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Importance of delegating jobs

By Carole Spiers, Special to Gulf News
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One of the commonest complaints about a manager is that although he (or she) might be highly proficient at the job, he is often far too reluctant to delegate.

Strictly, this means that he is not really proficient at his job at all, since delegation is such a vital management skill. It involves the ability to pass responsibility for the completion of a job of work, or a project, to other people within your team.

They will then take over responsibility for work that either you do not have time to do or which is not cost-effective for you to complete.

Delegation transfers work to others whose skill-sets in a particular area may be superior to yours - thereby saving time and improving efficiency. The transfer of responsibility helps build teams, develops your staff and keeps their jobs interesting and enjoyable.

Of course, it is necessary to determine whether a particular job of work is appropriate for delegating. If you can do it yourself quicker and more effectively than someone else, then it may not be the best action - unless it is a viable option because you need to manage your time more efficiently.

When delegating, it is recommended that the person to whom you are delegating is also made aware of the reason for the work, why they are being entrusted with it, what their boundaries are and the expected outcome in addition to the time frame allowed. These are all important in order that the person to whom the work is delegated, takes proper ownership of the task or project.

Reluctance to delegate may stem from a short-sighted attitude to training and development or merely to a reluctance to entrust others with responsibility. If so, that is a managerial deficiency that can weaken teams and very often lead to frustration.

Variations

There are many degrees of delegation - in fact, a full spectrum of interventions, ranging from a single direct order with no argument, right up to the total handing-over of part of your own job-function. In between are numerous variations of responsibility transfer.

At the lightweight end, there is the commissioning of routine research that will influence a decision to be made by

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the supervisor alone. Next up is an invitation to share in the decision-making process. Then the shift across to asking advice - initially, briefing the subordinate to report the situation and suggest a decision, and then simply asking to be notified of the proposed decision, in case of disagreement.




It's easy to see how these routines give you insight into people's suitability for promotion, and ultimately, help you with succession planning.

The writer is a BBC broadcaster and motivational speaker, with 20 years' experience as CEO of Carole Spiers Group, an international stress consultancy based in London.

Key points: Efficiency matters

- Delegation is essential, even when it costs short-term efficiency.
- There are many grades of delegation, with increasing consultation.
- Reluctance to delegate is a managerial deficiency that can lead to expensive staff changes.

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