

MASTERING THE ART OF DELEGATION**By Rick Boxx**

Delegation. For some people it is easy, but for others it can be very difficult. ‘If you want something done right, do it yourself!’ they reason. When you are accustomed to doing work yourself, it can be challenging to turn over valued projects to others. However, often there is more work to be done than one person could possibly accomplish. So, here are four steps I have found helpful in learning to delegate some of the work burden to others.

The first step is: **Recognize and admit you need help.** We find a good example of this in the Bible’s Old Testament. After Moses had spent a very long day judging legal cases brought before him, his father-in-law, Jethro, cautioned, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone” (Exodus 18:17).

Moses had never considered delegation previously but quickly recognized its value. If you have experienced some very long days at work lately, ask yourself, “Is there work I should be delegating?”

The second step is: **Teach your team members your guiding principles and expectations.** Bill was a bank president known for his clean loan portfolio. He prided himself on having very few past due loans. If a loan payment was one day late, Bill expected his lenders to call the borrower – that day! His high standards established an expectation different from anything I had previously experienced.

In Exodus 18:20, Jethro directed Moses, “Teach them (God’s) decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave.” By training your team to understand your values and expectations, fewer problems will arise that you must resolve.

The third step is: **Choose capable, honest, and trustworthy people.** When I was a young commercial lender, my boss and I hired a new executive assistant. On her first week I assigned Brenda a project that could have taken an entire week. Within one day, Brenda had finished a week’s worth of work and had completed it perfectly. Our new assistant proved to be honest, professional, and trustworthy. My trust level in Brenda soared and I discovered the power of delegation. She had significantly lightened my load.

As Jethro told Moses, “But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain” (Exodus 18:21). Hiring the right people is critical for successful delegation.

The fourth step is: **Establish an effective organizational structure and begin delegating.** Bill was the president over five branches. He divided the bank’s operations between retail and

commercial. I led the commercial side. Every Monday, Bill assigned me a stack of files and required me to set a date for completion. If they were not completed, Bill would call. The bank prospered – and he enjoyed more golf.

Completing his recommendations, Jethro told Moses, “Appoint (capable men) as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you” (Exodus 18:25).

As your business grows, you will need an accountability structure and a willingness to delegate the work. By distributing responsibilities equitably, no one will feel overwhelmed – and you still can have the final word when complex or difficult circumstances arise.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe what it means to delegate responsibilities, whether in the workplace or even in a home environment? What are some challenges in doing this?
2. When it comes to delegating work assignments, how easy is that for you to do? How have you felt if someone was unwilling to delegate work that you were fully capable of performing?
3. What are some of the problems that can arise when work is not properly delegated?
4. Why is establishing a level of trust important in the process of delegating work responsibilities? What happens when people fail to live up to the trust given to them? Are they deserving of getting a second chance? Explain your answer.

Challenge for This Week

Are you a person who likes to be in control, who would rather do work yourself than to delegate to ensure it is done to your standards? In many instances there is nothing wrong with this, unless you are taking too much on your own shoulders.

Take time this week to evaluate how well you do at delegating assignments, not only to lighten your own load but also to prepare others to do the work when you are not available to do it. It might help to discuss this with a trusted friend, mentor, or accountability group to get their perspectives.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Deuteronomy 1:9-13; 2 Chronicles 19:5-7; Proverbs 11:14, 27:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

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