CASE STUDY: “The Do-It-Yourself Manager”

“Joanne was a capable and enthusiastic professional. She was promoted to manage a group of five professionals doing work very similar to her own past assignment.

“She began her new position thinking, “I was promoted because of my excellent performance in past assignments. Therefore, I must have greater expertise than any of my subordinates and can probably do most of the work better and faster than they can. I will train them when I have time, but right now I had better concentrate on getting the work out.”

“Joanne did not pass on any major assignments to her employees; she did the work herself. As time passed, her hours of work increased steadily and she was less and less available to her peers – and to her own supervisor, with whom coordination was important. Her employees were given only the most routine work, received no training, and actually knew very little about major projects in progress. One actually resigned because of the lack of challenge and personal growth. Joanne was too busy to replace him.

“Finally, after 60 days, Joanne’s supervisor called her in to discuss her performance. What would you have said to Joanne if you had been her supervisor?” (Reference: Robert B. Maddux, Delegating for Results, 1997.)

QUESTION: Why is it important for a supervisor to delegate?

QUESTION: What role does “training” play in the delegation process?

QUESTION: Why do supervisors fail to delegate?
WHY SUPERVISORS FAIL TO DELEGATE:

- Since supervisors are held accountable for results, some of them hesitate to delegate out of fear that their employees will make mistakes.

- Some supervisors believe that when they delegate, they surrender some of their power, thus decreasing their authority.

- Some supervisors have a personality that makes them want to dominate things completely. We see this trait in the way some parents raise their children.

- Some supervisors do not delegate because of a lack of trust in others.

- Some supervisors do not delegate because they are insecure and are afraid that their subordinates will do so well that they will be recognized and promoted ahead of the supervisors.

- In some cases, some supervisors realize that employees do not have the ability or maturity to handle tasks without close supervision.

(Reference: Donald C. Mosley, et al, Supervisory Management: The Art of Empowering and Developing People, 1993.)

WHAT DELEGATION IS:

“Delegating is the assignment of tasks and responsibilities to help employees make their best contribution to the overall productivity of your department. When you delegate you become a teacher.... Delegating takes time, patience, and follow-up to ensure it is done right.

“A supervisor must learn how to evenly distribute tasks, tap the special creativity of each individual, and, when appropriate, rotate responsibilities among different employees. Proper delegation keeps employees motivated, increases productivity, and frees the supervisor to perform [other] activities.” (Reference: Elwood N. Chapman, The New Supervisor, 1992.)

QUOTE

“Delegation is not some mysterious art available only to a chosen few. It is a basic management process that can be learned and honed to a fine edge by anyone who is willing to make the effort and able to get some practice.”

(Robert B. Maddux)
WHAT DELEGATION IS NOT:

• Being “bossy.”
• Being overly critical.
• Merely giving permission.
• Merely handing out assignments.
• Giving employees “dirty work” that you do not want to do.
• Being overly controlling.
• Quick and easy.
• A de-motivator for employees.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION:

• “People cannot grow and develop if they are over-supervised or not trusted to handle their normal duties and responsibilities.” (Reference: Donald C. Mosley, et al, Supervisory Management: The Art of Empowering and Developing People, 1993.)

• “A fault-finding atmosphere – in which higher management is quick to criticize and fails to offer positive feedback for good results – will negate the process of effective delegation.” (Ibid.)

• “One reason delegation is so difficult is that either over-control or under-control by higher management can hinder the process.” (Ibid.)

• “Most important for the supervisor is training employees so that they can do their jobs without the supervisor’s intervention.” (Ibid.)

• “Remember, you are a manager, not an individual contributor. It is your job to utilize your human resources effectively to accomplish organizational goals. You must sort out the important from the unimportant and proceed on a priority basis. The more you develop your people, and the more you delegate to them, the more they can help you identify key results areas and meet objectives. Let go of tasks that rightfully belong to your employees. That includes troubleshooting and problem solving in their areas of responsibility. Be sure they are properly trained and help them when they flounder, but by all means give them a chance to do the job for which they were hired.” (Reference: Robert B. Maddux, Delegating for Results, 1997.)

• Be patient. When you delegate, realize that the quality of the work or product will most likely be less at first. But eventually, as the individual learns the job and becomes proficient at it, the high quality will return.
**Steps for Effective Delegation:**

1. *Identify Work Items that Can Be Delegated*

   - Decide what to delegate and whom to delegate it to.
   - Be sensitive to the skills and abilities of your subordinates.
   - Be sensitive to the workloads of your subordinates.
   - Remember that not all items can be delegated. Consider the following:
     - Upper-level managers spend more time administering and delegating and less time performing operational tasks.
     - Front-line supervisors spend more time performing operational tasks and less time administering and delegating.

2. *Give the Assignment to the Employee*

3. *Communicate Your Expectations*

   - Communicate clearly and in detail what you expect (dates, quality, etc.).
   - Give the subordinate a clear vision of the end goal.
   - Detail the end result, not the method for arriving at the end goal.
   - Solicit their questions. Be sure they clearly understand the assignment.
   - Set up a specific time for follow up.

4. *Provide Training When Necessary*

   - Oftentimes, subordinates will need feedback and/or guidance to become proficient at a particular task.
   - One of your goals in the delegation process is to develop your subordinates. Be patient and provide the necessary training for your subordinates to succeed.

5. *Follow Up*

   - Provide feedback. Make adjustments as necessary.
     - Give corrective feedback in an appropriate manner.
     - Provide *positive* feedback as well as *negative* feedback.
Hiring the Right Person

- Positive attitude.
- High energy level.
- Enthusiasm.
- Competitive spirit (*self-starter*).

Hiring the Top 10%

- Identify top 10% employees.
- List their desirable qualities.
- Prioritize the list in order of importance to the position.
- Hire those who have the qualities you want.

10 Reasons to Delegate

- You don’t want to lead an army of one.
- You’ve moved from doing to directing.
- You are responsible for the growth of others.
- You can’t get everything done yourself.
- You don’t want to create indispensable and unpromotable people.
- You need to get the best return on your personnel dollars.
- You can increase your control and power.
- You will have more time for important matters.
- Help your organization prepare for the future.
- You need to compensate for your physical limitations.
WHAT TO DELEGATE

Consider the:

• Employee’s needs.
• Delegator’s needs.
• Organization’s needs.
• Nature of the work versus the employee’s style

WHAT NOT TO DELEGATE

• Praise that is rightfully yours to give.
• Disciplinary action that is yours to give.

HOW TO DELEGATE WORK

• Set a clear objective.
• Assign the project or task, identify milestones, and assign a completion date.
• Provide necessary information and guidance.
  ▶ Provide information and data.
  ▶ Suggest approaches.
  ▶ Describe results desired.

• Clearly state the level of authority assigned.
  ▶ Resource control granted.
  ▶ Frequency of follow-ups required.

• Provide feedback.