Let's Talk: The art of delegation

Presenter – Daphne Parker, Clinical Manager

Hi, my name is Daphne Parker, and I'm here to talk a little bit today about delegation. It's hard to be a manager, I've found. There's so much to do, we've got a lot we're responsible for, and we have to make sure that those things are done well. And I know that one of the reasons I got into this role is because I was good at what I did, I was a good individual contributor. But part of what I've learned a lot about in my role as a manager is that I really need to delegate things to give others opportunities, and also to give myself more time to do all the things I have to do. So I want to talk to you about some things to think about when you're delegating to your team.

No one can do it all

So there's an old adage, if you want something done right, you need to do it yourself. After all, if you do it, you know it's going to be done the right way, your way. But what happens when your desire for control keeps you from letting go of projects? Well, the most obvious consequence is that you likely take on too much, and this can really lead to a lot of stress and burnouts. Controlling managers also risk micromanaging their staff, and this can really be disempowering to the staff, and they can become disengaged.

Share the load

So how can you share the load? The first thing that you need to do is make a list of tasks, and keep the ones that are critical for yourself. Delegate the tasks that are important, but not critical. Choose the best person to work on the project, is also another thing to think about. Try to match the employee interests and talents with tasks. Then you want to be sure and agree on deadlines with those to whom you've delegated tasks. Leave yourself time to review their work.

Give space to succeed

As your employees are working on a project, be sure and give them the full responsibility and authority to complete the project. You want to make sure they have what they need to succeed, and remove any barriers. You also want to check in regularly, just to see if they're having any questions or challenges, and really want to help them to come up with their own solutions. You don't want to take the project over and disempower them. Really, you also need to let them have an opportunity to fail. Failure's how most of us learn, and we want them to feel empowered, even in failure, to come up with the solutions and the next steps.

Final follow up

Once a project's complete, be sure to meet with the employee in charge for a final review. Discuss what worked and what didn't, and be sure to say thank you for a job well done. Appreciation can go a long way. Delegation can be hard to launch, but once you're into it, you'll really appreciate the returns.

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