

Leading from the ground up

For new or renewing leaders



Factors that affect delegation

Leaders sometimes forget that achieving things in their role relies on enabling others to succeed in their work. Leaders are no longer individual contributors but people who coordinate and guide the work of others. This makes delegating very important

The leader who doesn't delegate gets overloaded, becomes a bottleneck that slows down work flow, and ends up micro-managing and annoying their team. Effective delegation helps get work done, builds people's capabilities, and enables achievement, which all build wellbeing and productivity. Here we look at some factors that can influence the practice of effective delegation. They are personality, fairness, and operational needs.



People have different personalities. Each has its own level of ease or effort for different types of activity. Sometimes the work you delegate suits their personality, sometimes it doesn't. Your goal is to delegate and support in way that helps people flourish. This might mean allowing some 'recovery time' when a person has to work in a way their personality finds draining.



Openness to experience

Do they thrive on new experiences or prefer familiar, predictable work?





Extrovert and Introvert

Do they like interactive, high energy processes or to work quietly and internally process their thoughts and feelings?





Fairness

Fairness doesn't mean people are treated the same, as this could result in discrimination and harm. It means equal consideration is given to their needs. To treat a highly experience person the same as an inexperienced one can leave the latter at risk of harm from neglect or the former annoyed by excessive interference. We must give people work to suit their competence, with the level of direction and support they need. Delegating fairly gives people confidence and promotes reliable work and outcomes.



Contingency leadership

Is the person new to the work? Do they need support to learn how to do it? Is the work urgent? Is there lag time? Does someone need more variety? Will this work help their career? Are you rotating high and low pressure tasks? These are just some of the variables to consider so you can delegate to match the situation.



Subsidiarity

This principle of fairness means the right level for decision making and task responsibility is the lowest level where it can be done competently with the resources available. To place it lower sets people up to fail and undermines the business. To place it higher blocks learning and career opportunities, overloads senior staff, and clogs up the work program.



Operational effectiveness

Delegation is about maintaining an effective work flow while building the capability of your team. This makes operational effectiveness a critical factor for how you delegate. It is important to coordinate the work and make sure people know how they fit into the combined work of the team.



Performance Delegation links to higher operational performance



Trust

Building your team's trust in leadership will increase your options for delegation.



Clarity

Be clear about the type of delegation. Map out the expectations and processes for how it will work.

Always communicate your reasons for how you delegate in ways that build people's confidence in your decisions but protects sensitive information about how you evaluate other team members.