

# Effective Delegation

## ***Introduction***

By definition, *delegation* is the transfer of the authority to make decisions and complete specific tasks. Learning how to effectively delegate is one of the most important skills for managers and leaders to possess. Strong delegation techniques will help managers save time, improve productivity, and motivate and train people. A manager who lacks these basic skills often leaves people frustrated, unmotivated, and under-trained.

In the business world delegation is used as a tool to cultivate leadership. In order for a manager to move up within their organization they need to first find and train an adequate replacement. By delegating work, managers are able to coach, train, and develop competent employees, making them more valuable to the organization and allowing for upward mobility at all levels.

## ***Main Concepts of Delegation***

- **Authority** – Authority is the power given to a person or group of people to act and make decisions within designated boundaries. When delegating a task, the authority is shared between the manager and the person receiving the delegation.
- **Responsibility** – Responsibility refers to the act of carrying out a specified task. When delegating a task, the manager and person receiving the delegation share the responsibility of completing the work. The manager has the responsibility of providing clear instructions on what work needs to be done, while the person receiving the delegation is responsible for figuring out how the task should be completed.
- **Accountability** – Accountability means that a person is held liable for their actions and decisions. During delegation, the accountability for a task transfers from the manager to the person who actually completes the work. Any positive or negative consequences associated with their performance are ultimately their own personal responsibility.

## ***Four Steps to Delegate Effectively***

- Step 1 – Select the Right Task

The first step in this process is to carefully select which task(s) you wish to delegate. Not every task is an ideal candidate for delegation. Tasks that are redundant or well-defined are typically ideal. Tasks that are isolated in function and do not require a great deal of coordination or group interaction might also be good candidates.

- Step 2 – Choose the Right Person

This step can be one of the most difficult in the whole process. It takes time and effort to find a person who possesses all the traits and skills required for some jobs. The potential candidate not only needs to have the right technical skills and expert knowledge, they also need to be trustworthy and have the time to take on the additional work. Finding a person who has all of these capabilities takes time, but being patient and selective will ensure that the delegation process goes smoothly.

- Step 3 – Give Clear Directions

Once you find the right person, the next step will be to provide them with directions. The directions should be clear, simple, and well-documented.

- Step 4 – Monitor Progress

The final stage of the delegation process requires a scheduled follow-up with the designated individual to see how well the task is coming along. You should take the time to check over the work in order to ensure that everything is being completed to your satisfaction. You should also let them know that you are available for questions and that you will continue to provide further feedback as needed.

## ***Summary***

- By definition, *delegation* is the transfer of authority to make decisions and complete specific tasks.

- Strong delegation techniques will help managers save time, improve productivity, and motivate and train people. Poor delegation practices leave managers overworked and employees frustrated, unmotivated, and under-trained.
- The three concepts of delegation are authority, responsibility, and accountability.
- When a task is delegated, authority and responsibility are shared between the manager and the person receiving the delegation. Accountability is transferred from the manager to the person receiving the delegation.
- Managers should follow four steps when planning to delegate:
  1. Select the right task.
  2. Pick the right person.
  3. Give clear directions.
  4. Monitor progress.