

# Guide to Effective Delegating (For Control Freaks)

You cannot grow your business all on your own so stop trying to. It's time for you to trust others to help you. Here's how.



I started my first business in a 100-square-foot office my brother-in-law and I finished in the basement of my home. Over the years the business grew from just me to a few more people and then a lot more people. We moved into our first rented space. Later, we moved into a larger leased space. Finally, we built our own office complex as the company grew beyond where I had ever envisioned it would go.

There were many critical steps along the way that allowed this to occur. One of the most critical was the ability to learn how to effectively delegate. It is a skill that every upstart entrepreneur must master if they wish to grow their business. Without delegation your business will be limited by your own time and energy.

Accordingly, to more effectively grow any business you must master the art of delegation. Here's how.

## 1. Everything Can Be Delegated

The first premise you must recognize is that everything can be delegated. If you think you are the only person who can perform a specific task your issue is more with you and less with those around you. Often we fall into a habit of thinking that we are the only ones that can do something right. This is particularly the case with persons with obsessive personalities (aka control freaks). In the end, however, there is almost nothing that cannot be delegated assuming you have hired competent personnel.

## 2. Make a List of Tasks to Be Delegated

Once you have overcome the mental hurdle of accepting you are not the only one that can do everything make a list of the tasks that occupy your time on a day-to-day basis or that otherwise need to be completed. Once you have created the list determine which of these tasks can be done by someone else so long as they receive adequate instruction. Focus on those tasks that won't be too difficult or time consuming to explain to someone. In this regard, pay particular attention to those tasks that you perform redundantly (e.g., daily, weekly, or monthly) as the same tasks performed with routine frequency are the ideal candidates for delegation and time saving management.

For instance, if you have a task that takes you five hours per week that equates to 20 hours per month or 240 hours per year. If it takes you three hours to prepare instructions to delegate that task and then assign it to another, in the first week you will save two hours--in the first month 17 hours--and over the course of a year 237 hours!

### 3. Prepare Specific Directions

Once you have listed out the tasks that can be delegated and determined which of those that will be delegated you must now set forth a specific set of instructions, per task, to allow the transfer of responsibility to occur. Start by including a brief explanation of the task, the purpose it is being performed, and the goal that is sought to be achieved. I have often found that by telling the assignee a brief synopsis of the basis for the task and why it is important that information helps them to understand the value of their work thus leading to pride in ownership.

Next, list out detailed step-by-step instructions for the person who will be performing the task. Leave nothing unexplained. Although you should have a meeting with the assignee to delegate the task, when writing the steps down assume that no such meeting will occur and that the person will only receive their instructions from your written guidance.

Finally, always include deadlines, benchmarks, or any other requirements for the tasks that are relevant thereto.

### 4. Conduct an Assignment Meeting

Once you have created your metrics hold a meeting with the individual or team that will be assigned the delegated task. Keep it efficient and present them with the duties as listed on the written assignment. Once you have discussed the project and allowed for any questions they may have to clarify the work to be performed finish the meeting with two critical steps:

- **Ask them if they fully understand the assignment.** This will allow them one final opportunity to clarify anything they are unsure of. Only when they state that they have no further questions are you ready to conclude the meeting.
- **Set up milestones and status checks.** As you conclude the meeting remind them of their milestones and that you will be checking in on them at specific intervals to make sure the goals or tasks have been met. This gives the assignee knowledge that they will be held accountable and that you will not be constantly looking over their shoulder during the course of the project.

### 5. Follow Your Schedule

Follow your follow-up schedule with the person or team with whom you delegated the task. Resist the urge to follow-up early unless it is obvious that the task is not being done within the parameters of the assignment.

Likewise do not miss a scheduled follow-up as this may imply to the person working on the task that the duty is of lesser importance and, accordingly, may miss milestones or not perform the tasks in accordance with the written instructions.

Once you implement these steps you will find yourself exponentially increasing your productivity and will truly be able to focus on what you want to do: build your business.