Leadership – Delegating Responsibility

Why Delegation is important
- Allows more people to be actively involved.
- Distributes workload.
- Motivates members by giving them value and importance.
- Helps organizations run more smoothly.

What and When to delegate
- Matters that keep repeating themselves.
- Minor decisions made most frequently.
- Details that take up large chunks of time.
- When you feel someone else has particular qualifications, which would suit the task.
- When someone expresses interest in the task.

What and When NOT to delegate
- Situations where you have to change someone’s behavior.
- A decision that involves someone else’s morale.
- Something that involves trust or confidence.
- Something you would not be willing to do (the menial work).

Methods for delegating
- Ask for volunteers. Interest is one of the greatest motivators for success.
- Suggest someone you feel would be good for the task. Silence in response to a request for volunteers does NOT necessarily mean lack of interest. Often, a person won’t volunteer because s/he lacks self-confidence.
- Assign the task to someone. The person can always decline.
- Spread the good tasks around. Good jobs give people status and value. Make sure the same people don’t always get the good tasks.

Guidelines for effective delegation:
- Choose the appropriate people by interviewing and placing your members carefully. Consider their time, interest and capabilities. Specific responsibilities to be delegated to a particular person must be appropriate for the growth or developmental needs of that person at the time.
- Explain why the person was selected for this task.
- Delegate segments that make sense; not bits and pieces of a task.
- Discuss the task at hand. Discuss ideas; mutually set possible goals and objectives. Whenever possible, give those who will be responsible for carrying out a program a voice in the decision-making. Do not lower standards.
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- Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person. Explain what is expected of the person and what the bounds of authority are. Be sure agreement is reached as to areas where the person can function freely.

- Give accurate and honest feedback. People want to know how they are doing and they deserve to know. This is both an opportunity for giving satisfaction and encouraging growth. Allow for risk-taking and mistakes.

- Support your officers and chairpersons by sharing information, knowledge and plans with them. It is incredible how many errors are made simply because of a lack of information. Share their failures as well as successes.

- Really delegate. Most responsible people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder or taking back parts of their assignment before they have a chance to do it. As the leader, it’s hard for you to let go. You want to be the doer – or you feel you can’t just throw them out there to sink or swim. Let them do the job! Delegating does not eliminate work; it simply changes it. As you delegate appropriately, a multiplier effect occurs; the time spent doing a job can be spent enabling several people to do numerous jobs.

- Stress the importance of evaluation. You must not overlook the need to evaluate and measure the extent to which your actions conformed to your plans, if the plans went well, or if the original plans were appropriate and worthwhile.

**NOTE:** Your members are your greatest resource. Let them create; let them put their creativity into action!