

# Successful Delegation

## Productivity Skills

Team FME

[www.free-management-ebooks.com](http://www.free-management-ebooks.com)

ISBN 978-1-62620-982-4

### *Copyright Notice*

© [www.free-management-ebooks.com](http://www.free-management-ebooks.com) 2013. All Rights Reserved

ISBN 978-1-62620-982-4

The material contained within this electronic publication is protected under International and Federal Copyright Laws and treaties, and as such any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is strictly prohibited.

You may not copy, forward, or transfer this publication or any part of it, whether in electronic or printed form, to another person, or entity.

Reproduction or translation of any part of this work without the permission of the copyright holder is against the law.

Your downloading and use of this eBook requires, and is an indication of, your complete acceptance of these 'Terms of Use.'

You do not have any right to resell or give away part,  
or the whole, of this eBook.

# Table of Contents

<b>Preface.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Visit Our Website.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Why Should I Delegate?.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>When Should I Delegate?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Principles of Delegation.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Common Pitfalls.....	10
<b>Practical Stages for Successful Delegation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>How You Make Delegation Succeed.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Monitoring Delegated Tasks.....	19
Recognizing Over-reporting.....	20
<b>Providing Feedback to Team Members.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Reviewing the Delegation Process.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Other Free Resources.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Reference.....</b>	<b>29</b>

## Preface

One of the fundamental problems that people have when making the step up to management is the inability to delegate effectively. This eBook provides a practical guide to boosting your own and your team's productivity through successful delegation.

You will learn:

- Why delegation is one of the most important management skills you can master.
- How to decide whether or not a task is suitable for delegation.
- The ten rules of successful delegation that will motivate and empower your team.
- How to accurately monitor delegated tasks and avoid the over-reporting trap.
- The six questions you need to ask in order to develop your delegation skills.

## Visit Our Website

More free management eBooks along with a series of essential templates and check-lists for managers are all available to download free of charge to your computer, iPad, or Amazon Kindle.

We are adding new titles every month, so don't forget to check our website regularly for the latest releases.

Visit <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com>

## Introduction

One of the most important management skills you can master is learning how to delegate. As a specific skill, delegation is one that becomes increasingly more important as you progress through levels of management and will greatly increase your own productivity. There is no other skill that will increase your productivity to the same degree as being able to delegate successfully.

That said, successful delegation does take time and effort, but the benefit it gives of actively helping employee involvement and empowerment succeed as a leadership style, is invaluable. When undertaken properly, delegation increases the level of motivation of team members as it allows for new and innovative ideas, which in turn leads to the development of team members' creative and decision-making skills.

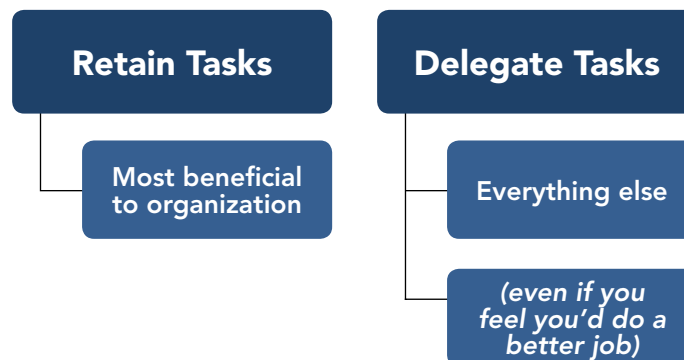
In their groundbreaking book, *Principles of Management*, Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell stated the following about delegation:

*'Administrators must realize that there is a "comparative administrative advantage law", similar to the comparative economic advantage law that is applied to nations.*

*Comparative economic advantage states that each country will get richer if they export the product that is more efficiently manufactured, and they import the product that they manufacture less efficiently, even if they could produce said imported goods at a lower cost than any other nation.*

*Administrators can better contribute to the company if they focus on performing tasks that are more beneficial for achieving the objectives of the company, and they delegate to their subordinates all other activities, even if they could do a better job while working on said tasks.'*

In other words, you should always concentrate your energies on those parts of your work that are the most advantageous to the organization and its development.



All other tasks should be delegated to other individuals who are under your control. This philosophy should over-rule your belief that you could perform the task 'better' than those you've delegated it to.

## Why Should I Delegate?

As a manager, you need to allocate as much time as possible to aiding the development of your business or service. This requires focusing a significant amount of your time on planning for the short-term and long-term needs of your organization; a strategy that in theory sounds good, but will undoubtedly in practice be replaced by any free time being overtaken with everyday operational tasks and problems.

Thus, if you can successfully reduce the amount of time you spend performing the latter, the more time you will have to dedicate to the growth and planning of your organization. Hence the importance of learning how to delegate.

One of the most effective and efficient ways you can achieve this is by delegating the disruptive operational tasks to someone else who is equally capable of performing this role. Indeed, a key aspect of delegating efficiently is to ensure that whilst your time is organized more effectively, tasks must be allocated to suitable people to minimize risks, and to ensure the optimum outcome. It also provides you with the opportunity to develop your team members by increasing their morale and motivation.

It is also key to remember that when delegating a task to other team members, you will retain the responsibility for it; all you are doing is assigning another person to perform the task on your behalf. It is often the fear that the delegated person will fail to perform

the task properly (for which you will ultimately be responsible) that prevents managers from delegating.

Whilst delegation does contain an element of performance risk, the extent of the risk is dependent on the nature of the task and its importance to achieving organizational goals. To be an effective manager, you therefore need to control that risk of poor performance when you delegate a task.

The first step is to ascertain whether you are someone who is fearful of delegating. Common reasons for not delegating include:

- You're too busy.
- You can't trust anyone else to do the same quality job.
- No one has your ability.
- You would feel guilty passing your work on.
- The delegate's success may show you to be lacking.
- You are the only person capable of performing the task.

Using the excuse of 'being too busy' is often what people say when they are avoiding the issue of work overload. It shows insecurity on their part, which may be the result of a lack of confidence in anyone within their team being able to perform the task as well as them.





It can also be seen as a reluctance on the manager's part to hand over any part of his work to another. This can be because it is one of the few aspects of their role they enjoy. Unfortunately, it shows poor leadership skills on the part of that manager and a lack of willingness to develop their own team. A good manager develops trust in the capabilities of his team and is always looking for ways to expand their skills and identify training opportunities.

Often managers are apprehensive about delegating tasks in case it reflects poorly on their own abilities and they therefore retain the task. This has implications for their ability to manage their workload and could increase levels of stress. Recognizing when you need help is a strength, not a weakness, and should not make you feel guilty about delegating.

In some cases, managers may also avoid delegating due to resentment at others being given credit for the successful completion of the task. This again shows not only poor managerial skills, but also a lack of suitability for a management role; a good manager will be proud of their team member's achievements and recognize the benefit for the whole team, rather than allowing jealousy to stand in the way.

## When Should I Delegate?

One of the fundamental problems that people have when making the step up to management is the inability to appreciate that delegating is essential to their success. The belief that you could perform a better job of a particular task is not a valid reason for doing it yourself.

As a manager, you need to keep the bigger picture in mind of what your organization wants to achieve. When considering which tasks to delegate, there are some fundamental high-level factors you need to address.

You can do this by asking yourself 'If I delegate this task':

- Will it give me more time to focus on tasks that are of higher value to the organization?
- Will it allow me to develop the skills of one of my team by expanding their experience in this area?
- Will it offer someone with a fresh view of the task the chance to provide a more innovative solution than I would have done?

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes,' then you should consider delegating the task.



As an initial step it is best to delegate:

- Routine tasks.
- Planned tasks.
- Tasks that a team member has expressed an interest in performing.

For all of these, you should ensure that you have sufficient time within your workload to brief and explain exactly what is required. You must be mindful not to **always** delegate unpleasant tasks as this will not develop or motivate your staff.

It is also important to understand when you should not delegate. You should resist temptation to pass on tasks that have been delegated to you, as it is crucial to be able to control issues that arise and ensure they are resolved between you and the task owner. Delegation should also not be used as a strategy to handle last-minute tasks. The nature of such a task does not provide sufficient time for you to control the risks involved or to provide a sound brief.

## Principles of Delegation

Having answered 'yes' to your high-level considerations, you now need to decide how to apply the principles of functional delegation as described by Koontz and O'Donnell:



### 1) Principle of delegation by results expected

The degree of authority delegated to an individual manager should be adequate to assure their ability to accomplish the results expected of them. Without this level of authority, they will be unable to complete the task, as others they need to interact with will hinder their progress due to lack of 'real' authority.

It is essential that as part of the delegation process, you communicate this devolved authority to all necessary parties.

### 2) Principle of absoluteness of responsibility

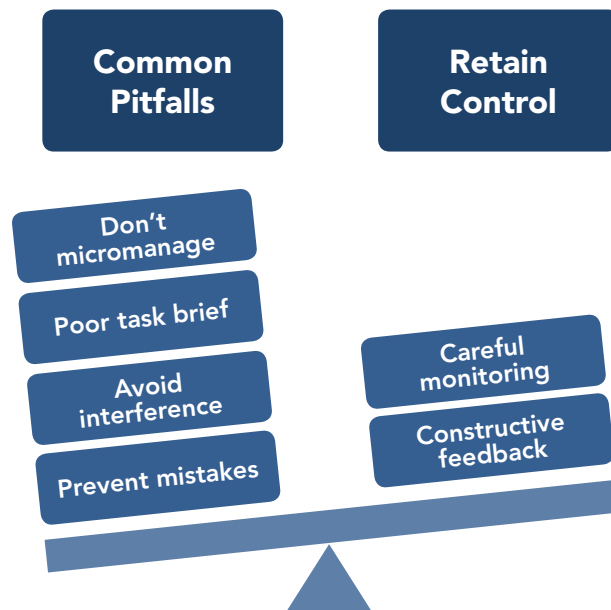
It is vital that delegation is not used as a way of avoiding or abdicating ultimate responsibility and ownership of tasks. Responsibility for the activities of subordinates, who have been assigned duties, remains at all times with whoever originally delegated the task.

### 3) Principle of parity of authority and responsibility

The degree of authority that is delegated in conjunction with the task has to be consistent with the level of responsibility and role of the subordinate.

## Common Pitfalls

The final step is to consider your own personal feelings and to ensure that you are ready to avoid the common pitfalls of delegation.



### Avoid micro-managing the task

'Micro-managing tasks' refers to giving your colleagues the freedom to make decisions, even if you feel you are more skilled at doing so. Many of us have the bad habit of continuing to make decisions once we have delegated a task.

This undermines the authority we have handed over for this task and hinders its actual achievement. It also wastes a considerable amount of your time, which was one of your aims in choosing to delegate a task. It is probably the single biggest cause of dissatisfaction amongst team members.

### Take the time to set up adequate controls

To be a successful manager, you will need to establish control systems that give you adequate feedback on the progress of all of the activities that you have delegated, so that you can take the necessary corrective action when needed.

Once these control systems are in place, you can feel secure in your ability to highlight and rectify any mistakes your subordinates could make.

### Allow others to make mistakes

It is important to feel secure in the systems and processes you have put in place to retain overall control and receive sound and regular feedback. Mistakes will be made as others learn, but you have to be mindful of these occurring and must allow some contingency to rectify them.

Your best lessons probably came from errors you have made during your career. For example,

*You may have double booked yourself with two equally important tasks and have had to decide how to best overcome this situation.*

*You have probably had to admit your error to one party to extricate yourself from the double booking.*

This sort of avoidable embarrassment is something you only want to experience once so you will avoid carelessness in future.

Koontz and O'Donnell explain it as follows:

*'Nobody would let a subordinate make a mistake that could harm the company or the subordinate's position but, the persistent supervision of your subordinates in order to guarantee that they don't make mistakes, makes it completely impossible to delegate authority.'*

*You should allow your subordinates to make mistakes, and the cost of said mistakes should be considered an investment in their personal development.'*

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Delegation is one of the most important management skills you can master.
- ✓ Focus your efforts on those parts of your work that are the most beneficial to the organization and delegate everything else.
- ✓ If you do decide to delegate a task, then use the three principles of delegation.

## Practical Stages for Successful Delegation

There are six practical stages you should follow so that your delegated activities are successfully completed. This logical process allows you to clearly define your requirements at each stage and will ensure that your personal productivity is optimized.

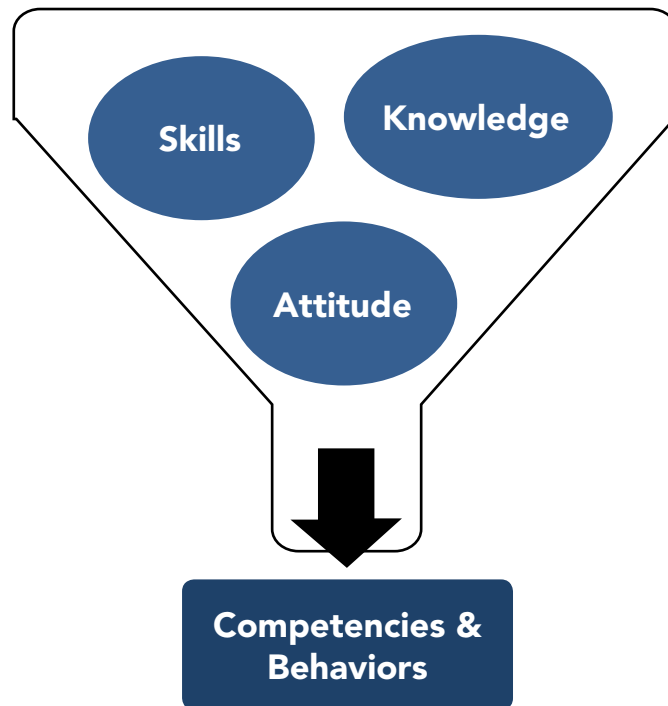
In order to prevent any element of confusion or doubt influencing the process, it is essential that you communicate with total clarity at each stage, not only with the 'right person,' but everyone who plays a part in ensuring the task is completed as expected and in a timely manner. This clarity is vital whether your communication is written or verbal.



### 1. Select the right person for the job

As a manager, it is essential that you have an accurate picture of your team members' individual KSA's (Knowledge, Skills and Attitude). You will be able to assess these by watching and evaluating the competencies and behaviors an individual displays in different situations.

The right person for you to delegate to will already exhibit many of the behaviors that are required to perform the task that you want to delegate. This can be seen in the way they deal with unexpected circumstances or handle other members of your team to defuse potentially damaging situations.



With this knowledge, you will then be able to select the ‘best’ person to complete the task that you want to delegate, in the manner that you expect.

The team member must feel that the task they have been assigned is commensurate with their role description and level of authority. In addition to providing a challenging opportunity to improve, they must be allowed to use their skill and initiative.

If these conditions are not met, then the team member is likely to reject the responsibility and try to actively or passively avoid doing the task.

## **2. Provide a clear goal**

It is your responsibility to provide the team member with all the information they will need to understand exactly what is expected of them and to perform the task successfully. It is important that the brief you give provides a clear understanding of the importance of the task.

An essential aspect of your brief is that you must clearly define what you expect from the job you are delegating and that it meets the SMART goal-setting criteria (described in ‘Effective Goal Setting’ which can be downloaded from [www.free-management-ebooks.com](http://www.free-management-ebooks.com)).

com). This includes how their, and your, success will be measured. With this knowledge, the team member can clearly understand what the goal is, as well as what you expect from them.

Try not to express your instructions in vague terms such as 'deal with,' 'coordinate,' or 'network with.' For example, 'I'd like you to coordinate with them from now on' is virtually meaningless and leaves too much room for misinterpretation.

As part of your briefing process, make sure the team member understands exactly what you want them to do. Get them to ask questions and then reframe or rephrase the task description in a way that gives them ownership of it and gives you confidence that they fully understand it.

### **3. Delegate the whole job to a single team member**

One of the most serious mistakes that you can make when delegating work is to split the task up and give it to more than one team member. The effect of this is to add considerable confusion to the whole situation. Therefore it is crucial to ensure that the individual understands that the task is their sole responsibility to deliver in the most appropriate way to guarantee success.

If several people become involved in performing different aspects of the task, it becomes difficult for individuals to see where their individual responsibilities begin and end. This results in elements of the task potentially being duplicated or left unperformed as individuals think it is someone else's responsibility.

If the person you have delegated to decides that they in turn wish to delegate parts of it, then that is for them to decide and accept the responsibility of ensuring success.

### **4. Set a realistic deadline if appropriate**

When briefing the team member to whom you have delegated, you must clearly state what the deadline is and the reason for that timeframe. There may be circumstances when you are delegating a task involving a third party where you are unable to offer a time period that you may feel is more appropriate. The reasons for this timeframe must be explained to the individual to ensure their acceptance of the task.

Setting extremely challenging deadlines usually has the opposite effect from the one intended. If a team member starts to doubt their ability to finish on time, they may lose



motivation to even try. Similarly, setting a strict deadline where there are too many unknown factors may have the same result of impairing motivation.

You should also make sure, where circumstance allows, that any deadline does not get in the way of exploring all the options available for task completion. For example, the best option may involve choosing an off-the-shelf solution rather than developing something in-house.

The deadline could be very different depending on the path chosen. Remember, once you have set the deadline, it is difficult to see any options that don't fit closely within your predefined time limit, particularly if they can be done in a much shorter timeframe.

### **5. Perform periodic reviews**

To ensure successful delegation of your task, you must clearly identify as part of the brief the key points of the task or the dates when you want feedback about progress. This allows you to become aware of potential issues or problems the person you've delegated the task to may have and to help them resolve them, before they become damaging to the task's success.

It is your job to make sure that the task is on track and you will need time to act if it is necessary to influence the project's direction or the team member's decisions. It is only through regular, spaced, and pre-defined reviews that you will be informed enough to correct any problems before they get out of control.

Conducting a Task Debrief following the completion of the task enables both you and the person who performed the task to have an honest appraisal of the whole event. This allows them to have recognition of their personal development and helps you to understand how well you conducted your task delegation. From this debrief you will be able to judge what went well, what went poorly, and areas for improvement.

Throughout the whole process of delegation, it is important to be aware of the so-called over-reporting trap, which is described later in 'Monitoring Delegated Tasks.'

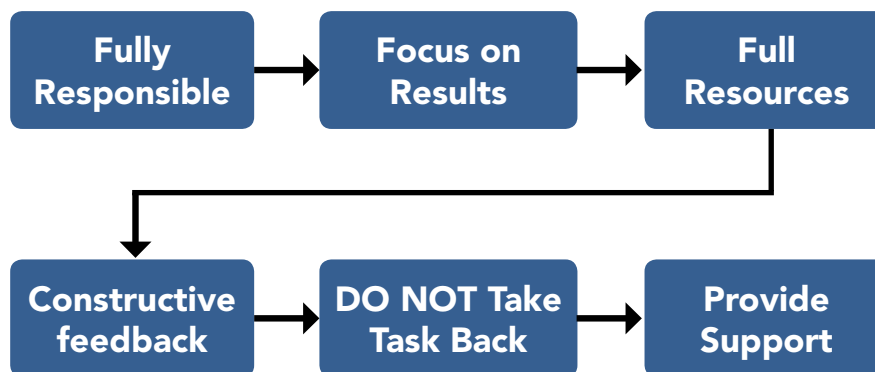
## 6. Give proper credit and recognition to the person that completes the job

Decide in advance how you will thank and reward the team member for their successful completion of the task. When a job is completed, it is important that you give full credit to the person that completed it. This provides them with the personal recognition of their achievement at both a team and corporate level.

If the project is not a success, you must assume full responsibility and as part of your Task Debrief evaluate what happened, how things developed, and the reasons as to why the team member was not capable of completing the project. Always try to learn from these experiences, so that next time you delegate more efficiently.

## How You Make Delegation Succeed

Whilst the stages you work through to decide whether or not it is appropriate to delegate a task, and to whom, are important, they are not the only aspects of success you must observe. There are certain competencies and behaviors you must adopt to ensure your success.



### Give Full Responsibility

It is a serious error to delegate a task without giving the chosen person sufficient responsibility. This situation becomes a major obstacle for the individual and a drain on their time and productivity, as they permanently have to seek your approval of the actions they wish to take. This results in poor performance and could become a major aspect of why the task failed.

### **Focus on the results, not on the process**

As the manager delegating a task, it is vital that your role focuses on the required result and not on how the task should be performed. At the outset, you must clearly state the required outcomes and explain what must be achieved and what the measurements will be, and clarify how you intend to decide that the job was successfully done. This includes the specific outcome that is required and the standard that is expected.

Team members need to decide how to make use of the authority that has been delegated to them and should be allowed to work in a way that suits their own individuality and method of working. Your role should be to offer coaching and mentoring to the person if and when they require it. The extent to which you need to perform this role will become self evident through the regular reviews you set up.

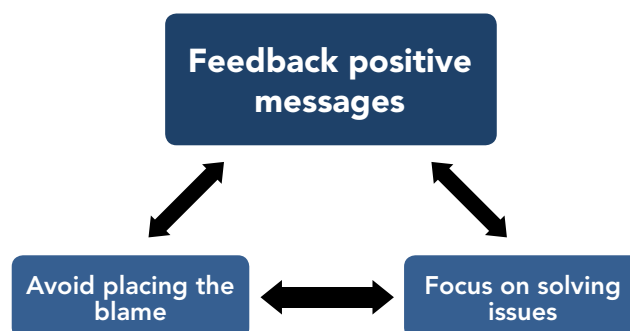
### **Provide the necessary resources**

In order to complete a task or project, you may need to involve other departments within the organization. If this is the case then always provide full information about all of the people within the organization that can collaborate.

The successful outcome of any task or project is heavily dependent on whether appropriate and sufficient resources are available as required. As the manager, it is your responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available.

### **Give constructive, and positive, feedback**

A vital aspect of any task or project is the regular communication on how well the delegated person is performing. For this type of dialogue to be pertinent, it must be timely and constructive in how it is fed back.



The use of positive messages within your feedback will gain you respect and cooperation. This is especially effective when things are not going as expected. By focusing on how best to solve the problems that have emerged, rather than looking to place the blame, you are more likely to succeed in your goal or to achieve the most positive outcome possible.

When a team member feels they have your complete support, they will expend even more effort in ensuring a successful outcome.

### **Do not allow them to delegate the job back to you**

When a team member encounters problems they will usually refer back to you. It is difficult to resist the temptation to take control when this happens. Your best course of action is to suggest two or more possible solutions and leave it to them to choose which to implement.

If you attempt to take back control at this point, you are in a no-win situation. If you succeed, then completing the task will be your responsibility, and if you fail, then the team member will no longer trust you and will be unlikely to make you aware of any future problems in a timely way.

### **Provide backup and support when needed**

Situations often occur during a task or project where your support is required to eradicate issues or problems. From the outset, you need to have clearly defined what resources you will call upon and how much of your own personal time you will commit if needed.



You should actively schedule your own involvement from the beginning, as this will ensure that you stay on top of progress and will be available if the project requires your input in order to get back on track—for example, by making a phone call to someone who is involved in the project but not fully cooperating. It is important that team members know that they have your full support.

**KEY POINTS**

- ✓ Select the right person for the job.
  - ✓ Provide a clear goal.
  - ✓ Delegate the whole job to a single team member and give them full responsibility.
  - ✓ Focus on the results, not on the process.
  - ✓ Set a realistic deadline if appropriate.
  - ✓ Provide the necessary resources.
  - ✓ Perform periodic reviews.
  - ✓ Give constructive, and positive, feedback.
  - ✓ Do not allow them to delegate the job back to you.
  - ✓ Provide backup and support when needed.
  - ✓ Give proper credit and recognition to the person who completes the job.
- 

## Monitoring Delegated Tasks

Now that you've delegated your task, all you have to do is to read your regular reports and ensure that the deadline is met. As a manager, the most important aspect of this reporting is openness. This will be shown by your willingness to be objective when facts are reported to you and to support the person you've delegated the task to, with additional resources and support as needed.

It is up to you to ensure that you maximize the opportunity to show this openness during your regular review sessions. You can achieve this by truly listening to what you are being told and by identifying the signs that someone is not being totally open with you—for example, by not maintaining eye contact or through similar other signs. This could be due to the fact that they don't want to disappoint you with bad news.

By using your questioning skills, you will also be able to identify inconsistencies that may provide you with early warning signs of potential or real problems. These questions need to be asked in such a way that the person the task has been delegated to, or others involved in the process, don't regard it as interference. If the questions are subtle enough the people involved may not even be aware of what you are doing.

This openness can be established when you exchange your brief by asking for the delegate's agreement to its contents and offering them this initial opportunity to feed back to you any concerns or issues they can see that may cause problems as the task progresses. By showing your willingness to receive feedback, you send the signal that you want an honest and open exchange to be an integral part of the delegation process.

One way to safeguard against problems in this area is to make sure that you use a variety of tools as part of your monitoring. The most popular tools are:



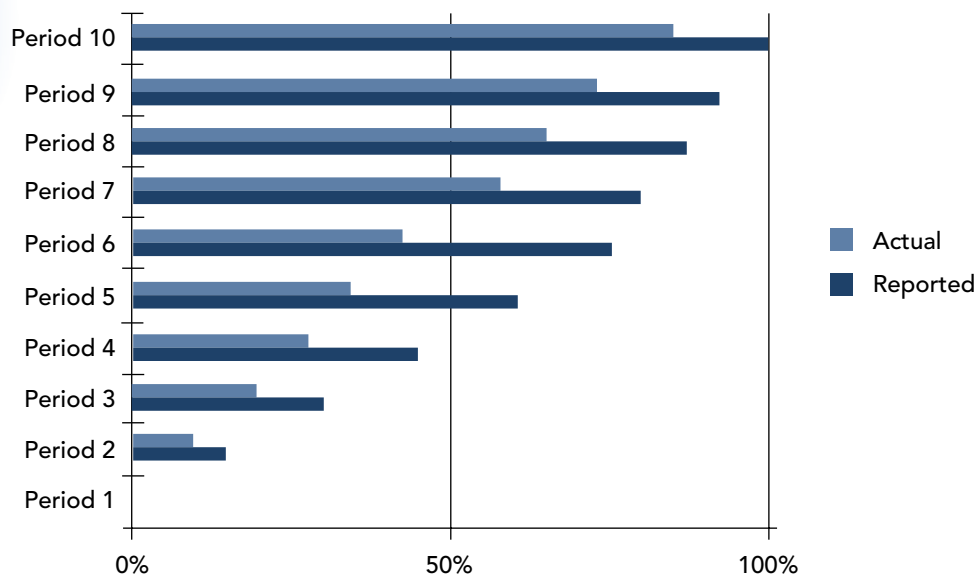
Your main responsibility now is to monitor progress in order to ensure that the task is completed on time. One of the most difficult problems you will face when monitoring delegated tasks is the so-called over-reporting problem. This becomes a greater risk as the complexity and length of the task increases.

### Recognizing Over-reporting

The over-reporting of progress occurs because people tend to be over-optimistic to start with, and is compounded by the fact that managers tend to encourage it. This may be done unconsciously, by reacting positively and uncritically to optimistic progress reports.

Feedback is an essential part of the delegation process and this must be a two-way process, one where questions and listening are key aspects to ensure the communication is open and supportive.

Shown below is a graphical representation of the typical over-reporting scenario. The explanation of how this occurs follows.



1. At the beginning of period 1, the estimated 'percentage complete' of the task is zero.
2. At the beginning of period 2, the natural optimism or the desire to appear productive, has resulted in a report indicating the task as being 15% complete whereas in fact it is only 10% complete.
3. At the beginning of period 3, the task is reported as being 30% complete whereas in reality it is only 20% complete. Optimism may still be a factor, as may the desire to maintain the rate of progress that was reported earlier. This problem will be compounded if the manager is actively encouraging the reporting of rapid progress. This discrepancy increases through periods 4 and 5.
4. At the beginning of period 6, the team member feels under pressure to report that the task is 75% complete, in keeping with previous progress. At this point they are probably aware that their claims about the progress of the task have over-estimated the actual work completed, but it is difficult for them to admit

that they have been exaggerating. Consequently, the manager may receive a progress report that is underestimating the amount of work remaining. That is, the manager believes that only 25% of the project remains to be completed, not the 58% that is in fact the case.

5. At the beginning of period 7, the reported progress falls as the team member realizes the reality of the situation. They cannot keep reporting this rate of progress otherwise they will be reporting completion when in fact the task is only 58% completed. The usual reaction is to report an update such as half of the expected progress in the hope that they can bring the reported and actual progress into alignment at some point in the future.

Over-reporting often leads to a situation where tasks always seem to be 80% to 90% complete. The best way to avoid over-reporting is to implement objective measures of progress, rather than asking for a subjective estimate.

You should never underestimate the unwillingness of team members to admit that progress has been over-reported or their ingenuity in trying to disguise that it has.

One of the tactics that people use to try to dig themselves out of the hole they have dug by over-reporting, is to take on additional work in parallel to the over-reported task in the mistaken belief that they will be able to save some time in new work and use this to make up the 'lost' time in the over-reported work.

This is very unlikely to have the desired effect and the usual outcome is that the over-reporting remains hidden for longer and is more of a problem when it eventually surfaces.

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Over-reporting of progress happens because people tend to be over-optimistic
- ✓ It is compounded when managers react uncritically to optimistic progress reports.
- ✓ Over-reporting leads to a situation where tasks always seem to be almost complete.
- ✓ Implement objective measures of progress rather than asking for a subjective estimate.



## Providing Feedback to Team Members

Once you have delegated a piece of work using the guidelines above, it is vital that you not only monitor progress, but also provide regular feedback to the team member. This is particularly important in the first few days as team members often feel uncomfortable asking for guidance once they have been delegated the task, assuming that it will reflect badly on them if they are seen to not understand the task or to be slow in their progress

This can cause unnecessary anxiety if, as is often the case, they are unsure exactly how to proceed once they examine the task in detail. This usually happens when it becomes clear that there are several options available or when they become aware of an unforeseen problem.

By employing the strategy of openness you will be able to reassure them during this anxious period and give the necessary support to bolster their decision-making skills.

The trick is to provide feedback without being seen to interfere unnecessarily or to show any impatience if the team member is confused by something that you think should be clear.

By offering constructive feedback, you help to guide the person with the necessary decisions so that they truly begin to own the task delegated to them.

The important aspect is that feedback is given whilst there is still time to act upon it. You must ensure that your feedback is continuous and provides opportunities for an open exchange of information without judgment.

Feedback is also a major contributor to motivation and empowers people by enabling them to build upon their successes and lets them know that their efforts are appreciated. This should improve their performance and enable them to keep their problems and concerns in perspective.

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Provide regular feedback to the team member, particularly in the early stages.
- ✓ Feedback improves performance and enables people to keep their problems and concerns in perspective.
- ✓ Give feedback while there is still time to act upon it.

## Reviewing the Delegation Process

Once the task has been completed then the team member should be thanked for their efforts and receive the recognition promised to them.

It is essential that you reflect on how well the process went and review the decisions that you made throughout the process. This review should also include feedback from the team or teams involved, as well as the individual you delegated the task to.

By listening to this feedback you will be able to determine the quality of your own decisions. It is important that you ask yourself the following questions:



### Did you select the right person for the job?

By selecting the individual you did to perform the task, you will now have a clearer picture of whether or not they have the competencies and behaviors required. It may be that you misjudged the abilities of the team member and had not expected them to perform in the way they did. This highlights an area or several areas in which the person requires additional training.

As part of the delegation process it also gives you the opportunity to review this individual's performance compared to that of other team members. This provides you with an opportunity to review your teams KSA's and may influence your decision regarding the next person you delegate a task to.

### **Did you provide a clear goal?**

Once the task is complete you will have the chance to review how well your instructions and brief were understood. Through the feedback processes, you will be able to ascertain if there were any significant omissions or unnecessary detail in certain areas.

If this is the case it could be as a result of the objective not being stated clearly enough. You can then reflect on how best to avoid such problems in the future and if necessary seek advice from your seniors or colleagues.

### **Did you give them sufficient freedom to complete the task in their preferred way?**

Finding out whether you achieved the right balance between being supportive and interfering is not easy. Most team members will be reluctant to imply any criticism of you, and you should take note of any hesitation in answering questions, in their body language, and other non-verbal signs that indicate that you need to interfere less in future.

### **Was the deadline realistic?**

Setting deadlines is always difficult, as you need to consider so many factors including the team member's skill level, their other commitments and external influences or constraints.

Often a deadline can be imposed by the very nature of the task, for example an exhibition, where you have no control over when it is, only how or what you do before the event. In such situations it may mean that insufficient notice was the major issue in completing the task.

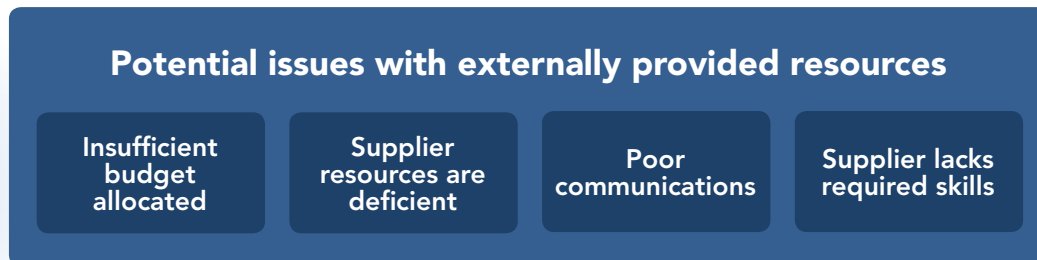
If this is the case, it also provides an opportunity for you to test the abilities and skills of your team. Your brief will need to inform them from the outset that corners need to be cut and that they are required to select how best to do this. As part of your feedback you will be able to support them through this thought process and ensure the task is successfully accomplished.

### **Did they have the necessary resources?**

Check that you provided the necessary resources in a reasonable timeframe, as it is very frustrating for team members to be left waiting for things they need to progress with the job.

It may also highlight certain 'bottlenecks' within your organization, which you need to address as a separate issue. This could be something as simple as the length of time

required to process an order, or insufficient budget being allocated to the project, or it took too long for the task budget to be approved, therefore delaying its commencement.



Issues with externally provided resources may also be highlighted and may be a result of:

- Resource issues of the suppliers.
- Using an incompetent supplier.
- Poor communications between the parties.
- Insufficient budget for the task.

Once again, be aware that they may be reluctant to criticize you directly, but encouraging open communications from the start will help identify resources issues in a timely manner.

### **Did they have sufficient support from you?**

You can ascertain how well you performed this role by asking some simple questions:

*Did you schedule sufficient time to support the team member?*

*Did you brief the team member on the importance of seeking advice as and when they needed it?*

You should remember that some people are reluctant to ask for help because they feel that this shows a lack of ability. If this is the case, despite your frequent reviews, then you will need to address the assertiveness of the individual and discuss with them if they really want this type of additional responsibility.

These questions should answer whether or not your expectations were realistic. Evaluating the outcome of delegation in this way will enable you to make better judgments in the future.

As a manager, much of your success will depend on being able to delegate as effectively as possible. Delegation is a skill that you can improve if you take the time to analyze your own performance.

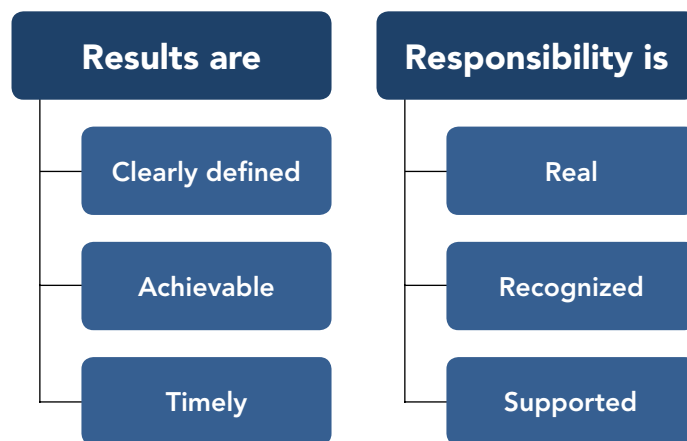
The important thing is to encourage openness and constructive criticism, which you then act on appropriately.

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ Solicit feedback from the team member when the task is complete.
  - ✓ Evaluating the outcome of delegation in this way will enable you to make better judgments in the future.
-

## Summary

Delegation, used as a tool, develops you and your team members. The better you are at delegation, the more successful you and your team will be. The difference between success and failure is often a matter of distancing yourself from a task and delegating.



### **Establish the results you expect to obtain when you delegate**

You must clearly establish what you expect from your team members when you delegate an activity or a specific task. When a person knows what is expected from them, they will always try their hardest to achieve it.

### **Delegate in accordance with accepted responsibility**

In order for the team member to succeed, it is necessary that you properly assign them all tasks, so that they can complete all of the activities required by the project.

### **Delegate the necessary authority so that your subordinate can complete all tasks**

It is impossible for your subordinate to complete a project or activity if they do not have the required authority to do so. When you delegate authority, it is your responsibility to notify all of the interested parties that you have done so.

## Other Free Resources

The Free Management eBooks website offers you over 100 free resources for your own professional development. Our eBooks, Checklists, and Templates are designed to help you with the management issues you face every day. They can be downloaded in PDF, Kindle, ePub, or Doc formats for use on your iPhone, iPad, laptop or desktop.

**eBooks**—Our free management eBooks cover everything from accounting principles to business strategy. Each one has been written to provide you with the practical skills you need to succeed as a management professional.

**Templates**—Most of the day-to-day management tasks you need to do have already been done by others many times in the past. Our management templates will save you from wasting your valuable time re-inventing the wheel.

**Checklists**—When you are working under pressure or doing a task for the first time, it is easy to overlook something or forget to ask a key question. These management checklists will help you to break down complex management tasks into small controllable steps.

**FME Newsletter**—Subscribe to our free monthly newsletter and stay up to date with the latest professional development resources we add every month.

**Social Media**—Share our free management resources with your friends and colleagues by following us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and RSS.

Visit [www.free-management-ebooks.com](http://www.free-management-ebooks.com)

## Reference

**Koontz, Harold, and O'Donnell, Cyril**, *Principles of Management: An Analysis of Managerial Functions*, 4th edn, McGraw-Hill, New York.