

delegation

(dĕlĭ-gā'shən)

v. sharing the work among group members

When delegation is used effectively, you can see drastic changes within your group: higher retention rates, better quality events, and more free time for yourself. Here are some strategies for successful delegation:

Trust. If you believe that in order for something to be done right it must be done by you, you are not placing much trust in your group members. You need to believe in them and their abilities to successfully complete tasks. Delegating also allows for some creativity – trust the creative process!



Teach. By allowing members to hold responsibility and complete tasks, you are teaching your members skills in motivation, time management, and prioritizing.



Delegate accordingly. Know your fellow group members – their skills, talents, and interests – and delegate accordingly.

Leave them alone. Once you have delegated a task, do not look over members' shoulders to make sure it is getting done. Instead, develop a system from the beginning to determine how progress will be measured.

Be supportive. Provide resources and be available to answer questions when necessary. Think of what you would need if the task had been assigned to you and try to have those materials or information available. Encourage members and let them know they are doing a good job.

Don't delegate everything. Do not delegate jobs you would not be willing to do yourself. Also, if you feel a job is far too important to delegate to someone else, take a moment to consider the worst that could happen. If the worst is truly detrimental, you may choose not to delegate the project at all.

Pieces versus the whole project. When possible, delegate whole projects rather than bits and pieces. Your members are likely to feel more involved and accountable when they are envisioning and creating an entire project and not just a piece of it.



Establish clear expectations. You don't need to provide step-by-step instructions for all projects, but if you need something specific, make that clear.

Build self-confidence. Developing future leaders may not be in your job description, but do it anyway! Encourage and motivate your group members!



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10 Ways to Empower Group Members

Here are 10 steps to successful delegation and empowering your group members at the same time:

1. Set a clear and simple objective.
2. Select a group member. Don't automatically choose your best member – ask for volunteers and you might be surprised who raises their hand.
3. Prepare the group member for the project. Remember, delegation should build confidence, so select an assignment that will stretch, but not break, the group member.
4. When discussing the project, ask the group member for ideas. The different perspective may offer new ideas.
5. Assign the project and explain to the group member why you chose them. This will show that you value the member's judgment and aren't just pushing the grunt work away.
6. Provide necessary guidance. This doesn't mean telling the group member how to do the project but rather gives the member all the information and possible approaches.
7. Reach an agreement on how you will proceed. How often will you check in with the group member? How much freedom is there in the project?
8. Provide feedback, whether it is positive or constructive.
9. Evaluate the finished project. What went right and what could be done better?
10. Everyone can benefit from the project and delegation. Identify the lessons the group learned throughout the process.

References:

Marini, R.A. (1988, June). Letting go: The secret to power is delegating. Success, 40-41.
The Leader Reader. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



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