

Delegate. Do. Deliberately.

I came across a LinkedIn article called "[Key Reasons Delegating Is SO Difficult and What To Do About It](#)" on 07 Oct 2013. I'd written something about "Deliberate delegation" before, and this post caught my eye. It seems that the skill and/ or art of delegation continues to mystify many leaders throughout the leadership spectrum, and I thought I'd weigh in on this.



Do look up the definition of "[delegate](#)" and "[delegation](#)" before you continue. Be clear that "delegation" is NOT how your Boss dumps tasks that he or she doesn't want to do on you. If you have been tasked to be your Boss' representative at a meeting, symposium, conference, roundtable or similar event, do make use of the opportunity to put your Boss, and your company in really good light! Do not allow your fear of not being good enough to cause you to pass up such an opportunity. If you know that you have knowledge gaps, go get those gaps plugged before you attend the event on your Boss' behalf! If, however, you feel that you are being exploited, then calmly raise the issue with your Boss and state explicitly why you do not have the capacity to take on the task. Your reasons, of course, need to be absolutely legitimate and truthful, and you might just be pointing out some things about your current job that your Boss might just have forgotten temporarily or simply overlooked. If your Boss still wants you to take on the task, then propose taking some of your current work off your shoulders so that you can better focus on the task being delegated to you. Always be positive about the fact that your Boss thinks you are reliable enough for him to delegate tasks to you!

Now, if you are a Boss, how do you delegate? Are you afraid of delegating tasks to your staff? You don't have to be! Here are some simple rules-of-thumb:

1. Always have one-third of your schedule as "white space."

I've held the view for many years now that Bosses MUST have a third of their schedule with NOTHING on it. That gives Bosses spare capacity to look into things that they should be looking into – things that affect the vision and goals of the company. This white space is for Bosses to dream, sniff the wind, drop in on possible clients or partners and go for events which talk about things on the company's fringes. Or just loaf at the beach doing nothing. Impossible? Not really. Heard of this post called "Chief Operating Officer?" It exists for a reason. For you. Use it well!

2. Know your staff!

As a Boss, you have got to absolutely get to know your staff. Even if you have a staff of thousands, you have to make it your personal priority to get to know as many of them as is humanly possible. Not just their names, but their family details, hobbies, aspirations and why they are in your company. Get to know how their being in your company helps them to achieve their personal goals in life. Learn what makes them feel fulfilled and what they dislike. Knowing your staff helps you to also know whom

to delegate which task to. It helps you to discern which of them can be stretched and which would probably need more time on the job before sending tasks their way.

3. Determine what can and what cannot be delegated.

As a Boss, you need to be absolutely clear as to what you must see to personally and what you can get someone else to do. Draw up a list of those tasks you've delegated to others before. See if there were any that you ought to have seen to personally, unless you were in some way incapacitated. Remember that your own job is growing in tandem with yourself as well, so don't delegate things that would take even you out of your comfort zone. If you don't feel comfortable, how would your staff feel? If they can do it, why should you still be the Boss? Of course, I don't mean this to include things which you might simply have no aptitude for, but rather things which you know ought to be the bailiwick of Bosses and not of your poor staff.

4. Coach, mentor, train, or just develop your staff.

View delegation as a great way of developing your staff, and always with the view that you are delegating because you are taking on more than time allows you to handle. Delegate properly, meaning select your staff well, brief them thoroughly, get their buy-in and provide support which will ensure that they win. As you and your people grow, business grows in tandem. Make full use of delegation to support this!

I hope these points are useful for you. Have a great time delegating, and may your company grow as a result!