

ARE YOU ON OVERLOAD? DELEGATION IS THE KEY

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You probably know that delegating work to others is a great and appropriate way to save time, prioritize your own agenda and to focus on what you “should” be doing.

However, knowing when and how to delegate well is the key to being successful at it. First, what does it mean to delegate?

Del-e-gate: to assign responsibility or authority

Next, are you successful at delegating tasks in your life and work? If not, what gets in the way of successful delegation? Here are a few common factors:

- You have not taken the time to analyze all you are doing and therefore do not have the awareness of what you could delegate.
- You are a control freak and feel the need to do it all yourself.
- You do not have the confidence that anyone else could do it well enough.
- You enjoy doing it and don't want to give it up.
- You may feel that you will not be able to justify the time you have opened up for yourself.

If you are having trouble getting past some of these, engage someone to help you.

Following are 8 keys to successful delegation:

1. Take the time to look at everything you are doing. Make a list not only of the big projects, but break down the small details, for example, phone calls that need to be made, research to be done, whatever it is. Indicate with check marks or other kinds of notes a) which of those could be done by someone else, b) what you'd like to get rid of if you could even if the how is not obvious, c) the things you really must or want to keep for yourself.
2. Identify the likeliest person to do those tasks you want to delegate. Ascertain that they are capable and are not themselves on overload.
3. Even if you are their boss, engage them politely by asking if they are ok with it. Do they have the time and resources to do it? If they are too burdened at the moment, when will they be in a position to take it on? When you show respect for people they will be inclined to help out. Of course, as boss you have the right to insist, but you'd be wise to do it with respect and appreciation.
4. Make sure the person you choose is capable to do the task successfully. If not, you are setting someone up to fail and yourself to be even more stressed.
5. Communication is key. Many people fall short here. You need to have a clear picture of the outcome you want and communicate it clearly to the person who will do it. Often we take for granted that the other person knows, when in fact, because they are creative in their own way, they may produce a very different outcome than the one you envision.

6. Think through the degree of difficulty and if it is not simple, make a plan as step #1. Explain to the person who will be doing the task why it needs to be done a certain way by a certain time. Build in check-in points and a timeline to meet deadlines.
7. Overall, keep these points in mind:
 - Assess each task regarding the appropriateness to delegate.
 - Who would be the best person to ask to do it?
 - Make sure you are very clear in communicating how and what you want.
 - What measures will you use regarding deadlines and quality of work?
 - Remember to express respect and appreciation for the person helping you.
8. Now that you've relinquished the task, use the time wisely, prioritize everything you are doing and don't forget to schedule time for non-work on your priority list.

The benefits of proper delegation go beyond getting rid of some of your burdens and opening up your time. The exercise of thinking through and choosing what and to whom, forces you to focus on important details such as: what are your true strengths, interests, passions and skills. What are those of the others who surround you?

Delegating well requires you to better your communication skills of articulating clearly, listening and showing appreciation.

Before you rush into filling the free time with other tasks, take some time to look inside and ask yourself the important questions.

What is the balance between things you enjoy and things you do not in your daily schedule?
What additional changes can you make now or in the future to increase the positives for you and decrease the negatives?

You may not be able to make gigantic changes quickly, but baby steps will also get you where you want to go.