



Delegating more effectively to boost your performance

The challenge

Overloaded managers are often reproached for not delegating enough. As attractive as delegation may be in theory, many managers are reluctant in practice to employ this critical driver of personal performance, despite the fact that entrusting more responsibility to subordinates gives managers time to focus on more important issues. So how to capitalize fully on delegation to gain both time and peace of mind?

Three key success factors

Some common misconceptions explain why efforts to delegate responsibility are often disappointing. Indeed, entrusting a few tasks to someone else simply isn't enough to boost your efficiency. You must also ensure that the person in question is ready and able to take on these responsibilities:

1 Delegate what?

Try to delegate responsibilities rather than tasks

Delegate end-to-end responsibility for a problem, rather than a succession of tasks requiring systematic supervision to ensure they are done properly.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Do you have enough time to perform the tasks critical to your function (defining strategy, managing important projects, etc.)?
- What sort of responsibilities can be performed only by you, and you alone?

PRACTICAL TIPS

Delegate:

- **Long-term responsibilities**, to optimize the time invested in delegating.
- **Valued assignments** that motivate those concerned to do their best and thus minimize the need for managerial intervention.

2 Delegate to whom?

Choose a real partner, rather than someone who simply follows orders

Be careful to delegate only to people who are willing and able to assume real responsibility, rather than simply take orders.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What personal qualities are required to carry out the assignments you want to delegate?
- Who is most likely to be willing and able to assume responsibility for these assignments?

PRACTICAL TIPS

Some personal attributes are just as valuable as technical skills:

- **Ambition**: having more responsibility may motivate and inspire people to give their best.
- **Reactivity**: people who are entrusted with new responsibilities must be able to find their own solutions without systematically asking for help from their manager.

3 How to delegate?

Build trust and establish a clear contract

Trust must be built before empowered subordinates feel truly comfortable taking initiative and take the pressure off the manager. A clear balance between supervision and autonomy must therefore be established.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Are you sure that the other person has a clear vision of what the assignment entails?
- Are the game rules clear?
- Does your behavior promote trust?

PRACTICAL TIPS

To build a trusting relationship:

- Clearly define the **scope of autonomy** of those concerned.
- Agree in advance to conduct regular **performance reviews**, to ensure they are not perceived as an intrusion.
- **Provide** those concerned with **needed support** to keep them from feeling abandoned or isolated.