepts** the task and its responsibilities
 - Is **committed** to the desired outcome
- ★ Make the scope & conditions very transparent
 - Share the follow-up plan with the person from the very beginning
 - Tell others to whom you delegated the task and its accompanying authority.
- ★ Make sure that the team member knows that
 - You're on their side
 - You want to know if any problems occur,

Follow up

- ★ Establish and maintain control.
 - Have an appropriate plan for checking progress. Schedule both milestones and time-points marking progress checks
 - Follow this plan and make sure to get updates very regularly
 - Focus on results rather than procedures.
- ★ Provide regular feedback
 - Follow-up at meetings by giving them support, encouragement, and modification ideas.
 - When there are problems: coach them, but don't let them give the task back to you.
 - Use constructive criticism. Do not criticize their personality, only their actions.
- ★ Reward
 - Give out any rewards that you have promised them in order to motivate them.
 - And give recognition where it is due!

Self Assessment Quiz

Are you mentally prepared to delegate more?

Complete the following brief self-check to see how you feel about the skills involved in delegation.

No need to share the results – they are for your eyes only.

Using a scale of 1-4, with 4 being always, circle the number that best describes you next to each of the statements in the Self-Assessment Checklist.

How I View My Delegation Skills	1 never	2 sometimes	4 often	4 always
I fully communicate all the facts about each task I delegate	1	2	3	4
I know my team members' skills and experience levels.	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable sharing and assigning authority.	1	2	3	4
I avoid hovering and allow my delegates to work independently.	1	2	3	4
I set achievable expectations and provide the resources necessary for the delegate to succeed.	1	2	3	4
I encourage my employees to use their initiative when completing a task.	1	2	3	4
I provide positive feedback on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4
My delegates receive full recognition for their performance.	1	2	3	4

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