

## Delegating with Confidence

Many of us delegate or assign tasks to our team members without adequate thinking process and planning, but with tons of assumptions. This could cause misunderstanding, unmatched expectations, and lead to unsatisfying work relationship. Thus, upfront thinking and communication are worthwhile investment for managers before delegating an assignment to their team members. Done correctly, delegation can free managers' time and energy to work and focus on things that matter. It can also empower team members to demonstrate their abilities or learn skills. By optimizing resources and fostering culture of trust, delegation also benefits the whole organization.

### How to Delegate

**Step 1: Analyze your Workload and Define what to Delegate** Analyze and prioritize what's on your plate. You can review your schedule and analyze how you have been spending your time. Ask how you can improve your effectiveness by freeing up your time through automation and delegation. Once you have some ideas on what to delegate, categorize them into task, project or function. Defining what you're delegating will help you with communication, expectation and calibrating effort in managing it.

**Step 2: Clarify your Intent** Ask what this delegating would mean to you, individual team member, your team and the whole organization, what impact it would make qualitatively and quantitatively. Delegation should optimize your tasks and time, talent of your team member or teamwork. Clarifying your intent will enable your team member to exercise creative freedom and adjust the strategy & execution as required.

**Step 3: Put your Plan on a Page** Writing down your delegation plan put structure on your thinking and makes your assumptions clear. The plan should cover 1. Intent (from step 2), Timeline, Current State vs. Desired end-state, Key Activities (activities that must be performed to achieve the desired end-state), Risks (likelihood & impact of uncertainties that could hinder the success), Available resources and budget.

**Step 4: Identify whom to Delegate** Consider 1) availability, 2) skill, 3) motivation of team members and 4) impact on team dynamics in identifying whom to delegate. If the project or function is too big for one-person, joint delegation should be considered.

**Step 5: Communicate and Agree on the Assignment** Communicate with your team member about the assignment. Make sure that you cover all the topics mentioned in Step 3 as well as assumptions you have made. Having good conversation and discussion is critical to avoid communication breakdown. Expectations and non-negotiable, particularly on timeline, quality and scope should be agreed.

**Step 6: Track and Support** Schedule regular check-ins with your team member to track the progress, provide feedback, coach and remove roadblocks. Do your best to block time for this as it will help you in achieving the desired end-state, developing talent, deepening bonds and building culture of accountability.

**Avoid Reverse Delegation** Assigned tasks or project can come back to you in the form of your team member totally giving up on the assignment/project or asking for your "guidance" with tons of unfinished tasks, unresolved problems and decisions to be made. Following the above-mentioned steps could prevent such scenarios. Should this happen, control your urge to take back as it will defeat the purpose and set the tone for the future.

Ref: HBR Manager's Handbook, [www.achieveit.com/resources/blog/use-commanders-intent-to-empower-your-team-for-execution](http://www.achieveit.com/resources/blog/use-commanders-intent-to-empower-your-team-for-execution)