

Delegating Work and Responsibility

Delegation is how a manager successfully assigns work to an employee to be accomplished. Delegation is a three-step process including assigning responsibility, giving authority, and creating accountability. These steps can vary between organizations, but the process must be done smoothly and concretely. Additionally, delegation can be completed based on assumed working agreements that are already established by prior delegation relationships. Delegation techniques are adjusted according to the nature of the work itself, and by the type of person who will be completing the work. Delegation is an essential skill for managers to use to make the best of their own time and resources.

In a small business setting, delegation plays a special role. A few managers, or even a sole manager, have responsibility for numerous tasks to be accomplished. It is essential for them to prioritize and see what work can be given to others. There are certain jobs that can't be passed onto others, but many jobs have elements that can be given to others in manageable increments. In some work environments delegation occurs to make use of other people as a resource. Well-adapted managers also realize that some employees may have more knowledge or expertise than they do in certain fields based on individual experiences. They are then able to give the work to the people that are best suited to complete it. Formal procedures and job specialization may also govern the delegation process.

There are problems that occur with delegating responsibilities, but they can be overcome by ensuring that you work with capable people and have good communication

with them. Many workers will resist authority placed upon them if they fear making a mistake. When delegating and passing responsibility, be sure that workers clearly understand the task and their authority over it. Also communicate in a direct manner. Understand that workers are different. For example, some people flourish with additional responsibility, and others dislike the challenge without added compensation. Managers may also not like to delegate if they feel that they do not have quality personnel to help with the situation, or if they feel that it would be easier for them to accomplish the work by themselves. Managers are the ones that have to deal with the ultimate outcomes. If their delegation is not successful, they are ultimately responsible for the accurate completion of the work and will receive reprimands for poor or incomplete work.

Decentralization is a type of authority structure in a business setting that flourishes on delegation of authority. The basic idea is that there are not large layers of management and one way to do things. There are many ways to get goals met through various people. Authority is based on expertise and accomplishment, not on job titles and age. It is also essential to have direction and trust in order to keep control of the business. Business functions are a shared effort and process instead of assignments being passed down through layers of management. By delegating responsibility in a coordinated manner, there is more of a fluid flow of ideas from various people. Many workers respond positively towards independence and empowerment when they are delegated an assignment.

References:

(2002). Successful Delegation. *Business The Ultimate Resource*. Cambridge: Bloomsbury Publishing.