

The Buck Stops Here

The Success Series: Effective Delegation

By Stefan Swanepoel

Introduction

One of our most beloved Presidents, Ronald Reagan, once said: “Surround yourself with the best people you can find, delegate authority, and don't interfere.” Wise words, as delegation is a skill which everyone has heard of, but few truly understand. Sadly it is often used as an excuse for shifting failure onto the shoulders of others. However, in its positive form it's an act of authorizing subordinates to make certain decisions; allowing your team to realize their full potential. Here are 5 simple steps taken from The Success Series (www.iSucceed.com) that will help you maximize this entrustment skill.

1. Outline the Task: Understand the task yourself before delegating it. Determine if the task is suitable to be delegated. Establish realistic deadlines. Ensure that they know what you want, what authority they have and that they have the actual knowledge and expertise to complete the task.

2. Facilitate Information and Communication: Establish access to all necessary information sources and open channels for the regular flow of communication between you and the team undertaking the task. Communicate goals, targets, expected results and timelines so that there is no uncertainty regarding the desired result.

3. Define the Boundaries and Rules: In essence, delegation is the abdication of authority and the loss of power over the subsequent process. To obtain the desired results, make certain at the outset that everyone understands the limitations and regulations and what criteria will be taken into consideration in to determine whether the task has been successfully completed.

4. Allow for Growth: One cannot relinquish responsibility through delegation. This is especially true with people that have not yet had sufficient opportunity to gain the skills necessary to complete the task. These skills are usually developed gradually over time by starting small and building experience, knowledge and confidence.

5. Manage the Result: Monitor, but don't persecute – provide guidance and input, don't decide. Give them the space necessary to grow. Measure the results objectively on predetermined criteria and standards that were explained at the outset. Praise and encouragement foster an acceptable outcome. In the case of an inadequate result, consider your own lack of effectively managing the delegation progression. Remember, you can delegate authority but you can never delegate responsibility.

In Closing

Handing over authority is one of the hardest things most people to do because with it you also confer a wide range of freedom. Therefore, never expect a result that is exactly what you would have achieved. You didn't do the task – you turned over the reins, remember. Don't fret too much. It is a vital stage of growth and the benefits are huge. Good delegation saves you time, develops a formidable team, motivates, builds loyalty and above all grooms successors.

Acknowledgement

This article is part of “*The Success Series*” by Stefan Swanepoel author of 11 books and whitepapers, and a celebrated speaker to more than 250,000 people on five continents. Stefan is CEO of The RealtyU® Group, the largest real estate education, training and career development company (www.RealtyU.com) in the US.