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PROMOTE TEAM EFFECTIVENESS
BSBWOR402A



by

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This book supports BSBWOR402A Promote team effectiveness in the BusinessServices Training Package.

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Purpose, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

DELEGATING AND ASSIGNING WORK TO STAFF

Delegation is the act of passing a task for which you are accountable onto a staff member for completion. Usually it is one of your lesser tasks, as delegating your core tasks is akin to abdicating your position. Assigning work is pretty much the same thing.

To successfully delegate or assign work to someone you must provide them with the following:

Description	A description of what they are meant to be doing.
Deadlines	When should they have it done by.
Desired outcomes	What your expectations are as to the outcomes of the task. Many managers do not supply this and get unexpected results.
Responsibility	A sense that they are responsible for the task.
Resources	The resources they will need to complete the task. Assigning a task to someone but not giving them the resources to complete that task can demoralise staff as well as ensuring the failure of the task.
Authority	Some work requires people to have authority over others, or at least authority to request goods and services.
Performance Indicators	If the work is likely to run over several weeks or months, or is a recurring task, then examine the possible use of Performance Indicators.

In allocating a task to a person it is important to spend sufficient time discussing the work with them to ensure that both of you understand each other. As the manager it will be your responsibility to ensure that this communication happens. You will need to question the employee and to use active listening techniques to perceive how they view the task.

There is also the degree to which you delegate responsibility. For example, a fairly inexperienced person should be supervised more than the office guru when you assign them work. This raises an interesting question for managers: who should you delegate what jobs to?

Assigning work to staff is often more than simply trying to get a task accomplished. Jobs with little importance or urgency can often be used as learning exercises for staff. Identify less experienced employees and assign them such tasks to build up their knowledge, skill and confidence. However, ensure that when you do this that the person has the skills (or the ability to develop the skills) to do the job. Allocating work to someone who has no chance of being able to perform it, nor the ability to develop the skills to perform it, is more likely to discourage them than be a personal development exercise.

More important or urgent tasks should be allocated to an experienced staff member. However it may be worthwhile to assign a less experienced employee to assist them in order to learn. What's more, this gives the experienced employee an opportunity to develop their supervisory skills. If you do this, ensure that you take a moment to discuss the fact with the experienced employee and give them a few tips on how to supervise. In this way they will not perceive the presence of the inexperienced staff member as a burden, but rather as an opportunity to develop leadership skills to help them climb the corporate ladder.

Example

Today was one of *those* days, thought Jerry. Busy, with a million and one things coming through his door. Why was it he sighed so often these days?

A budget report was due by Friday and he knew that he had neither the time nor the inclination to write it himself. It was a fairly mundane report. Nothing more than a list of all costs for the month as compared to the budget allocated, and then an explanation of any discrepancies between expected spending and actual spending.

Checking the calendar he saw that he had two staff with some free time this week. Peter was a senior Consultant earmarked for management in the firm. He could do the report in his sleep. The other was Selena, a recent graduate whose studies should have covered this kind of work.

Exercise 6

1 List the options available to Jerry in assigning this work.

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2 Which option would you choose and why?

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3 How could Jerry maximise Selena's learning experience, develop Peter's supervisory experience and still get the task done?

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DELEGATING WORK YOU ARE NOT GOOD AT

The plain truth is that not everyone is good at everything. As a leader you are no different. There are bound to be some tasks that you do not do well. Performing these can lower your confidence and also damage your reputation if you are constantly under-performing in that area. For example, you may lead a team of engineers and one of your duties involves some accounts work, a task you hate and are particularly bad at.

How do you fix this?

Delegation is both a common solution and a good one. In the above example, you would simply find one of your staff who is good at accounts and delegate the work to them. This will free you to concentrate on the work you do best and also provide more time for managing your team.

A few words of warning. You may not have a staff member who can do the work, and rather than delegate to someone who may be just as bad as you in this area, you may have to find another solution. Also, if you are delegating a key leadership task then ask yourself how suited to leadership you really are.

DELEGATING DECISIONS

It is not uncommon for leaders of teams to try to make all the decisions themselves, and under certain circumstances this may work. However, if the team grows, if complexities occur or if the manager is given greater responsibilities, this method of decision making is likely to fail. Hence there are compelling reasons why a leader should consistently delegate most decisions to selected subordinates. Here are three of those reasons.

Time constraints - Making a good decision is hard, time-consuming work, and no leader can make several good decisions continuously day after day. So leaders must reserve the most important decisions for themselves, and delegate the rest.

Team development - Leaders cannot expect their subordinates to grow without giving them the opportunity to make real decisions that will have real consequences for the organisation.

Team coherence - Finally, the leader who is willing to delegate almost all decisions to subordinates has an opportunity to build a much stronger and more coherent team than does the leader who tries to make all the decisions himself. Why? Because the leader therefore has more time to put into the effort of building the team and developing the individuals within it.



Exercise 7

Which of the following decisions or work should you delegate and why?

1 You lead a workshop team and a sudden increase in your budget permits you to either buy a new piece of equipment or hire a new employee. A cost benefit analysis has been made of both options.

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2 You are the senior engineer leading a team on a \$4 million project and your office requires some new stationery.

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3 You run a restaurant and a decision needs to be made about extending opening hours.

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4 You are the team leader controlling the development of a new accounting package for a large company. One of your duties involves documenting team progress. However you really hate writing and are not particularly good at documentation.

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5 You are the foreman of a building site and one of your staff will have to be retrenched because of budget restrictions. You hate having to reprimand or fire staff.

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