

The art of delegation



It's hard to be a manager. You have a lot to do. You're responsible for making sure things are done well. Chances are you were promoted into a manager role because you're good at what you do. You work hard, you get things done and people know they can go to you.

No one can do it all

There's an old adage, "If you want it done right, do it yourself." And it's only natural to find comfort in doing things yourself. After all, you know it will be done the way you like it.

But what happens when your desire for control keeps you from letting go of projects? The most obvious consequence is that you likely take on too much. And this can lead to stress and burnout.

Controlling managers also risk micro-managing their staff. Trying to oversee every detail of a project can frustrate employees and interfere with the work. Even worse, a micro-manager might delegate a task only to take it back. Micro-managing is a great way to kill morale and stunt employees' professional growth.

Share the load

The best managers understand it takes a village to get work done. One person can't do everything or be in control all the time. Here are some quick and easy steps to become the kind of manager everyone wants to work for:

- **Make a list of tasks.** Keep the ones that are critical for yourself. Delegate the tasks that are important but not critical.

- **Agree on deadlines with those to whom you delegate tasks.** Leave yourself time to review their work.
- **Choose the best person to work on the project.** Try to match employee interests and talents with tasks.
- **Give employees the authority and responsibility to complete the project.** Make sure your staff have room to make mistakes, learn and be effective.
- **Make sure your employees have the training and resources to work on their projects.** Try to remove barriers that will get in the way of a successful effort.
- **Ask for regular progress reports.** Discuss successes and challenges. Allow your employees to find solutions for issues.
- **Allow your employees to fail.** Failure is the best teacher. If the project is critical and failure isn't an option, you shouldn't delegate it.
- **Once it's complete, meet with the employee in charge for a final review of the project.** Discuss what worked and what didn't.
- **Say thank you for a job well done.** Appreciation can go a long way. Be sure to express your thanks.

It might be hard to relinquish control, but delegation can lighten your workload and empower your staff. Over time, it will help your employees gain more skills. And this will leave you with not only a more talented workforce, but more time on your hands.

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