

Delegation

By Joel Levitt

"Supervisors are not paid for what they can do but for what they can control," (stated by Lee Minor teaching How to Supervise People).

In Webster's New World College Dictionary delegation is defined "to entrust (authority, power) to a person acting as one's agent or representative." The first ground rule of delegation is to entrust both the authority (power) and the responsibility.

The supervisor's job is to work through other people. One of the most difficult transitions is from worker (being paid for how well you work) to supervisor (being paid for how well you work through others). One of your main jobs is the development of the people that work for you. Delegation will help develop talent within your work group. The effect of some responsibility on people is amazing.

Resistance: Many supervisors resist delegating work to their subordinates. Often the reason is the supervisor is sure that they can't handle it or he/she can do it better.

Other fears might be:

That they might mess it up and be a bad reflection on the supervisor

Loss of control

Feel threatened by training a replacement

Look bad because other people are doing the 'actual' work

Supervisor's often like their job because they like to feel needed (always being the center of attention). Delegation might reduce their position.

On the other side of the coin, the subordinate might resist the assignment because they feel as if they are being set-up, they are already too busy, and they learned it's safer to rely on the supervisor.

Do's and Don'ts of What to Delegate

DO

1. Routine Tasks
2. Time-Consuming Jobs
3. Skill Improvement Tasks

DON'T

1. Personnel Tasks
2. Job Assignments
3. Disciplinary Actions

This is an opportunity for coaching. Allow enough emotional space for your people to grow. Keep yourself from interfering (we know you can do it better). As long as they are not in danger (to themselves, you, large batches of product, etc.). Let them learn, it will make them better employees. Consider a replacement supervisor as a training ground for future supervisors when you vacation (or go to seminars).

The One Minute Manager by K. Blanchard, PHD and S. Johnson, MD.

The One Minute Manager is one of the most popular self-improvement books for managers. The rules apply directly to maintenance supervisors. We strongly encourage all maintenance managers to purchase and read this excellent book. There are three concepts which are simple and powerful. The issues are productivity, job satisfaction and the effectiveness of the work group.

To maximize the effect of The One Minute Manager concepts, discuss the goals and concepts with your work group first. Reprint this page for everyone to read and encourage people to read the book (supply some copies). Discuss the concepts so everyone knows what the score is.

1. One minute goal setting: Make it clear what they are to do. Write the goals out on a single sheet of paper. The total statement should be less than 250 words. In the words of the author "feedback is the breakfast of champions." The goals should be written in the first person (using I), and in the present tense. They should read their goals every morning (should take less than 1 minute).

2. One minute praising: Catch people doing something right! Look for approximately right. Remember feedback is the breakfast of _____.

Steps: 1. Tell person what they did right.

2. Tell person how that makes you feel.

3. Do it now.

3. One minute reprimand: This is an opportunity to express your anger and frustration before it can build up and become destructive. Person gets any guilt relieved and knows what is expected. Idea: we are not our behavior. Before you reprimand be sure you have the facts. Give the reprimand in a private location.

Steps: 1. Do your fact finding

2. Be specific, tell people exactly what their behavior was that made you angry.

3. Tell them how that behavior made you feel.

4. Allow a pause; make sure the person understands that their behavior was the Issue, not them as a person.

5. Do it now.

Three thoughts on The One Minute Manager

1. Beware: Do you believe that you have to be great at it for it to work? The fact is that it will work if you use it. You will improve over time.

2. It will increase productivity. The better your people look the better you look.

3. Good productivity is a journey not a destination.

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