

HIGH-QUALITY DELEGATION

PREPARE TO DELEGATE

Make a thorough list of everything you're doing in your role – daily, weekly, monthly, and then add to it any of the other “stuff” that comes across your desk that you also tackle- those pesky post-it notes that are stuck all over the place, the phone call you need to return, the new salt spreader you need to select – ad hoc projects, ongoing tasks, and everything in between should be captured.



Spend some time with the list. Which of the items do you need to control and complete directly yourself, and why? There are likely many of them that justifiably fall under your remit and would be inappropriate to delegate; you'll recognize them. But look for the tasks that someone else could do; there are probably at least a few of those, and once you've identified them, it's time to think about who to delegate them to....

DECIDE WHO TO DELEGATE TO

If you have spent time coaching and communicating with your team, you probably have a sense of their professional interests, area of strength and areas of opportunity, and how they want to move between those spaces. Which tasks on your “To Delegate” list will give an individual new experiences or help them gain confidence in a new area of their work? Who has a background or prior experience in an area that will lend itself to this task? Who has bandwidth to take on new projects? What tasks are you doing just because you've never considered if it belongs somewhere else? You might even find some tasks you can just take off the list all together.

HOW TO DELEGATE

Thoughtfully and intentionally – that was simple!

Ok, so maybe we can expand on that a bit more, but it really *is* simple; it's also very time consuming to delegate well. Be sure to block out the appropriate time to meet with the individual, share the new task, reinforce why you are delegating it to them and how you think they will be an asset to the task, and support them in taking ownership of it. Do they need any additional information, context, or resources- equipment, technology, safety gear, training, or time with you or someone else? If so, be sure they know how to get it. Keep in touch with them; the conversation doesn't end when they walk away. Be sure to lay out a reasonable plan for follow-up and check-ins. If you're a parent of a teen or have ever taught someone to drive a car, think of it this way...you wouldn't just hand them the keys, hop in for a quick drive around the block, and then set them loose. You “train” with them routinely, you check in with them, you watch the weather and remind them of best practices for winter driving, you make sure they know what's important for safety and what the rules are for borrowing the family car, and you also communicate an expectation of the trust and accountability you've instilled in them. It's the same for your employees- you need to see delegation not as a chance to *get someone else to do the work*, or even one more obligation for you as a manager, but an opportunity to nurture and develop your team.



Be clear when delegating; set expectations for the work to be done and what “success” will look like. Consider SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Time-Bound), and ask your employee to summarize what they've heard to be sure you're synced up on the expectations, including what their role will be in the project or task, any other stakeholders they should communicate with, what level of autonomy they have for decision-making, and the timeframe or deadline.

LET GO – BUT STAY NEARBY

Once you've delegated, although you should step back, you should not disappear. Keep in contact with the employee to monitor progress and provide course-correction as needed to support success.

Remember that good delegation is time-consuming *initially*, but done well, it can set the precedent for long-term success and time-savings.

TEACH A PERSON TO FISH

Now that you're a delegation pro, it's time to raise up others. As employees take on new tasks and responsibilities, work with them to ensure they're sharing similar opportunities with those who report to them or junior members of the team – help them to decide what to delegate, to who, and how. Cross-train, calibrate resources, and create open lines of communication to ensure an agile workforce.

Remember that any time we do something new, it comes with a little risk. This is true for you and the person you're delegating to. Maybe whatever "it" is won't be done *exactly* the way you would have done it, but lay out clear expectations and performance measures, create a culture of openness and an appropriate level of risk-tolerance. Importantly, try to see delegation as not only your *job* as a manager, but also your gift as a leader, to create opportunity for others on the team to grow their confidence and skills in a supported environment.



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UNH Technology Transfer Center (UNH T2)

33 Academic Way Durham, NH 03824

<https://t2.unh.edu/>
T2.Center@unh.edu

