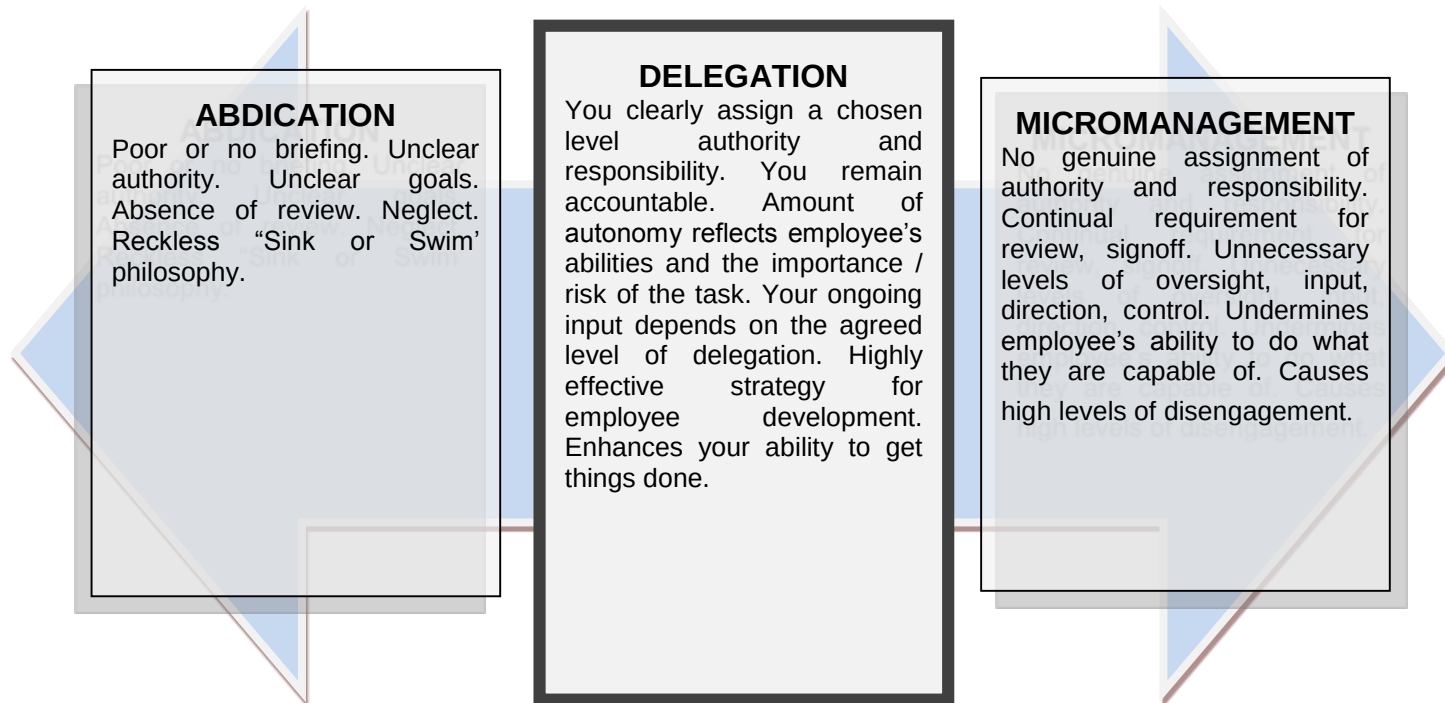


TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

Scope and Purpose

Delegation is the assignment of authority and responsibility to another person to carry out specific activities. However, unlike when 'Setting Expectations', the person who delegated the work remains accountable for the outcome of the delegated work. Delegation empowers a subordinate to make decisions, i.e. it is a shift of decision-making authority from one organisational level to a lower one. Delegation, if not properly done, is abdication. The opposite of effective delegation is micromanagement, where a manager provides too much input, direction, and review of delegated work.



Six Levels of Delegation

LEVEL	DEGREE OF DELEGATION AND WHEN TO USE
1. <i>"Do exactly as I say."</i>	This is instruction. There is no delegated freedom at all.
2. <i>"Investigate this situation - tell me what you find. I'll decide."</i>	You want research or analysis but not recommendation. You retain responsibility for assessing options and making decisions.
3. <i>"Give me your analysis of the situation (reasons, options, pros and cons) and recommendation. We'll decide together"</i>	This has an important difference to the above. You've asked to see the analysis and recommendation, and you will check the thinking and the plan together before jointly deciding. This level of delegation encourages and enables the analysis and decision to be a shared process, which can be very helpful in coaching and development.
4. <i>"Explore this and make a decision, but discuss with me before you proceed"</i>	Now the employee begins to control the action. The default is now positive rather than negative. They are trusted to assess the situation and options and are probably competent enough to implement too, but for reasons of task importance, or competence, you prefer to retain a veto. This is a very liberating change in delegated freedom. You can also use when seeking responsibility from above. For example, "Here is my analysis and recommendation; I will proceed unless you tell me otherwise by (date)."
5. <i>"Solve this problem within parameters I set. If you can, go ahead otherwise check with me."</i>	This delegation level saves even more time. It also enables a degree of follow-up by the manager as to the effectiveness of the delegated responsibility, which is necessary when people are being managed from a greater distance, or more 'hands-off'. The level also allows and invites positive feedback by the manager.
6. <i>"Decide what action needs to be taken and manage the situation accordingly. It's your area of responsibility now."</i>	The most freedom that you can give to the employee, and not generally used without formal change of the employee's job role. It's the delegation of a strategic responsibility. This amounts to delegating part of your job - not just a task or project. You'd use this utmost level of delegation when developing a successor, or as part of an intentional and agreed plan to devolve some of your job accountability in a formal sense.

What's the Right Mindset?

1. **Delegation should be win-win.** Growth for the employee and leverage for me as the manager.
2. I need to **plan** this delegation and consciously **decide how much authority I delegate.** (Which of the **6 levels of delegation** will I use)?
3. I'll make sure the **employee is comfortable with the level of delegation** I propose before I 'contract' with them for the delegation.
4. Preferably I will **delegate whole tasks rather than pieces** of an integrated project.
5. If I **over-delegate** (beyond the employee's capability) **or micromanage**, I will **fail**.
6. I will base the delegation on a **written brief**.
7. I'm responsible for **supporting their success**. I will schedule reviews and checks.
8. I will consider **who else needs to be informed?** (Communicate the delegation to peers / superiors)
9. I will give **feedback on results**. (It is essential to let the employee know how they are doing, and whether they have achieved their aims. If not, you must review with the employee why things did not go to plan, and deal with the problems. You must absorb the consequences of failure, and pass on the credit for success).

Key Points

1. **Match assignments with the employee's competence...** Use the 6 Levels of delegation to choose an approach that balances the skill, ability and confidence of the employee against the risk and impact of failure for the business. Explain your decision and check the employee is comfortable with that. In particular be clear whether decision making is delegated or joint.
2. **Be specific...** It's easy to give an employee a vague assignment ("You take care of the Xmas party") only to find out later that what they understood this to mean is very different from what you intended. The employee needs to know what tasks they're responsible for and what the finished product should look like. Be a **S.M.A.R.T** delegator.
3. **Don't micromanage.** Tell the employee enough so they understand what's expected, but not so much that they have no chance to think for themselves. Leaving the employee room to make some independent decisions lets them choose a style of doing things that suits them best. It makes them feel respected and trusted and part of the team. It builds a greater sense of pride and ownership in the project, and it gives them a chance to develop their skills and confidence. The employee might not do the outstanding job that you think you would have, but it might still be good enough, with the benefit to the employee probably worth the tradeoff..... ***So learn to let go!***
4. **Agree on deadlines.** Make sure the employee understands when they can expect things they need from other people, when their part of the task needs to be done, and how this fits in with the larger timeline for the whole project.
5. **Follow up.** Check back with the employee who has been delegated the task to find out how it's going. Ask if any questions have come up since you last talked. Make sure the employee has what they need to do the job, and that they're getting the necessary assistance and cooperation from others.
6. **Use a standard template for** setting expectations when you delegate larger projects. For instance, you might want to describe the outcome you want, including the criteria that must be met, list the reasons why and discuss the roles, responsibilities and authority of everyone involved.
7. **Adopt a 'No Surprises' policy** and make it clear that if anything gets in the way of delivery the employee is responsible to advise you ASAP so together you can decide how to proceed.
8. **Give accurate and honest feedback.** Employees want to know how they're doing, and they deserve your honest opinion. Praise effort and good work, but also let them know where they might have done better. Encourage risk-taking and growth by treating mistakes and less-than-successful efforts as a chance to learn and do better next time.