

#111

## Delegation

“Delegation can be a tremendous training tool for individuals who want to learn and do more. Delegating duties to employees makes sense for three reasons:

- It frees up managers’ time for other matters,
- It develops employees to take on broader responsibilities, and
- It prepares others to step into a particular position should the incumbent move on.

Practice delegation by selecting one or more employees who show both the aptitude and the interest to take on expanded duties. The manager’s role towards these individuals should be that of a mentor.

When mentoring staff, in addition to showing them what to do, the manager needs to explain in depth the reasons behind various duties. If they are to grow into broader responsibilities, they will need to have knowledge, not just technical experience. While mentoring can be time-consuming, it will ultimately free up a manager’s time. Employees will appreciate both the interest and effort devoted to their development and the manager’s career and personal development will be advanced by the additional time he has to focus on other issues and projects.

Caveats:

- Unless the manager makes a concerted effort to provide employees proper direction, feedback, and ongoing growth opportunities, delegating may alienate them. In other words, don’t use them. The manager needs to put effort into their growth and make it worthwhile for them as well.
- If employees are put in a supervisory role, pay close attention to how they interact with other staff. The critical aspects of supervision are directing and motivating employees. Many first-time supervisors have difficulty with the more subtle aspects of directing employees and may end up alienating the rest of the team.
- When authority to do something is delegated to a subordinate, the manager still retains the responsibility that it is done correctly. A manager must never use the excuse that he told a subordinate to do something and it wasn’t done.

Delegating requires extra effort on the part of a leader, but ultimately it is one of the most rewarding things he can do. Not only will the manager have more time to concentrate on projects and details, but he also helps others grow personally and professionally – certainly a win-win scenario for everyone.”

- Ed Rehkopf, *Leadership on the Line*

**Take Away:** Delegating can be a win-win situation for both the manager and the employee and frees up the manager’s time for other matters.