

Delegation

As much as they don't like to admit it, leaders of organizations cannot do everything on their own. There are only so many hours in the day and a limit to the number of extra tasks one person can do. Learning how to delegate may be one of the hardest things the leader of an organization does but it is very important for your organization. Keeping other members involved in tasks usually makes them care more and helps decrease the rate of members leaving the organization.

Principles of delegation –

- Assigning responsibility to members does not lessen your responsibility. It gives you the capacity to handle greater responsibility.
- Never assign tasks to a member solely because this task is unpleasant to you.
- Delegate only if you have confidence that the member is capable of handling the task.
- Delegating allows another to complete a task his or her way, not necessarily, as you would have done it.
- Even though you may be able to do the task better or faster, delegating allows for the growth of others.
- Delegating sometimes involves teaching someone how to complete a task. How else will your members know how to operate the group when you've graduated?
- Delegation is most successful when someone expresses an interest in the task, when he or she has a specific skill which would suit the task, or when he or she would benefit from the responsibility.

Guidelines to delegation –

- Choose the appropriate people. Consider his/her time, interest and capabilities.
- Explain why the person(s) was (were) selected for this task.
- Delegate segments that make sense, not bits and pieces of the task.
- Discuss the task at hand. Discuss ideas; mutually set goals and objectives.
- Do not lower standards - don't insult your members!
- Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person.
- Find out how you will know when they need help. Make sure they understand you are willing to assist but must first be told when and how you can help.
- Delegate. Most responsible people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder.
- Follow up. Check periodically to see if people have any questions regarding how a project is supposed to be done.
- Evaluate. One of your most important roles as a leader is to help your members learn and grow through both their successes and failures.

Ways to delegate –

- Ask for volunteers in a meeting (show of hands, sign-up sheet)
- Appoint someone (in meeting or after meeting)
- Assign it to a committee (sometimes in a smaller group, people are less intimidated to volunteer)
- Break up job into logical parts and spread the work to a few people
- Find out your member's interests/skills/time commitment, and then find a task to suit them.

Adapted from Adrian College

http://www.adrian.edu/student_life/student_organizations/resource_documents/delegation.pdf
 and from the University of Kansas

<http://www.silc.ku.edu/leaderbits/delegation.pdf>