



HOW TO USE DELEGATION TO --- BE A MORE IMPACTFUL LEADER

prialto



HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DELEGATE TO EMPLOYEES

To be an effective business leader, you must be an excellent delegator. Gallup found that leaders who are skilled delegators achieve three-year growth rates that are 112% higher than those who don't delegate at all or who do so poorly.

Here's why: Delegating gives leaders more time to focus on refining their business strategies and engaging in activities that generate value for their companies.

Delegation is also key to empowering employees. By giving your tasks to subordinates, you allow them inside your world so they can acquire some of your knowledge and skills.

Entrusting team members with even small responsibilities gives them opportunities to prove their competency and feel like a valued member of your team. Research shows that empowered employees are happier, perform better, and are more loyal to their companies.

Thus, delegating isn't just about freeing your time - it's about giving your team more meaningful ways to use theirs. This is why delegation is one of the most powerful leadership tactics.

However, to reap the full benefits of delegating, you have to do so correctly.

There are 7 steps to become an effective delegator:

1. Identifying the Work You Should Delegate
2. Strategically Choose Who You Delegate To
3. Pass Off Assignments with Zero Confusion
4. Monitor Progress Periodically
5. Create Clear Processes for Ongoing Tasks
6. Do This When Employees Resist Delegation
7. Show Your Gratitude

In this guide, we'll walk you through each of the steps and provide you with actions you can take immediately.

1 IDENTIFYING THE WORK YOU SHOULD DELEGATE

According to the Business Strategist Jenny Blake, choosing the right tasks to delegate plays a massive role in your ability to leverage the assistance of others.

There are two types of work you should delegate:

1. Work that is critical and doesn't require your expertise.
2. Work that a subordinate would benefit from doing.



TYPE 1: WORK THAT IS CRITICAL AND DOESN'T REQUIRE YOUR EXPERTISE

As a leader, your time and mental energy are incredibly valuable. You are wasting time and money by doing tasks that can be done by someone else.

Here are some examples:

- Scheduling meetings
- Managing databases
- Filing expense reports
- Making travel arrangements
- Collecting prospect research
- Etc.

All these little tasks add up and take your time and energy away from strategic work.

If you don't have an in-house assistant, consider hiring a part-time virtual assistant through a managed service. The process is simple; just attend a couple of meetings to explain your procedures and preferences. Afterward, your account manager will keep your assistant trained and ready to tackle any tasks you send their way.

TYPE 2: WORK THAT A SUBORDINATE WOULD BENEFIT FROM DOING

Delegation is one of the most effective ways to empower junior employees to take on greater responsibility. When you're overloaded with tasks, consider whether any of your employees have the skills to be successful at it. Assigning employees portions of your work lets you test their abilities.

Here are some examples of tasks you can give to junior employees:

- Creating slides for an upcoming presentation
- Drafting a report
- Making preparations for a client meeting
- Outlining project proposals

Keep in mind that delegating stretch assignments often requires a time investment from you because your employees may have questions or make mistakes.

However, it is still worth delegating these types of tasks because you're still saving some time and, as your team develops new skills, you'll be able to pass on more complex tasks.



2 STRATEGICALLY CHOOSE WHO YOU DELEGATE TO

One of the most damaging mistakes leaders make when delegating tasks is giving them to the wrong people. Research shows that it is critical for you to carefully consider the skills and abilities of individuals before you delegate to them.

The amount of thought you need to invest varies based on the complexity of the task. Generally, though, you should carefully consider tasks the first time you delegate them and, if possible, repeatedly give them to the same employee(s)

Follow these steps to determine who you should delegate to:

1. Develop a rough list of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) that are needed to complete your tasks.

HR uses KSAOS to select the right people for jobs and so should you. You don't have to create a document or anything formal like that - a mental list will help you understand what your tasks require.

2. Identify which employees have those skills. Once you have your list, think about which employees are the best fit. Your goal is to find a couple of individuals who have the right skills and are at an appropriate job level for the task. To do this, you may have to assign tasks to individuals outside of your team. Delegating administrative work to subordinates who are responsible for strategic projects is distracting and may be insulting.

Important: One of the skills you're looking for must be reliability. You don't want to find yourself in a situation where an urgent task is due and the person you delegated it to didn't complete it, leaving you scrambling at the last minute to get it done.

3. Determine which employees have the availability. Once you've identified the skills needed and found a couple of employees who that skill set, assign your work to the individual who has the most availability. If you face challenges on an ongoing basis with everyone in your organization being too busy to support one another, consider hiring support staff.

3 DELEGATE ASSIGNMENTS WITH ZERO CONFUSION

When delegating, remember that your employees can't read your mind. Visionary leaders, in particular, tend to specific ideas of what they're looking for and can make the mistake of assuming their employees share their understanding.

Failing to explain your expectations leads to mistakes and can be detrimental to employee morale. Another [Gallup report](#) found that when employees lack a clear sense of direction, they're likely to become dissatisfied since they don't know if they're on the right track.

When you delegate, don't assume the person knows what you're talking about unless you've already developed a process for passing off that type of task.

To avoid confusion, delegate tasks via written messages that includes the following:

- An explanation of the deliverables you expect from them
- Details about how you want it delivered (if applicable)
- Deadline
- Any other preferences you have

The clearer you are in this message, the easier it will be for your team members to complete the tasks you give them.

Here are a few examples on how to send a clear message.

Task: Scheduling a meeting

Hi Maria,

Can you schedule a 90 minute lunch meeting with John Smith (john@example.com) sometime next week? I want to meet somewhere in Downtown Portland. John is a vegetarian so please find a restaurant with options for him.

Thank you,

Emily

Task: Filing an expense report

Hi Andy,

I attached all the receipts from my recent trip to New York. Can you file all them into our expense management system and produce an itemized report that I can give to my supervisor?

Thanks,

Emily

Task: Identifying who you should reach out to at an event

Hi Sara,

I attached the attendee list for my upcoming conference. Can you review the list and do the following:

- *Remove anyone who is already in my CRM*
- *Highlight in green anyone who works for a financial services or VC firm*
- *Highlight in yellow anyone who works for a software development company*

Thank you,

Emily

The more clear and concise your messages are, the less likely it is for there to be miscommunications when you delegate tasks.

Important: Subordinates may not have the same authority and access to resources to complete the work as you do. Consider if there are any types of special permissions you need to give your employees so they are fully empowered to get the task done.

Permissions include:

- Giving them access to online tools
- Messaging anyone who may block them from completing your task
- Granting them the authority to make any necessary decisions on your behalf
- Sending them any relevant materials may help them do the task more accurately

Let your subordinate know the fastest way to reach you if they run into a roadblock.





4 MONITOR PROGRESS PERIODICALLY

If you're delegating tasks on an ongoing basis or delegating projects that take a few days to complete, check in on your team to ensure they're on the right track. Monitoring your subordinates' progress lets you catch and resolve misunderstandings before they create conflicts and, if you offer positive feedback, can boost their morale.

Studies show that employees who receive frequent feedback are less stressed, happier and more confident. This is likely because feedback lets people know if they are on the right track which minimizes their fear of failure.

When you delegate, set up brief sync meetings at intervals that are appropriate for your project's timeline. If you're assigning small tasks like scheduling and expense reporting on an ongoing basis, aim to catch up weekly to quickly address any concerns, comments, etc.

Inevitably, some miscommunications will go unnoticed and mistakes will be made. Rather than getting frustrated and deciding to complete the task on your own, offer constructive criticism. Addressing issues will make delegation easier for you and your team moving forward.

Here are some tips for giving constructive criticism:

Focus on the error, not the person.

The more objective your feedback, the more likely the individual will accept it because they don't feel like you are personally attacking them.

Use a neutral tone and facial expression.

Don't give feedback until you can do so calmly. If you make your frustration visible, most people will naturally react defensively or withdraw - even if your words aren't accusatory.

Provide action steps for improvement.

If your team member made a mistake because they didn't understand how to perform an aspect of their job, don't end your meeting with them until you're confident they know what to do moving forward. If you have time, coach them on how to develop the solution. However, if you're in a hurry, explicitly state what you expect from them.

The more you delegate tasks, the less often you'll have to check in because you'll develop a natural rhythm and understanding with the individuals you pass off tasks to.

5 CREATE PROCESSES FOR ONGOING TASKS

If you frequently delegate specific tasks, document processes for completing them. A lot of leaders make the mistake of assuming that if they tell a person to do something once, that person will memorize how to do it.

While that is sometimes the case, you have to remember that subordinates are often juggling tasks for multiple people and may have difficulty remembering your specific preferences. Writing down your needs makes it easy for employees to get the job done right every time.



There are two easy ways to create ongoing processes.

Option 1: Write a list of instructions that includes notes about your preferences.

Clarify them based on the questions asked. This option is great for short, step-by-step tasks and/or when you delegate most of your tasks to someone who learns best via written communication.

Examples of tasks that work well for this include:

- Scheduling meetings
- Creating standard reports
- Making event arrangements

Option 2: Create a video of yourself doing the task and explaining your reasoning as you move through each action.

Create the video live with the person you plan to delegate to most often. This gives them an opportunity to ask questions and have the answers recorded. This option is excellent for tasks that are visual and that shift depending on context.

Examples of tasks that work well for this include:

- Keeping a database clean and up-to-date
- Uploading and editing content on websites
- Performing a function in a new software

Once you document processes, you can quickly assign tasks without explanation. If your go-to person is unavailable, processes make it easy to delegate to other individuals.

6 DO THIS WHEN EMPLOYEES RESIST DELEGATION

Occasionally, you may face verbal or passive-aggressive resistance when you delegate tasks. Here are the top reasons employees resist being assigned additional tasks and how to overcome them:

Lack of time. If the individual is struggling to keep up with their primary tasks, they'll resent you adding more to their to-do list. To minimize this, clearly state the priority of the task you're delegating. If it's urgent, give them a deadline extension for the other work they have pending. If it's not, give them a flexible deadline to get the job done.

Lack of experience. Some employees get nervous when you ask them to do tasks that they've never done. If someone objects for this reason, let them know you appreciate their concern but you know they're capable of completing the work. To limit their likelihood of failure, give them detailed instructions that explain how to meet your expectations.

Fear of failure. Others may have the ability to complete the task but, have a fear of failure due to the added pressure of doing a supervisor's job. If someone appears nervous, let them know why you think they'll be successful at the work and reassure them that you'll be available to answer questions.

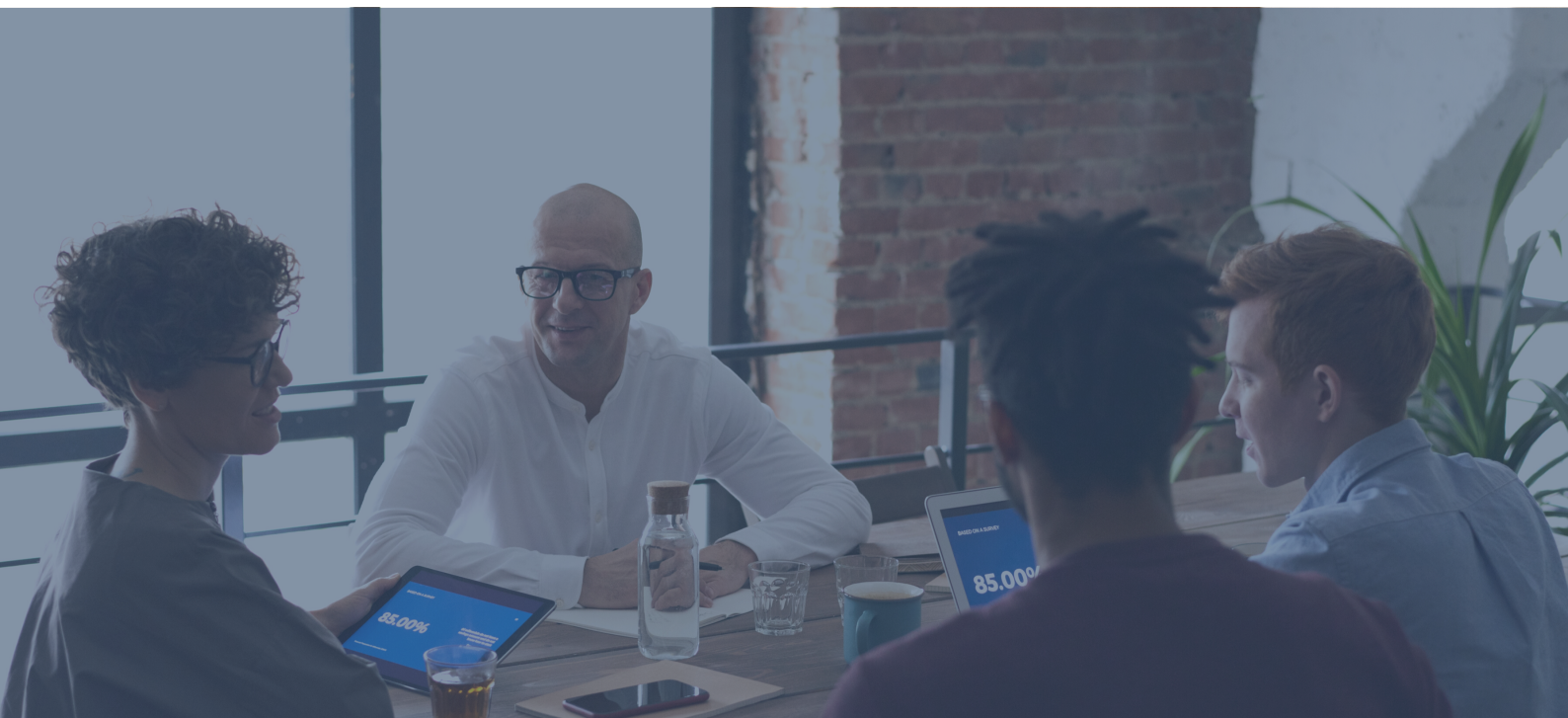
They don't want to do someone else's work. Some employees are capable and confident but have a self-centered attitude that gets in the way. If someone grumbles “it's not my responsibility” or something similar, have a conversation with them about why it is important for them to prioritize the organization's needs.

Fear of being blamed. If you tend to lash out at your employees for mistakes and refuse to take ownership of your own, they may cynically believe that you're delegating difficult tasks to set them up as the scapegoat. Hopefully this isn't you but, if it is, you need to focus on repairing your relationships with your team before you consider delegating more work to them.

Fear of their colleague's reactions. Sometimes, delegating tasks is seen as a sign of favoritism. If you work in a competitive organization where employees are perceptive about how leaders treat each member, more reserved members may dislike attracting a lot of attention due to fear of retribution from aggressive colleagues. In the short-term, delegate tasks discreetly so no one is seen as having a political advantage. However, cultures that foster this fear are toxic and, in the long-run, you need to work on shifting it from competitive to collaborative.

Keep in mind, resistance to delegation is symptomatic of one these three workplace challenges:

- 1. Employees feel undersupported.** In this case, focus on providing additional training, positive feedback, reasonable deadlines.
- 2. You have a toxic workplace culture** that causes people to fear retribution from their managers or colleagues. In this case, you need to fix the culture and establish a reputation as a trustworthy leader before you can effectively delegate tasks.
- 3. Employees are self-centered.** In these cases, have conversations with the individuals about the importance of prioritizing the organization's well-being. in an effort to make them understand why they should take on responsibilities that don't directly benefit them.





7 SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE

Delegating allows you to focus more on the activities that matter most to you. That's incredibly valuable, and you should show appreciation for the employees who enable you to do that. Making your employees feel valued is powerful. Glassdoor found that 81% of employees are willing to work harder for a boss that shows their appreciation.

Gratitude also creates a healthier workplace culture, more cooperative teams, and more empathetic employees.

Here are some creative ways to show gratitude other than just saying “thank you”:

- Recognize the individual during staff meetings
- Leave a personal, handwritten note on their desk
- Take them out for lunch and get to know them on a deeper level
- Let them take an afternoon or morning off for something that’s meaningful to them
- Bring them their favorite coffee in the morning
- Offer them advice on something you’re an expert in
- Connect them with someone else who can help their career
- Let them have a say in the next project they work on
- Send them an email that explains how valuable they are to your company
- Give them a small, meaningful gift

By taking a personalized approach to gratitude, you show your team that your appreciation is genuine. Too often people feel like the work they do goes unnoticed, which is especially true for workers who tackle small, delegated tasks.

When you express that you value your employees, it dramatically improves their morale and their commitment to working for your organization.

BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE LEADER

Need someone to delegate tasks to?

Join executives, entrepreneurs, and industry-leading professionals from around the world who leverage our virtual assistant services to become more effective and productive leaders.

GET IN TOUCH

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or want to get started leveraging a VA.



www.prialto.com



sales@prialto.com



+1-888-873-6101

prialto