



**PDHonline Course P229 (2 PDH)**

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# **Delegating Effectively**

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# Delegating Effectively

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## Course Content

### Introduction

Making the transition from individual contributor to manager is often difficult for people in a field of work they enjoy. People who have good subject-matter expertise often prefer that role rather than taking on management duties. This is an important distinction, because good management requires a different set of skills than being a subject matter expert. Management skills are based on less job-specific knowledge but more strategic knowledge and management of people. Delegation and development of others is an essential part of good management.

Some managers who have that title may actually be performing more like individual contributors with a few extra managerial duties added on top. They gave up very little of their previous project or client work when they moved to management, but simply took on the role of approving vacations and serving on interview panels. Other than the most crucial of management duties, they neglect that part of their role because it is not their favorite.

This approach—of only doing what cannot be avoided—is not what good management is about. When one becomes a manager, it is important to give up some of the technical or professional work he or she may have done and enjoyed. Being a good manager means getting work done through others by training, motivating, and involving them. It means coordinating their work; it does not mean that the manager continues to do much of the work. Many technical professionals are reluctant to make the transition to manager because they enjoy the specialized work in their field of expertise and may, honestly, not be skilled at or interested in the human relations field. If you have enjoyed the work in your specialty area and love chewing on a good problem, if you find yourself challenged and baffled at how to get people to get their work done and get along in the process, and if you have managerial responsibilities, you need to keep reading. As you learn to apply some of the suggestions included in this course, you will be more successful in your managerial role.

It can be very rewarding to develop your employees, to see them grow and become better contributors—knowing that you had a big hand in that process. It can expand your own level of influence in your organization. It will most certainly expand your employee's loyalty to you. You become a much larger contributor to your organization, your profession, and your community. If you know what to do and how to do it, you can delegate effectively and reap many rewards.

## **Example**

*Gordon is a department manager at a computer consulting company that produces structural design software and information system solutions, primarily for the engineering and construction fields. Because of the speed with which technology changes, there is a pressing need to keep the skills of his workers updated. Gordon is often confronted with new developments in his field that may impact his company's services. His own job responsibilities change frequently. An additional challenge he faces is to help his employees keep up, learn new skills, and accept a high level of changes in their own responsibilities.*

*In addition, there is the issue of turnover in his department. Gordon worries that if he trains his people well, they will leave the company for better opportunities. In recent exit interviews of his programmers and support technicians, one of the things several of them have mentioned is that Gordon and the company fail to keep their professional and technical employees well-trained. This is one reason some of them have given for leaving the company. Terminating employees also say that Gordon sometimes gives them work for which they are not properly trained but hangs onto work that they are capable of helping with. They perceive him as unwilling to give up control.*

As you reflect on the above scenario, think about whether you believe Gordon is properly developing and delegating to his people. Does training and developing employees encourage them to leave the company? How do you actually “develop” an employee?

Turnover is a common problem in many technical industries, but is Gordon effectively managing his department in ways that encourage employees to stay? The answer is, “Probably not.” If you sympathize with Gordon and the challenges he faces, the information in upcoming pages will help you to become a better delegator than Gordon.

## **What is Delegating?**

Delegating is the process of turning over work to others and allowing them to perform this work themselves. The process of delegating is not to be confused with a hurriedly scrawled e-mail message or a hasty voicemail message to your employee telling him to complete the report you were working on because you didn't have time to finish it before you left town. Too many people have been on the receiving end of messages like that from the boss. This kind of handover of a task with little or no instruction and no warning is commonly known as “dumping,” even if the boss calls it delegating. It's no wonder that delegating has gotten a bad name if this is your experience.

On the flip side, many people have worked for bosses who were simply unwilling to turn over any responsibility to them. If you are a competent and motivated professional, you may have experienced the frustration of standing by helplessly while the boss maintains rigid control. The boss regularly lets things go undone because he

refuses to delegate and has too much to do, yet requires that you come to him for approval at every turn. The boss simply won't delegate anything to you. This boss clearly sends the message that he is in complete control and your involvement is secondary.

Encountering bosses and managers like either of the above descriptions convinces most of us that delegating is hopeless. Who's got time to worry about delegating anyway, you may be thinking? I've got enough to do just getting through the day without dropping the balls I already have in the air, so it's just easier to keep plugging away.

Most people in a management or supervisory role find delegating to be a difficult skill to do well. It requires not only a good deal of self-confidence but also confidence in the person being delegated to. Delegating is an investment of time to get your employee up to speed and monitor their progress. Perhaps you can see merit in delegating, but you may have concluded that it just won't work in your situation. Keep an open mind, because this course will help you understand how you can use delegation in your situation, and in fact, why you should.

It is helpful to note here that everything discussed in this course in regard to delegation applies to direct people management, as well as project management with indirect people management responsibilities. Even if you do not have people reporting to you as their direct boss, these ideas will be useful. The methods we will discuss are equally applicable to project managers.

### **Why Is Delegating Challenging for Many Managers?**

If you have employees you could and should be utilizing more fully, you are not alone. There are probably at least five reasons why intelligent, capable, and hard-working professionals with excellent skills and experience in their areas of expertise find it hard to delegate. Let's examine each of these in order to help you understand any reluctance you may currently have. A self-examination will help you to understand why you are not proficient in some area of your current management responsibilities or why you are not getting the results you'd like to see out of your employees. Delegating is no exception. So consider which of these possible reasons or which combinations of reasons seem most relevant to you. The reasons for reluctance to delegate are described below.

- I. The manager feels so responsible and so totally involved in the outcome of his projects that he would be derelict in his duty if he failed to take care of every detail himself. This is the manager who is overloaded and overwhelmed but thinks it is his "duty" to get it all done. This person may truly love the work but may also look around him and believe that everyone on his staff is working as hard as possible; he would feel guilty asking any of them to take on more. But the pile on the desk never seems to get any smaller, and he never gets ahead.

- II. Another reason for lack of delegation is the manager who is highly controlling. She is certain that nobody else can do the work to the exact specifications and to the high degree of quality standards that she follows. This is the person who finds that the work of subordinates is often sorely lacking and is rarely satisfied with work turned in by another. “They” just don’t live up to her exacting standards.
- III. The third reason that the one in charge may not delegate is that he feels threatened by the competencies of others around him. By holding on to information, tasks, and responsibilities, this manager hopes that he will appear more competent and will not be replaced by one of the shining stars in his office. This manager clearly lacks self-confidence and spends a good deal of time worrying.
- IV. A fourth reason managers sometimes offer as an excuse for failing to delegate is that it takes too much time. They continue to do it all because, “It takes too long to teach somebody else how to do it; I can get it done faster if I do it myself.” While this may be true for the short term, managers who do not break this cycle find themselves continually overwhelmed with no improvement in sight for the long-term.
- V. An additional reason for failure to delegate may simply be lack of skill in how to do it properly. Some managers recognize the need to delegate and better develop subordinates while making good use of their own time, but they may have had little success delegating when they have tried. Either the employee refused by protesting vigorously, or they may have trusted somebody they thought could handle a particular assignment only to get burned with that person’s deficient performance. If something like this has happened to you when you tried to turn over work to another, it makes sense that you would be reluctant to try again. Delegation skills can be learned, however, and they are very important both to you personally and to your organization. You will learn how to delegate properly and set appropriate controls so that the final result is in line with what you need and expect.

In terms of the above five reasons, think about which of these may apply to you, at least somewhat. It’s also a good idea to consider what these reluctant attitudes are doing to your professional image with your subordinates. Even though you may think you have covered yourself pretty well, people see what’s going on. They joke about it, gripe about it, and generally begin to mistrust you when you fail to appropriately delegate. Think of how you may have felt yourself if you were in a situation where you were perfectly capable and willing, yet the boss would not “turn you loose.”

With Reason One above, your employees may feel sorry for you. You are bearing a heavy burden, and they probably perceive that you are doing it for, generally, noble reasons. Even so, managers who won’t assert themselves and say, “Enough,” when they reach their limits are not considered to be outstanding managers. Even if your employees feel some sympathy for you, this still doesn’t make up for the fact that you don’t trust that they are capable enough to help you. This attitude makes employees

think that maybe there is something wrong with them or they are untrustworthy. In this kind of situation, they are not internally motivated to give you all they've got.

Reason Two is toxic, and people are very quick to perceive that you are overly controlling. They resent it. This is the manager who treats everyone else as if they are average or less, but assumes himself or herself to be outstanding. If you are this manager, why do you hire capable and motivated people and pay them well if you won't allow them to give you everything they've got? Are you lacking in trust that they will really come through for you? Do your employees have to come to you for approvals and status reports at every turn? If so, this could be likened to having an expensive sports car that you generally leave in the garage, but once a week take out and drive around the block at 25 miles per hour. What a waste! If this reason for lack of delegation is true or partly true for you, you probably need to be concerned about turnover. High turnover is not a necessary evil in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It can be reduced with good management practices, including proper delegation. Turnover is expensive, and you certainly know that good, skilled people are hard to find. If you are a perfectionist and things always have to be done your way, you may not be cut out for management, and there is nothing wrong with admitting that.

Reason Three above is serious for a different reason: this is the manager who is insecure in his role and assumes that others are a threat to his career. This manager holds on to information and won't share freely because he equates holding on to information and decision-making authority as the source of his power. Unfortunately, this manager cuts himself off from others, who begin withholding information just as he does. Freely sharing information is exactly what is going to provide any manager a greater sphere of power and influence, not a narrower one. The manager who has smart people working for him can be acknowledged for his savvy in hiring really good people. By thinking of himself as incompetent and others as competent, the manager brings on the very thing he fears. Others begin to see him as insecure and watch themselves around him, never knowing whether this manager can be trusted.

The fourth reason above—it's faster to do it myself—is a short-term fix that keeps the manager on a treadmill. If you have said, "I can do it faster myself," then you are partly right: it does take an investment of time and focus to train and mentor others as they learn to take on certain responsibilities. However, if you fail to make this investment in your people the long-term effect is that you must keep doing this responsibility yourself into the future. You are not putting steps into place for getting any relief for yourself nor for improving the long-range picture for the organization by developing your people. If you begin today to delegate properly, then in a certain number of weeks or months you will have less pressure on you. If you fail to begin now, the treadmill keeps moving and may even have to be speeded up. Delegation will also provide the organization with the talent and capabilities it needs for the future—an important safety net in many organizations.

The fifth reason, lack of experience in delegating effectively or lack of understanding how to do it properly, is the easiest to fix. If you systematically apply the skills you

will learn in this course, you will become adept at delegating. As implied above, there are some very good reasons why you can and should learn to master this skill. Let's take a closer look at all the reasons why delegating is so important.

### **Why Managers Must Learn to Delegate**

Some of the reasons to delegate have to do with you as an individual manager; some of the reasons why you must master this skill are for your organization. Delegation skills have a positive impact on you and your career, your employees, and your organization, including your internal and external customers.

The manager who fails to turn over responsibilities to capable employees is almost certain to be overworked. The popular and scientific media is full of evidence that overwork kills. Medical doctors generally acknowledge that 90% or more of the health problems they treat result directly from, or are made worse by, stress. With today's leaner companies, many managers may shoulder a great deal of responsibility. The heavy workload and long hours, the pressure of deadlines, the amount of change and uncertainty, among other things, often cause health problems. Reducing the amount of stress and pressure is one important way of improving one's physical health, and sharing the load with others is an important key to helping your life at work become more manageable. In addition, the demanding workload reduces your time with your own family and may compromise family relationships. You have little time for leisure pursuits. If you are overworked, you may pay a large personal price for your reluctance to practice better delegation.

In addition to improving your personal health and family life, delegation improves your career potential. If you develop competent others who can partly fill your shoes you are more likely to be promoted than if you are the only one who knows what you know. Delegating to others allows you time to work on other projects that may have greater challenge for you, enabling you to grow in your own strategic knowledge and experience and become a more prominent player in the organization.

The employees you delegate to benefit by being challenged and growing in capability. They take additional pride in their work and add value to the organization's bottom line. It also increases your employee's loyalty to you for your positive impact on their professional life.

There are equally important organizational reasons why you need to delegate to others. When you retain much of the work yourself, you are not developing the talent and breadth of coverage your organization needs, both now and for the future. If you consistently hold on to projects and responsibilities, you are not helping the organization build a strong bench—people who can be called on in times of crisis (for example: what would happen to your projects and to your company if you were suddenly unable to work for a period of weeks or months?). In addition, many companies today are concerned about succession planning: who do they have in the



wings that has the kind of knowledge and experience needed to step into leadership roles and lead the company forward in the future?

Succession planning and grooming talent for the future is a looming problem for large numbers of organizations as many baby-boom generation workers retire and demographics reveal we can expect fewer replacements coming in. This means that every capable person needs to be fully developed and groomed for the future; managers need to model good leadership and delegation so that younger workers can step into leadership roles themselves at the appropriate time.

If you work successfully to delegate responsibilities to capable others among your own staff, you will also enhance your own career. Your top decision-makers will see you as a unique professional who knows how to challenge and develop others, share knowledge, and in so doing move the organization forward in its mission and its standing. This is exactly the kind of professional who is most valuable. Because of your managerial skill, you may be eligible for promotion, recognition, and salary increases. You may be attractive to other companies in the future.

There are even advantages to your external customers when you delegate more effectively. Customers have additional access to knowledgeable company insiders; there is not simply one person who can answer their questions. If you are the only one in your company who is in the know and you are not available when a customer needs you, this poor service may risk the customer relationship. Efficiently and effectively using employee time allows you to keep costs low and offer value to customers, too.

So, learning to delegate has many advantages for the manager: less pressure and stress, better health, increased time for your own family and personal pursuits, organizational recognition, and career advancement. When done well, delegation can also earn you the trust and respect of your staff. The bosses most of us remember and appreciate were the ones that were tough but fair, not the ones who never challenged us. The appreciation of your staff will be returned to you through office goodwill and increased productivity. As you can see, there are many good reasons why you need to learn to delegate. If you are convinced of the value of learning this skill but know that you sometimes struggle in implementing it, continue reading to learn how to do it well.

### **Questions to ponder**

Think about the following questions honestly as they apply to you.

How would your staff rate you as a delegator?

How would your boss rate you as a delegator?

What would be the greatest personal advantage to you of learning to delegate successfully?



Your own answers to these questions may help provide you the incentive you need to apply the skills of this course. Beyond getting the credit for completion of this course, application of these methods could make a positive difference in your professional life.

### **Understanding Your Own Role**

No longer are you just the practitioner. In fact, you may have little time to practice your profession once you become a manager. Depending on the number of people or the size of the projects or budgets you manage, you may now need to spend the majority of your time coordinating and leading the work of others. As a manager, you function more in the role of a general contractor or orchestra leader.

If you are still trying to carry a sizeable load of the technical or professional work that you have always done, this is a very good indicator that you will have to let go of some of those responsibilities. This is often a difficult transition for many professionals to make. For example, if you are an engineer who very much liked your job as an engineer and were good at it, you enjoy those activities that give you the opportunity to use your engineering knowledge, skills, and experience. Perhaps your top managers saw that you were bright and motivated and tapped you for promotion. Some professionals are reluctant to accept the fact that along with their leadership role and increases in visibility, value, prestige, and income, it is necessary to release some of those very activities that they have enjoyed in their career. If you are not ready to do this through appropriate delegating and developing of your direct reports, then you will continue to be an overloaded and ineffective manager.

Whether you are a new leader or have been in a leadership role for some time, ask yourself whether you are ready and willing to make the transition to technical manager. If you are not, you may find that you are much happier as a significant individual contributor or subject matter expert, but without management responsibilities. The remainder of this course will inform you about advantages of delegating and how you can be more successful in your management responsibilities. Your success, however, rests on your willingness to accept your changed role.

### **Build a Positive Attitude About Delegation**

Prepare for becoming a delegator by working on your own attitude. In the section above, “Why Delegating is Challenging for Most Managers” we discussed a number of reasons why people drag their feet in turning responsibilities over to their employees. Most of these reflect disabling thinking on the part of the manager. If you saw yourself in any of these descriptions, it’s important to reflect on your own attitude about managing people.

If you don’t believe that people can be trusted and that they are fundamentally “good,” then you need to reconsider whether a management or leadership role is right for you. To be an effective manager requires that you adhere to thoughts that people basically

want to do the right things; issues come up when they do not know what to do or how to do it. But people can be trained, and they are worth the effort.

If you are generally mistrustful of people, being an individual contributor may be a better choice for you. Managers and potential managers who believe the worst about people set up a self-fulfilling prophesy, a condition well-documented by social science research. If you believe that people are basically lazy and incompetent, that is exactly the way they will act for you. If you have a positive underlying belief about people, you will be much more successful in managing them.

It's a good idea to do some thinking and some internal self-management before you undertake additional delegation. Get rid of the kind of negative thinking described in the previous paragraph. If you notice that you are thinking negatively, STOP; immediately think a completely unrelated thought that is positive. Your attitude is based on your thinking, so do not allow untrusting, negative thoughts to dominate your thinking. Your attitude should be that delegating as many tasks as possible is in everyone's best interests—your own, the employee's, and the organization's. If you saw yourself in any of the pictures described earlier about why many managers are reluctant to delegate, think about that and work to honestly change your attitude.

If you are a leader and you want to be a better one, approach your subordinates with an attitude of trust—trust that they want to do well for themselves and the organization. You have to work on first extending progressively larger amounts of trust to people. When you decide to trust them, people are usually very careful not to let you down. As they prove they can be trusted, give them even more trust. This is the basis of effective delegation—a trusting attitude.

In addition, it is important to maintain a supportive posture with employees. Tell them what they have done right instead of being quick to point out what they did wrong. This also reflects your attitude and is based on your thinking. Perfectionists are impossible to work with. In the real world, doing work that is “good” is good enough; “perfect” is not going to happen. If your employees have made a mistake, you can problem-solve with them, rather than harshly criticizing them. You can show interest in their work and thank them for their contributions, which will encourage them to perform better and be more receptive to taking on additional responsibilities. Think of delegation with this kind of mindset. Change your thinking and your attitude to allow for this kind of flexibility.

Develop the attitude and belief that delegation maximizes productivity. Your plans and intentions to delegate are greatly enhanced and much more likely to be successful if you go into the process believing that delegation is a very good thing. Remind yourself why you are doing this, what you will personally get out of it, as well as how it will be good for the company and, thus, your career. If you do not sabotage yourself with negative thinking, you will be successful.

### Carefully Select the Right Delegatee

Once you have worked on your attitude, are convinced of the advantages of delegation, and want to get on with the process, your next step is that you need to examine the capabilities and potentials of your staff. List the names of the people who report directly to you and rate them on five categories. Use 1 for low, 2 for moderate, and 3 for high on each of the following five areas: knowledge, skill, experience, motivation/reliability, and self-confidence. If you do not have direct reports but are, instead, managing people as part of your role as a project manager, use this same system to assess your team members.

You may want to develop a table or spreadsheet that looks something like the example below.

Name	Knowledge	Skill	Experience	Motivation/ Reliability	Self- Confidence	Total

It is possible that you will want to assess one employee two or more times. For example, if you have an employee whose responsibility includes field work and also computer work (especially if that employee is very good at one and not so good at the other aspect), you may want to give this employee two lines on your table with an assessment for both areas of his/her job. Use this method if a global or average assessment would not be accurate. Generally, however, an average assessment of each person's potential will be adequate. As you complete the assessment, you may want to particularly consider the general willingness of each employee—their motivation, reliability, and self-confidence may be more important in many assignments than direct, previous experience.

Rate your employees on a scale of 1-5 under each of the five areas, with 1 low and 5 high. This is not exact and does not need to be precise. In a similar way as you do a performance appraisal, this rating system requires a judgment on your part. You are in a management role partly because you have good judgment. Your opinion is what matters and will lead you to delegate items that are appropriate for the competency level of your people. This exercise will strengthen your understanding of the relative capabilities of your direct reports and will form the basis for confidently moving ahead with delegating by selecting the right person or people.

In your total ratings, if an employee scored 13-15, this is an employee you can confidently delegate to. Scores of 10-12 are the people to whom you can begin to

delegate simpler tasks and gradually increase the complexity of the responsibilities assigned to them as they learn and prove capable.

One of the reasons discussed above that managers are reluctant to delegate is that they may believe they do not have skilled, reliable people to whom they can turn over responsibilities. If your people don't score highly on this exercise, ask yourself if you are being too harsh. If they honestly have the deficiencies you believe they have, what can be done to train and coach them to be stronger contributors? You can begin with the employees you have, however, and be selective in what you delegate and to whom. Choose tasks and responsibilities which are less complex and demanding. You may also want to follow up more closely with your delegates than is generally suggested in this course.

Where are your employees lacking? What kind of training or mentoring can you give your people so they meet your need to assign them more advanced work? What compliments or affirmations of their work can you give them that will raise their confidence and, thus, their initiative and attitude? Reflect on the answers to these questions in preparation for delegating.

As you complete this section of the course, it is recommended that you select at least one specific employee to whom you will delegate a particular responsibility. When you keep this person in your mind as you study the rest of this course, it will enable you to more nearly apply and put into action the methods you are learning here.

### **Identify Appropriate Tasks**

Just as you consider the people in your department or unit in terms of their readiness for delegation, it's also important to consider what tasks or responsibilities you have within your purview that you may be able to delegate. Make a list of tasks you are responsible for. Include on your list: 1) non-confidential things you may do routinely; 2) organization-essential functions (things that someone else in your department or area really should know how to do in the event that you were out of work for a period of time); 3) things that certain employees would find really interesting and would be pleased to be asked to do.

As you make your list of possible tasks, think about each activity, task, or project. Don't plan to put on your list just those tasks that you don't like to do. Avoid putting on your list things that are confidential (such as personnel items) or that your boss or other decision-makers have specifically assigned to you. In the case of items specifically assigned to you, get your boss' agreement to assign portions or all of such tasks to particular employees before you do so. You can offer your manager some of the same ideas used in this course, such as, "I think he is ready for this, and I know you would want someone who can do this in the event something happened to me."

Delegation does not simply mean assigning someone additional work. It also means turning over all or a portion of the decision-making responsibility to that person along

with the task. If you routinely expect people to come to you for approval at every step of the way or if you reverse their judgments on decisions, you need to be willing to give up some of this control. This is the real essence of what delegation is. Employees consider it “dumping” and resent it when the boss assigns more work but gives them no additional authority or discretion and no additional recognition or affirmation of their increasing capability. You want to build a climate in which employees will consider it a privilege and a sign of trust that you are delegating work to them. Giving them additional decision-making authority is an important way to do this. The employee feels trusted, and he/she is less likely to let you down.

### **Matching the Person with the Task**

You need to let yourself be comfortable with some ambiguity in matching potential employees with tasks from your list. There are two directions from which you can approach this process. You can begin with your top-rated two or three employees. Then look over your list of tasks. Based on the interests and preferences of your top employees (that you should already know about them), which tasks would make sense to be assigned to which employees? Deciding who to assign work to is not a precise process; you simply have to go with your gut instinct and make a reasonable judgment, with confidence that it will work out fine.

A second way to approach the matching step of delegation is to look over your list of tasks. Pick out two or three tasks, activities, or projects that you could or should let go of. As you think about those tasks, look over all your top candidates in your employee assessment table—anyone who scored 10 or higher—and decide whose interests and capabilities best match the demands of that particular task.

Whichever way you conduct your matching, it is important that you pick no more than two or three employees/task combinations at first, and one may be even better to begin. You will be able to manage the process more effectively if you begin small. When you begin with one assignment and have one success, this will enable you to move confidently to the next one. As you become more skilled at delegating and truly managing the work of others, you can involve additional people and additional tasks, as you should.

### **Get Your Boss Involved in Your Plans**

Even if you have full authority to delegate, share your plan with your own manager before you implement it. There may even be some tasks you need the boss’ approval on prior to turning them over. There are several good reasons for getting the boss involved with your plans. When you tell your manager why you are delegating (because it develops and stretches our employees, it gives the organization deeper coverage for essential functions, and allows me to focus more strategically), your boss will probably be impressed, and that’s usually a plus for your career. Emphasize the organizational advantages and how you believe you will now be available to better assist your boss with his/her priorities. Doing the right thing for the company and

making sure your boss knows it is the first reason for sharing your new approach with your boss.

Secondly, the boss will usually appreciate being part of the implementation of this plan. The boss may like being privy to your actions—not necessarily expect to approve everything, but appreciate being kept informed. Keeping the lines of communication open with your decision-makers is always a good idea. When you come to the boss with a sound plan to delegate, it will seldom be refused.

As you continue to delegate more tasks and monitor progress on those tasks, keep your boss involved in how it's going. Ask your manager for help or advice when needed. If you continue to keep your manager informed he or she is more likely to support and encourage your efforts. Make sure you and your boss are in agreement on your delegation. If you are not, you may run the risk of having an employee go directly to your boss with a complaint and your boss taking the side of the employee. If you and your boss are united, this is very unlikely happen.

### **The Delegating Conversation**

Once you have developed your plans and shared it with your manager, the next step will be to conduct a carefully planned dialogue with your employee. This step should be considered a dialogue or a conversation, not a time at which you issue orders and do all the talking nor appraise their performance. Make an appointment with your employee at a mutually-convenient time. Employees often feel less threatened if the boss wants to see them in their own office, rather than being called to the boss' office. If the employee does not have a private place, consider meeting at a neutral location such as a conference room. You could even take them to lunch. Having the employee come to your office, however, will also work, but warn them you want to talk to them about something good. Use your good judgment on where to meet with them.

You may want to do some small talk with them initially so they will feel more relaxed. Do what feels comfortable to you and to them. Begin your conversation by including two important elements before you tell them that you want to assign them a new responsibility. *Do not fail to include these items*, discussed below.

First, give them some type of compliment. "I have been observing you and I have noticed that you are doing especially well with X," is the idea you want to convey. Help your employee to feel proud. If they were one of your top candidates to whom you could delegate, they should know this. Make sure they know that you consider their performance very good—or even outstanding. Be truthful, but even if they are challenged in one area of their job, now is the time to concentrate on their outstanding areas and why you chose them. This part of your conversation will be more challenging if you have rarely or never given your employees any praise. If this is the case, be direct now but don't overdo it; otherwise, they will think you are being manipulative in order to talk them into doing something they don't want to do, and they will resent it.



The second thing to include at the beginning of your delegating conversation in order to lead you to a discussion of their new responsibilities is to say, “I need your help with something.” This is a simple request, and when it comes from the boss it makes the employee feel good. He or she feels competent and trusted. Asking for their help is a much better approach than saying, “I’ve got something I need you to do.” Most employees, especially the good ones that you would consider delegating to, want to be helpful. It also opens up a give and take conversation with the employee and does not imply that there is no negotiation on this assignment. There is room for negotiation, as there should be. How to handle a potential objection will be discussed later in this course. For now, remember to convey the idea that you are asking for their help because you have determined that they are capable, which you have also told them.

Next, tell them honestly that you are trying to improve your own management skills for the sake of the company and try to better develop the talent you have. You realize there are some things that you have been responsible for that other promising employees need to learn how to do. When others learn these things, this will give the organization more depth in terms of coverage of tasks and responsibilities. It will also help the employee to stretch and grow and will ultimately add to their career potential.

Finally, move to a description of the task, activity, or project. Most employees will listen politely while the boss is talking, but carefully watch their body language as you describe the assignment. Do they appear to be flattered and excited—as employees often are? Or do they appear to be upset, worried, or resentful? If their reaction appears to be negative, you will want to discuss their reluctance later if it persists, but for now you may want to encourage them to think more positively about this new role as you move to the next step and discuss instructions.

Throughout the conversation, you will want to sprinkle statements that answer the following types of questions: What are the advantages for them personally in taking on this new responsibility? What impact will their work have on others outside the department or area they work in?

Explain how their work ties into the company mission and vision as a whole; help them increase their understanding of the bigger picture.

### **Giving Instructions for the Assignment—A Balancing Act**

This step can be more appropriately described, perhaps, as helping your employee develop their own instructions. The discussion of the task must begin, first and foremost, with the end product you are looking for. Describe what result you expect. What should the finished product look like? What criteria does it have to meet? When your employee gets to the end of this project or activity, how will they know if they have been successful? By what metrics will you be assessing the outcome? Clarify the end product or final result you expect before you discuss the instructions with them.



Once the end product is clear, then you can discuss how to get there. Rather than giving your employee instructions for every step of how the project should be done, you can be much more effective if you ask them how they would go about doing this task. Let them describe it to you. Your aim must be partly to help your employee grow and develop. That means that she has to learn to think for herself without your coming to the rescue or spoon feeding her the answers. Begin by asking your employee, "What do you think you should do first?" Encourage her to make a stab at how she would go about structuring or planning this task. Then, what would be her first action steps? If there is some truly essential step that must be done according to precise specifications, make sure she understands what those are and can complete the task to that level of precision. Find out if she has understood any needed instructions by asking her to explain that part of the assignment back to you.

Other than that, ask them to continue describing the steps in how they would go about completing the assignment. Give approval to each part of their approach if they are going in the right direction. If they get off track and go in the wrong direction or forget something important, teach them through the use of questions: "Do you think you might have forgotten something in there?" or "What may happen if you do it that way?"

Encourage them to think about each step and the implication of their choices without giving them the answers, if possible. If the employee is stuck, however, because they have gone in the wrong direction, you can say, "One problem you might run into doing it that way would be \_\_\_\_." This way they can probably get back on track. It is part of your role to point out to them things they may not have considered or anticipated. It's not your role to spoon feed them each detail. If you try to do this, then your version of delegating may become micromanaging.

It is vitally important to remember here that your employee may go about this task somewhat differently than you did it. If they achieve the result you are seeking that should be sufficient, and in fact, may even be an advantage: having new eyes and hands on a particular task may lead to a creative, faster, or more robust solution. Employees often want to please and impress the boss, and they may put a great deal of energy and creativity into their new assignment. Rather than being threatened by their novel approach, think how smart you were for involving them in this assignment! Your boss will be pleased that the organization is being well-served by motivated and competent employees who work for a capable manager like you. Remember that what you are looking for is the result, accomplished in an effective and efficient manner. It does not have to be done your way. With most organizational challenges, there are multiple correct solutions. If the task truly does have to be done your way, consider delegating something else and retaining this assignment for yourself.

If you encourage your employees to set their own objectives and steps for the completion of their new task, they will be much more likely to meet goals they have helped to develop. When objectives are handed down from the boss, the employee is less likely to move ahead with enthusiasm. Proceed with your delegation with this

understanding, and use their participation to your advantage in generating additional buy-in.

### **Overcoming Objections: What to Do if They Protest**

After talking through the assignment with them, employees who were initially skeptical may still let you know verbally or by their tense or unfriendly body language that they are not happy about this new assignment. If this is the case, you will need to discuss this frankly and honestly. Say this to them, “I get the impression that you are not happy about this assignment. What’s going on with you?” Let them know that it’s important that they be frank with you, so you can help them eliminate any barriers to successfully completing this project. Make sure they know you are open to discussing the assignment, and it’s not a “done deal.”

There are three primary reasons why employees may be resistant, and some of their concerns may be quite valid. Prepare yourself ahead of time for the possibility of encountering one of these barriers or objections when you begin to delegate. If you prepare a good response to their possible concerns ahead of time, you will still be able to effectively make the new work assignment.

If your employee complains about the workload, listen to him or her. Have you been realistic in thinking he/she could take this on? Is this person a chronic complainer, or have you overlooked some of the responsibilities he/she already has? If the former, you may need to point out the advantages for the employee and reinforce the fact that you think they are ready for this. If the latter, let them tell you what they have going on in terms of their workload. Can you help them re-prioritize, based on the new assignment? Consider this possibility and engage them in jointly reassessing their priorities. In this way you will be able to help your employee overcome this objection.

It is entirely possible that your employee has a point and taking on the new assignment will be very difficult without additional shuffling of responsibilities. Reassigning some of their work may be an organizational advantage, if you make the commitment to help them out by getting someone to take care of one of their current responsibilities. You will, then, need to have a similar conversation with the newly-chosen employee for that assignment. Your first delegatee may need to help you train the person who will take over this item. This type of cross-training increases the breadth of organizational coverage and develops and grows additional employees

A second type of resistance may come in the form of your employee believing that he/she does not have the needed training or experience for the task. This is often an issue of self-confidence. If you truly believe they are currently capable, then reinforce this. If you agree with the employee that additional training could be helpful, then help them make arrangements to get the needed training or mentoring. Even if they cannot take on the new assignment immediately, getting them trained and prepared to do so in the near future is important. This delegation conversation is your first step.

Another way to handle resistance resulting from lack of confidence is to gradually grow them into the full assignment by negotiating and assigning them a smaller piece of the task than you had planned. If they don't believe they are able to do it all right now, what part or parts can they complete? What things could they begin learning and taking on jointly with you? Breaking the assignment into smaller pieces may help them to gain confidence while they gain experience and on-the-job training.

Third, your employee may also be reluctant to take on the task because it is not of interest to him or her. Unless you have completely misjudged your employee's interests and preferences, this may not be a valid reason to resist. All of us have parts of our jobs that we like better than others. Rather than getting upset that your employee is being insubordinate, stay calm. Reinforce the assignment in an encouraging way by reminding them what they will learn and how it will develop certain skills that will be useful in their future career. Encourage them to keep an open mind about it and see how they get along with it. Some of the negative response may be because they are uncertain that they can complete the assignment well.

Refrain from using the approach, "Do it, even if you don't like it. I'm the boss, and it's not optional." Instead, be positive with them and let them know that you believe they will find it interesting when they get into it and will be glad they had the opportunity. To overcome their concerns and get them on board, emphasize what's in it for them: excellent performance review, new skills, challenging and enjoyable work, career advancement, recognition within the department and beyond, increased contact and influence, responsibility for their own work, decision-making authority within certain limits, and possible pay raise or bonus (do not promise or imply this unless you have the authority to do so). Select several of these advantages that are likely to have the most meaning for the delegatee and emphasize those. Overcome their negatives by emphasizing the positives.

In addition, resetting priorities, relieving them of some assignments, as well carefully discussing how to approach their new project, and setting realistic deadlines (discussed below) will take care of much employee resistance.

### **Negotiating the Follow-up**

If you get this far successfully with your employee by having carefully planned your delegating assignment and conducting your delegating conversation, you are off to a very good start. However, you must successfully complete this next step—follow-up. Without the appropriate follow-up, your delegation will fail.

Follow-up is not simple and obvious. Managers at this stage often make one of two mistakes: they either follow-up far too closely and stifle the employee's enthusiasm by overcontrolling and micromanaging, or they fail to remain available to help the employee through any uncertainties, which can result in inadequate performance of the new responsibilities.

Once your employee understands what is expected and has a plan to proceed, the two of you must still discuss their deadlines and what role you will now play in the assignment. Negotiate a reasonable deadline unless the due date is already set. Let's take the example that your employee will complete their newly assigned project in three weeks. Ask them, specifically, what they think they will need from you. Will they need your help in securing resources or information? Do you need to notify other players in the situation to let them know that Joe is now taking on this project and will need their help? What, exactly, will you need to do? Will they want you to review their work after they get started to be sure it's on the right track?

Depending on their level of comfort with the new assignment and how much initiative they will probably take, ask them specifically how often they want to discuss their progress with you. You may be surprised to read that you should negotiate the necessary follow-up, but to some degree, the level of your involvement should be open for discussion. You want your employee to know that you trust them and respect their judgment on this task or you would not be asking them to take it on.

You will also want to cover yourself here, too. If you are ultimately responsible for seeing that this task is performed satisfactorily from your department, then you will want to know that it's on track. In our example of the three-week deadline, at a minimum you should plan to consult with your employee one-half to two-thirds of the way to the deadline. This is true even if your employee seems very motivated and has already proven herself in previous assignments.

If the employee says she thinks she can handle it and won't need help, you should build in a "safety net" anyway to cover unanticipated problems. Whatever your deadline is, back up on the calendar to about 50-60% of the completion time, and look at both your calendars. Set an appointment to get together then to talk about the project status and make any adjustments that may be needed. This will give you the added benefit of discouraging procrastination on the part of your employee. If she knows she has a meeting with the boss in 10 days time, she will be much more likely to follow through and complete at least some of the necessary steps in the process. Having one or more check-in times will help you feel more relaxed about turning over the assignment to another because there will be time for additional intervention on your part if it is truly needed—but not if it isn't needed. Periodic regular check-in helps you balance between micromanagement and abdication of your responsibility.

Keep your follow-up appointments religiously. Make sure your employee is able to demonstrate some evidence of progress. Let the employee show you what he has done. Be complimentary of the work if you can. If the work is deficient in some way, be honest but kind. "This is a good try (or good start), but I think it could be stronger in X area," is a good way to approach this. You do not want your employee to be crushed and demotivated because you were disappointed. Help him problem-solve and improve his performance.

Occasionally, you will have an employee who tries to convince you that he has done the work and is completely on track with expectations. However, this employee fails to answer your questions or show evidence that he has made much progress. This may be because he is stuck and does not want to disappoint you. He mistakenly thinks that if he doesn't admit it and just works harder, he'll figure it out. This may very well lead to a finished product that does not meet your expectations, thus disappointing both you and your employee and leaving you holding the bag.

Don't settle for vague explanations and justifications. Firmly but politely press for more answers and more evidence. Make sure that your employee knows that he will not be penalized or criticized for not knowing what to do. Ask probing questions to determine where he is stuck. Help your employee problem solve and develop a concrete plan for what to do next. Your employee may be embarrassed that he could not figure this out on his own, so be helpful and not critical. Let him know that the only problem you can't help with is the one you don't know about. Part of your role is to be there as a resource, to answer questions and help your employee overcome obstacles.

If your employee shows evidence that he or she has made satisfactory progress, be sure to compliment him or her. Let the employee know that you are pleased and that this confirms your expectation that they were the one you could count on to do this project. Be sure to ask whether or not they have questions—are there any aspects they are uncertain about? Ask them how they are enjoying their new responsibility. Ask them what they are learning. If you show them your approval and keep focusing them on the positive aspects of their interesting new project or how much they are stretching and growing, you will see them blossom with increased confidence and motivation. The additional stress of completing this work may seem less significant to them as you continue to focus on positive aspects.

### **Putting It All Together**

If you are concerned about whether you can remember to say all these things to your employee, write yourself a brief outline on a post-it note or have your brief outline up on the computer screen or your palm organizer when you schedule your delegating conversation. It can be your reminder list, something like this:

- Compliment/praise
- Ask for help
- Describe results
- Tie in bigger picture
- Ask questions of them to generate instructions
- Point out advantages for employee
- Negotiate follow-up

Better still, develop your own outline or code for how you will guide your conversation. Planning is the key to a successful conversation. You will be more

successful if you do not leave anything to chance as you learn to delegate properly. As you practice, the process will get easier and more natural.

### **Anticipate Your Employee's Learning Curve**

In most cases, it will probably take your employee longer to complete the task than it took you. This is especially likely to be true for the first time through a particular assignment. Certainly there will be a learning curve, and it is likely they will need to ask you questions and, perhaps, interrupt you from time to time. Expect this and remain open to help.

Be certain that your employee knows that you are available for questions and issues that arise around this assignment at any time. A common mistake managers make is to disappear right after they delegate an assignment. When you cannot be reached to help your employee, this is a serious problem for both of you. If you have to travel or are otherwise out of touch, make sure they know they can reach you. Then, be careful about returning phone calls and answering e-mails you receive from them. If you make an assignment and simply disappear, your employee will resent this and will not be as motivated to do a good job. Your employee will want to do a good job if you are available and truly encourage their efforts.

### **If Your Employee Is Not Making Progress**

If your employee is not making satisfactory progress on the assigned task, your follow-up appointment will tell you that. Your instinctive reaction may be to immediately take the task back and plow ahead to get it completed by the deadline. This is a mistake. It lets the employee know that if she just drags her feet long enough, you will come around, bail her out, and she won't have to do it. Next time you try to delegate, she may very well try the same tactic, even though she was thoroughly capable of performing. Don't be too quick to rescue your employees. While you may want to provide them a little assistance if deserved, at the same time you can turn up the heat and let them sweat a little. Remember not to lose your cool, though, because if you do you will cause resentment and mistrust. Although it's rare, the employee may, then, even try, on purpose, not to perform in order to sabotage the assignment. Instead of getting angry or doing the work yourself try the following approach.

When they are not making progress, it's time to have a serious talk and ask them why. Stay in control of your own temper! Simply ask them what's been getting in their way. Help them problem-solve with any unanticipated issues that may have intervened. If they have made a half-hearted attempt to get started but then became confused, help them clarify what they need to do.

If you are the boss and they have not done what you expected, surely they know they are in trouble. Depending on the complexity of the project, you may want to offer to confer with them after they have completed the first step. If so, set a date for this step within a day or two. Check over what they have completed by that time and praise



what they have done. You will probably want to meet with them a few more times before the deadline. Experiencing a little bit of success will usually motivate people to continue doing what needs to be done. Be certain they are clear what you expect them to have completed each time you meet with them. Encourage them by trying to be positive. Tell them that since they now understand better what's expected you are confident they can make steady progress and finish on time.

Since only 50-60% of your projected time-to-deadline will have elapsed at the time of your progress check, this should still give you time to get things back on track. Redirect your employee and set an additional date for a progress check about 75% of the way to the deadline. Before you end the first follow-up appointment, get your employee's verbal compliance that they will make significant progress by the next meeting. Encourage them to say to you in their own words what they will do and by when.

Your employee may be worried about your reaction and their own job security or embarrassed that they have not been successful. Be as understanding as possible. Try to find something—any piece that you can find—in which they did well. Recognize and thank them for that portion, and tell them you know they can do the rest of it just as well.

If they are trying hard but really struggling, decide whether you need to provide them some additional help—a few hours of your own work to complete a segment of the assignment or ask another employee to help out with a portion. What is reasonable and fair and will help you meet the target or the deadline? Be willing to negotiate on this. You should also question your employee further to see if they are trying to do more than is really needed. Even allowing for the fact that they will probably be slower than you are since you are more experienced, if they are completely and hopelessly bogged down you must probe further and investigate why. Discuss with them possible solutions that will help them meet the expectations, without overdoing it and without completely taking the work back.

Remind them that you will remember their progress at performance appraisal time. (Remember: don't promise a raise or a bonus for completing the assignment unless you have that authority.) Tell them that their increased skills and positive results will be officially recorded. As they make good progress, be sure to brag on them to your boss. Make sure their next performance appraisal acknowledges their work on new assignments.

Another concern in the "not making progress" category may be for situations when you have delegated decision-making authority to an employee as part of their new responsibility, and you believe they have made an error in judgment. If the employee did not come to you ahead of time to check out their decision, but boldly proceeded in the wrong direction, you must control your temper. Unless they specifically went against your instructions by not discussing it with you or were blatantly negligent, they were doing the right thing by taking charge. They took on the responsibility. The



worst thing you can do is take away decision-making authority and now make them continue to do the grunt-work of their new assignment but come to you at every decision-point for your approval. This is not delegating.

It is a very rare employee that purposely goes down the wrong path when they have been trusted with a project, and it's important that you keep their positive intention in mind. If they had a logical reason for their decision and stepped forward boldly, this is exactly the kind of behavior you want them to continue, even though they have made a mistake in the current instance. Point out the error calmly, in a non-threatening way. The best way to do this is to say, "I don't think that was the best way to handle this situation. What problems could this cause you down the road? Remember the result we are looking for." With this type of prodding, they will sometimes be able to figure out for themselves what they did wrong. They can often take corrective action and get themselves back on track.

This approach for dealing with mistakes is much more educational for them and encourages them to apply better reasoning the next time around than if you yell at them or just tell them the answer. The boss who can help problem-solve, not find fault, and not be highly critical of an honest error is one who will earn the employee's loyalty and the organization's respect. Your employee may feel very badly that he made an error and is often punishing himself more effectively than you could do. If you are patient and supportive, this employee will now go a long distance out of his way (often sacrificing personal time) to please you and complete the project with no more errors. Be sure you recognize and thank this kind of effort. This employee will never make this mistake again. He knows you could have "thrown the book at him," but because you turned this into an opportunity for him to grow, you will have his undying loyalty.

Make the offer to your employee that you will be available for another progress check if the employee wants it. Making a mistake may lower his/her confidence, and he/she may want increased involvement from you to be sure they are going in the right direction from this point forward.

### **Have You Made the Right Match?**

If your employee is encountering problems, you may be tempted to blame yourself for making the wrong choice for the assignment you delegated. Do not be hasty to remove the assignment from your employee, nor to chastise yourself. In making your initial choice, you had to judge your employees on a number of qualities without having complete information on them. Sometimes people do not react or perform as we expect. The delegation process described in this course will certainly help you reduce problems in delegation but it will not eliminate all problems.

If you believe you have made an error in judgment or in making your assignments, learn from your own mistakes but remain open to continuing to delegate. Even the best managers make mistakes but if you review what went wrong and make another attempt, you will still be successful in delegating more effectively.

## **Tracking Employee Progress**

For each employee that you delegate responsibilities to you will need to carefully track their progress. Set up a system for yourself that begins with a record of the date at which the assignment was made and to whom. Then record any needed interim check-in meetings that you have scheduled and set reminders for yourself so you do not miss these meetings.

When you begin the process of effectively delegating, you may only have one employee with one project, so keeping track of it in your head is possible. It's not a good idea to rely on that method, however, because you will be adding additional projects and people that you need to keep up with. As noted above, sometimes delegating an assignment to one employee may mean that you need to reassign some other work as well. With this in mind, you may be having additional delegating conversations with other employees. When you have two or three people working on various new assignments, you need to be sure that you are tracking what's going on. That's why setting up some kind of a tracking method initially is so important. Just like a general contractor, you are now coordinating the work of other professional, technical, or administrative employees who report to you—exactly like a good manager should do.

## **Accountability for the New Responsibilities**

Employees who are assigned more challenging duties should come to understand that they will be held responsible for this work. If they have the authority to make decisions, they bear accountability for those decisions. While their learning curve is steep, it's probably not necessary to say this directly and put extra pressure on them to perform. As they get more skilled in their new area and gain confidence, it is a good idea to help them understand that they will now be held accountable for the results of their efforts. This condition cuts both ways—whether they are successful or unsuccessful—and the manager has to be ready to act with the appropriate consequences in either case.

If the employee works hard and is successful, he or she should be given considerable praise and recognition for their achievement. When their assignment is completed the first time, sit down with them afterwards and review whether there is anything they will do differently next time so that it turns out even better or so that it is a little easier for them. This is the time to let them know how happy you are with their achievement. Let your own manager and other top leaders know about their good performance. It is your responsibility to make every effort to see that they fall into the category described in this paragraph, i.e., successful. That means getting them back on track if they aren't making progress, as earlier discussed in this course.

However, if for some unforeseen reason their performance is not acceptable, then they need to know that they will bear the consequences. This issue will usually come up

only if you have failed to follow the instructions in this course, perhaps by failing to keep a close enough eye out and provide enough support to them. If your employee is negligent, which may happen on rare occasions, make sure he or she knows of your disappointment. Is there some appropriate consequence since they failed in their responsibility? Is it possible to go back and improve or correct the deficiencies in the work? Is some disciplinary action (written or verbal warning, or even demotion or termination) appropriate? Think about this and discuss it frankly with your own manager. Disciplinary action may not be needed if there were unexpected barriers that were out of your employee's control.

### **Restructuring Your Own Time**

Learning to delegate properly is an excellent way to better manage your own time. Once you have begun the delegation process, you may gradually carve out more available time on the job. Having time for new, challenging projects can be a wonderful way to renew your own spark for your work. You may notice a dramatic difference in your work again, particularly if you have suffered for some time from overwork on the same projects. This is an opportunity that both you and your organization can benefit from as you become more competent in your management role.

As you look around your organization, perhaps you can identify two or three projects you would really like to work on. What could you get passionately involved in if you "just had the time"? Is there something you have had in the back of your mind, knowing it needs to be done or should be done, and you just haven't gotten to it? What networking possibilities could you learn from? What new, cutting edge idea would you like to research? What future project could you begin building a case for? In what ways can you be more strategic and long-range for your organization? Does your own manager have some priorities and concerns that you could begin working on. If so, this will enable you to stretch and grow in much the same way you are developing your employees. You may be able to affect your organization in a more significant way than previously, thus adding value.

### **Now That You Are a Better Delegator**

See if you would delegate and manage your technical employees in the same way that George does, in the example below. Think about what he has done well. Can you use the information you have studied in this course and the example below to become better in your own delegating? Use the tools you now have to make a difference.

*George is the plant manager at the electric power plant. He has a staff of 84 employees—primarily engineering techs and operators and specialized professionals, such as his Environmental Manager. Earlier in his career, when George was first promoted to management, he had a tendency to over-manage because he was very conscientious. He thought that being personally accountable for most of the details made him valuable and would impress his boss. This was the kind of boss he had*

*mostly worked for in his own short career. His first plant manager seemed to think George was doing a good job because he never got any complaints. So when this plant manager was replaced several months later with another type of manager altogether, George was caught off guard by his new boss' different perception of his performance.*

*Fortunately, George's new manager, Will, was a great coach and role model. Rather than being overly harsh on George when he observed things he didn't like, he worked with George to help him understand why it was important to release some control. Will met privately with George every month or so and taught George, through regular questioning and posing challenging "what-if's," how to develop his staff. Will taught George how to encourage them to step up to the plate more willingly. Will was a very effective delegator, and although George had been resentful at first, he learned the value of Will's ways. He began to understand just how much he was being encouraged to grow and how much trust Will had in him. Twenty years later he still considers Will his most significant mentor.*

*Now, in running his own plant, George's goal is to have his operations run smoothly, even when he is not present. George has developed enough depth in his staff that he is able to spend the majority of his time on strategic issues, including community relations. George learned early in his career the value of delegating. He was fortunate to have an outstanding role model and coach, and his plant runs more smoothly because of it.*