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Delegation

Delegating helps managers make best use of their time. It also gives individuals opportunities to develop.

Delegation self-assessment

This questionnaire will help you assess how well you delegate tasks to your team.

Taking each pair of statements in turn, circle the number which is most representative of your attitude and behaviour. 1 and 5 are closest to the different statements, 2 and 4 less close but still reflect your behaviour. 3 is the middle between the two statements.

Be honest! Do you:

Delegate tasks to ease the workload	1 2 3 4 5	Prefer to do the work yourself
Show confidence in staff to complete tasks	1 2 3 4 5	Lack confidence in staff to complete tasks
Allow staff to undertake delegated work in their own way	1 2 3 4 5	Prefer to check on how staff complete the task
Know everyone in your team well in terms of their strengths and weaknesses	1 2 3 4 5	Not know people in your team well
Give clear instructions when delegating	1 2 3 4 5	Find that people refer back to you with questions when you have delegated a task
View delegation as an opportunity to develop individuals	1 2 3 4 5	View delegation as means of getting the task done
Provide training to inexperienced staff in new skills to undertake a task	1 2 3 4 5	Prefer not to delegate tasks to inexperienced staff
Agree a completion time for the task and review as appropriate	1 2 3 4 5	Expect staff to complete the task as soon as possible
Tell your staff and other people what authority they have when delegating a task	1 2 3 4 5	Neglect to tell staff and other people their level of authority
Set standards appropriate to the task	1 2 3 4 5	Set high standards irrespective of the task
Tolerate mistakes, recognizing that people learn through them	1 2 3 4 5	Expect delegated work to be error-free
Balance the workload of your staff	1 2 3 4 5	Delegate work to certain individuals in the team more than others

Identify the tasks you should <i>not</i> delegate	1 2 3 4 5	Prefer to delegate as much work as possible
Consider the effects of delegating unpleasant or tedious tasks on the team	1 2 3 4 5	Think that unpleasant tasks are best delegated
Ask for information on your staff's workload and schedules before delegating	1 2 3 4 5	Consider that work that you delegate should take priority
Think about the amount you should delegate to your staff in terms of their workload and yours	1 2 3 4 5	Think more about your workload than your staff's
Give feedback to staff, both positive and negative, when they have completed a task	1 2 3 4 5	Prefer not to give immediate feedback

Now add up the scores you circled. Total

How to interpret your score

- 34 or under You delegate tasks well. The balance of your delegated tasks is good. You recognize that delegation provides a learning opportunity for your staff.
- 35 or over Your delegation could be improved. Your staff may see you as 'dumping' tasks rather than delegating. You need to recognize that delegation provides an opportunity for you to be more effective as well as to develop your staff.

Look back over those statements where you have given high scores. Decide what actions you can take to better manage your and your team's time.

Tips on how to delegate

- Plan it.
- Clarify what is required.
- Explain what is to be done and why.
- Explain what the results should be.
- Say what authority they have.
- Tell others what authority has been given.
- Allow discretion as to time and method.
- Check progress at agreed intervals.
- Be prepared for mistakes.
- Give feedback, both positive and negative.
- Provide support – you are still responsible.

RECOMMENDED READING

Blanchard, Kenneth and Johnson, Spencer (1983) *The One Minute Manager*,
Fontana/Collins, London