The 12 Rules of Successful Delegation

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Delegation is one of the most important managerial skills. Delegation saves time and money, builds people and team skills, grooms successors and motivates teams. Poor delegation sucks! Ask any employee. It causes frustration, de-motivates and confuses people and teams. To be successful, business leaders, managers and executives need to develop proper delegation skills. These 12 rules of delegation should help you out.

1. **Delegation is a two-way street.**
   That's right! Delegation is meant to develop you and the people you work with. Consider what you are delegating delegating to build people, get rid of work you don't like to do or to develop your team?

2. **To succeed you need to let go.**
   You can't control everything, so let go and trust the people you work with. Hand over those tasks to other people that are stopping you from reaching your full potential.

3. **Create a delegation plan.**
   Use a delegation matrix containing your people, the main task components and how you can develop your people to get the work done. This will help your people better understand the expectations being set.

4. **Define the tasks that must be done.**
   Make sure that the task can be delegated and is suitable to be delegated. Some things you have to do and others can be done by someone else. Be clear on what the task is and is not. People like clarity when being delegated to, so ensure you are clear. If you are not clear, your people will not be clear either and you will be disappointed. Worst of all, your people will feel like failures. Not cool!

5. **Select and assign who will take on the task.**
   Be clear on your reasons for delegating the task to that person or team. Be honest with yourself. Make sure you answer the question what are they going to get out of it and what you are going to get out of it? Think of it as listening to the radio station WII-FM (what's in it for them). It's a good motivator.

6. **Make sure you consider ability and training needs.**
   The importance of the task may need to be defined. Can the people or team you have in mind do the task? Do they understand what needs to be done? If not, you can't delegate it to them. If resources are an issue, sit your team down and move things around or develop a mentoring-support program that enables your people.

7. **Clearly explain why the job or task needs to be done.**
   Discuss why the job is being delegated and how it fits into the scheme of things. Don't

be afraid to negotiate points that are discussed when appropriate. Don't say that the job is to be done "because I said so" or "because we are told to do it." For your people to own the task you must own the task. Reframe and rephrase it so you have ownership.

8. **State the required outcomes and results.**
Answer questions like what must be achieved, what the measurements will be and clarify how you intend to decide that the job was done successfully.

9. **Consider resource availabilities when delegating.**
Common challenges arise with every person and team including people, location, time, equipment, materials and money requirements. These are important concerns and should be discussed and solved creatively. Be prepared.

10. **Get agreement on timeline and deadlines.**
Include a status reporting feature to ensure things are getting done. When is the job to be done? What are the ongoing operational duties? What is the status report date and how is will it be supplied or reviewed? Ask for a summary in their words and look for reassurance that the task can be done. Address any gaps and reinforce your belief in the individual or team's ability. They need to know you trust them.

11. **The two-way street can be multi-directional intersection.**
Look around, support and communicate. Speak to those people who need to know what is going on. Check your stakeholders list and make sure you inform them of the responsibilities you have delegated. Do not leave it up to the individual or team to keep them in the loop. Keep politics, the task profile and task importance in mind.

12. **Provide and receive feedback.**
It is important that you let people know how they are doing and if they are achieving their aim. Don't get into blame-storming. You must absorb the consequences of failure, create an environment where failure is an opportunity to grow and pass on the credit for success. Pay it forward if you can.

Delegation should be used as a tool to develop you and your people. The better you are at delegation, the better the people around you and your teams will be. It is part of Command Skills and should be used to let go and trust in your people. The difference between success and failure is often a matter of letting go and delegating.

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