Less Time, More Impact

Delegating

Officers or leaders of an organization cannot possibly handle all of the responsibilities and tasks required to meet the goals of that organization. As a result, delegation of responsibility to other individuals is essential. In addition, in those organizations which have as a goal the leadership development of their members, delegation can be an important means of providing leadership development opportunities.

Delegation Does Not Eliminate Work, It Changes It.
Delegating is one of the most difficult concepts to implement. Yet it is a critical element in the successful management of nearly all programs.

Common Roadblocks to Delegation
If delegation is essential, why don't all leaders use it? Some common reasons are:
- The leader doesn't understand <u>what</u> tasks/responsibilities to delegate.
- The leader doesn't know <u>how</u> to delegate.
- The leader feels "ownership" for the task and does not want to give it up.
- The leader wants the tasks to go as perfectly as possible and is afraid to let someone else do it. (This is called over-responsibility.)

Factors to Consider in Successful Delegation
- Make sure the task is manageable-not overwhelming, something the individual/group <u>can</u> reasonably do, but still a large enough task to be meaningful.
- Define responsibilities clearly. Be sure the individual/group clearly understands the task and what is expected of them.
- Maximize strengths through choosing the right people for the appropriate task. Determine strengths and weaknesses of staff and delegate accordingly.
- <u>Really</u> delegate the responsibility-give the individual/group the freedom to make decisions; then be sure to accept those decisions. Delegation also involves the transfer of authority.
- Discourage the individual/group from depending on you to make decisions.
- Agree on time lines and set performance standards together.
- Periodically ask questions to monitor progress on the task.
- Provide support through sharing knowledge, information, and plans with them.
- Allow for success <u>or</u> failure-mistakes are often a greater learning experience than are successes!

Many Tasks May Be Delegated in an Organization: Some examples include:
- Nominating new officers;
- Contacting members for meetings;
- Making room arrangements for meetings;
- Reporting on specific fact finding or information gathering;
- Developing a rough draft of a program idea or action plan;
- Interviewing members for program needs or ideas;
- Taking responsibility for organizing a special event;
- And many more.

Questions for you and your other leaders in your group to consider
- Which of all the tasks in this organization could be delegated?
- What are the best methods of delegation to use in each case (i.e., delegating the responsibility to one person, to an ad hoc committee, appointing a standing committee or other methods)?
- What can you do to make the delegation –the transfer of responsibility- successful?
- What will you do if the delegated responsibility ends in "failure"?
- Are there any tasks that you feel shouldn't be delegated? And why?

RESOURCES:
Yukl, G.A., Leadership in Organizations, Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1981 (Chapter 8).
Family Community Leadership, "The Art of Delegating", pg. 83

The author expresses thanks to Boyd Rossing, UW Extension Community Leadership Development and Evaluation Specialist for reviewing this fact sheet.

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An Oconto County University Extension Leadership Development Fact Sheet

Written by Marilyn Magnin,
4-H Youth Development Agent
Oconto Co, UW-Extension