Quick Tips: *Delegation*

Take the Lead!

Delegation, one of the keys to being an effective leader, is the process of granting the authority and responsibility for performing a task to another individual.

How To Delegate

Getting Ready

- Set overall goals for the organization (with group members)
- Break goals into smaller tasks which can be delegated
- Determine when projects need to be done
- Determine the interest level of members

Make Matches

- How much time do people have available?
- Assess the member's expertise or decide who has some abilities that can be used to acquire the expertise
- Is this the best use of this person?
- Ask for volunteers—-interest and belief in someone is one of the greatest motivators for success.
- Suggest or encourage—-someone who would be good at the task. Silence in response to a request for volunteers does NOT necessarily mean a lack of interest. Often, a person will not volunteer because she/he lacks self-confidence.
- Assign the task to someone. The person can always decline.
- Spread the fun and responsibility around—-good jobs give people status and value. Make sure the same people do not always get the good tasks.

Delegate

- Instill a sense of responsibility in the volunteer
- Suggest methods of implementation
- Establish a mutually agreeable deadline for completion
- Establish mutually agreeable milestones where decisions need to be made or where progress can be checked
- Establish a contingency plan to determine what they should do if they get stuck or if something goes wrong
- Repeat the agreements (in writing or through email) to ensure understanding

Why You Should Delegate

- Increases number of tasks that can be accomplished in a set period of time
- Frees you from performing routine tasks; therefore, allowing you more time to work on the overall organizational goals
- Allows you to increase your management experience by learning to focus on the big picture, coordinate other tasks, and complete administrative tasks
- Builds a team of strong, informed members who stay excited about goals and will work with you to reach them
- Trains future leaders or makes members more active
- Helps to avoid "burn-out"

Why We Don't Delegate

- "If you want it done right, you have to do it yourself" - You lack confidence in another's ability to perform tasks, it's easier to do it all yourself
- Insecurity - the belief that you will lose control and not know what is happening
- Takes time to train others - you don't have time to train properly or organize efficiently
- Perfection - it won't be done the way you want it

When Not to Delegate

- Confidential matters
- Something you would not be willing to do yourself
- Situations that are potentially controversial or something "hot" that you don't want to deal with

Following Up

- Know the difference between concerned interest and nagging
- Use group or individual meetings for members to report on their progress
- Stick with the milestones you agreed to
- Positively acknowledge progress as it happens
- If necessary, renegotiate the agreement
- Reward achievement accurately, publicly, sincerely, and often
- If necessary, relieve a member of responsibility

Quick Checklist for Effective Delegation

(*Adapted from LEADERSHEETS, University of Alabama*)

☐ **Plan before you delegate.** Determining what can be delegated is often complicated, but use an 80 percent rule. No one can do the job as well as you (or so you think), so delegate when the job can be completed to 80 percent of your satisfaction. Critical issues may demand your personal attention, but everything is not critical.

☐ **Decide to whom to delegate.** This is either someone who can do the job now or someone you are willing to train so they ultimately can take responsibility. Do not delegate to someone just because they happen to be close at hand. Do not skip levels without checking with a person's supervisor. Decide whether the person needs coaching. Consider his abilities, experience, and degree of willingness.

☐ **Communicate the delegation in writing.** Tailor the task to the individual. Back up the oral presentation and avoid the "I didn't know" syndrome. Resolve deadline or priority conflicts immediately.

☐ **Follow up.** Use your personal organizer to remind you when the task is due. Leave no doubt as to what you expect to be achieved by the review or completion date. Resist the tendency to let jobs be delegated back to you.

☐ **Reward successful completion.** Praise is often the most effective reward. Send a thank-you not for a job well done. For unsuccessful or partly successful assignments, review the errors and keep a positive approach to future ones. Remember to praise in public and correct in private.

☐ **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(s) was (were) selected for the 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: Don't insult people!

☐ **Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person.** Explain what is expected of the person(s) 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 complimenting work 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 lack of information and communication. 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 is hard for you to let go. 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 others to do numerous jobs.