

GETTING THINGS DONE THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

In Pakistan delegating authority is not considered good, whether it is government sector or private sector organization. This paper not only discusses the need and importance of delegation but also identifies occasions when managers must necessarily delegate their authority. This paper is divided into three main sections: first, why and when to delegate the authority; second, what obstacles a manager may face in delegating power and the last section is about how the manager may delegate his powers effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Management may be defined as the art of achieving useful objectives by utilizing the efforts of other people. A manager who insists on doing everything by himself can not be an effective manager. So he should delegate his powers. Delegation involves the assignment of a job as well as the accompanying authority and responsibility for doing that job to a subordinate who is held accountable for the performance of the job[1]. Quite simply, it is getting things done through others. In Pakistan, the managers consider delegation as sharing of power, and hence they are afraid to delegate. The British as rulers did not find it suitable to delegate authority to their local subordinates. The Government machinery in Pakistan after getting independence from British rule, instead of adopting a democratic and liberal system continued with the conservative and bureaucratic British Raj system. This attitude is not only evident in government institutions but commercial organizations in Pakistan as well have adopted the same style.

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We may divide the businesses in Pakistan in two categories: (a) multinationals and (b) local organizations or popularly known as Seth organizations. If we closely look at the working of these two types of organizations, we may find many differences in them. The multinationals are more liberal and the authorities, duties and responsibilities are also more properly delegated in them. On the other hand, in the local organizations, the owner (Seth) does not want to delegate any power to his subordinates; he wants to keep all powers with him, and likes to take all decisions, whether they are of important nature or related to some petty matter. And the mockery of all this is that, the owner-manager with little knowledge of management believes that he knows all about management. He is so obsessed with his powers that at times he takes such decisions which may prove detrimental to the organization, just to prove his powers over his professional subordinates. Looking at the above facts there are certain questions which always come in the mind of people. For example: why to delegate the power? When to delegate them? How to delegate powers effectively?

WHY TO DELEGATE POWERS

In modern management concept, for the success of any organization, it is necessary to delegate the powers, because of the following:

Workload reduction:[2][3] Delegation makes the job of the manager easier. Instead of working on repetitive and unimportant work, the manager can concentrate on more important jobs like long term planning. The manager who tries to do all the work burdens himself unnecessarily, and fails to make effective use of the available human resource. Some management experts believe that delegation is the key ingredient in distinguishing good from bad managers.

Provides cover: Delegation helps to make sure there is proper cover in the absence of the manager. A manager who fails to

delegate may find it difficult to take absence from the work or to take some other important work with his current assignments. He always remains in fear that there is nobody there to take his responsibilities and in the course avoid taking actions that may prove beneficial for organization in the long run.

Develops and broadens staff skills:[1][2][3] Delegation is the best way to develop subordinates. While subordinate can learn from observing managers as their role models, as well as from coaching and teaching, delegating assignments gives them hands-on experience. The managers can develop their subordinates by giving them challenging situations/assignments but not too difficult assignments and giving them authority over that assignment. This will not only give them confidence and train them for the future assignments but it also proves helpful in showing their potentials. The managers are responsible for the welfare and development of their staff. If they insist on doing everything by themselves, they are denying the subordinates the opportunity to learn and grow.

Allows the efficient use of human resource:[3][4] Delegation allows the best use of human resource in an organization. Employees at lower levels who are more close to a work unit are in better position to make decisions about the work unit. There are people in the organization with good ideas, and they would welcome the assignments with authority to implement those ideas. There is a famous proverb in English that 'two heads are better than one'. Managers who delegate the authority increase the brain power of the organization and thus improve the decision making process.

Motivates employees:[4] Delegation motivates subordinates. Most employees enjoy greater responsibility. Surely there are exceptions, and the manager must identify those individuals who fear or resent additional responsibilities. But for the subordinates who like to be challenged, delegated assignments can be a real

boost to their morale. If people have no feelings of responsibility or control over what they are doing they will become frustrated, demotivated and less effective. And in this way the manager will actually create a work environment in which he has to do everything because nobody else has the confidence or the ability.

WHEN TO DELEGATE POWERS

The decision of delegating tasks become easier if manager considers all the tasks for which he is responsible and applies to them the following questions:

1. Which of my tasks should be done by one or more of my subordinate?
2. Which of my tasks can be done by one or more of my subordinate?
3. Which of my tasks makes only a small contribution to achieving my work unit's objectives?
4. Which of my task are mundane administrative or clerical routines?
5. Which of my tasks take more time than I can afford?
6. Which of these tasks do I do myself simply because I enjoy doing them?
7. Which of my tasks cause problems when I am away because no-one else can do them?
8. Which of my tasks would help a member of staff to develop if he or she were given the responsibility?
9. Which of my tasks require my involvement because of my unique authority, knowledge, skills or perspective?

If any of the first eight questions applies to a task, then the subordinates should be considered as candidates for delegation. It is only if the ninth question applies to a task, then the manager should definitely do it him or herself.

OBSTACLES IN DELEGATING POWERS

Some times even if managers understand that, there is a need to delegate the powers but they face following obstacles in effective delegation of powers.

1. **Complexity of what is delegated:** The project is too complex, and the subordinate is not qualified enough or not properly guided to handle the project. The schedule for the project is unrealistic. The problems were not anticipated.
2. **Managers are reluctant to delegate:** At times managers are reluctant to delegate, because of fear of looking bad if the subordinate performs badly, as well as a fear that the subordinate might do too well and outshine the delegator[5]. Perfectionist managers do not have enough trust in subordinates to delegate projects to them, they have the attitude that "no one can do the job as good as I can." [1]
3. **Improper communication:** The delegated project may also fail because there is little or no communication between delegator and subordinate. The subordinate does not feel free to ask questions. The managers do not monitor progress on the task.
4. **Interference from management higher up the line:** Too much monitoring or interference may also cause problems. The subordinate does not have enough authority on the task. He always remains in fear of making mistake.

EFFECTIVE POWER DELEGATION

Keeping in view the above facts, it should be decided that how to delegate the powers effectively, there are several key elements to successful delegation, as given below:

1. **Select appropriate subordinate for the task:**[1][5][6] A successful manager is one who knows the strengths and limitations of his subordinates. If the manager properly guides, teaches and coaches the subordinates then he knows better when a person is ready to take a new assignment. This is the first step in promoting successful delegation.
2. **Trust the subordinate:**[6] The key word in any successful delegation is *trust*; the delegator must believe in, support and help the subordinate succeed in the delegated task. The trust enables the managers to share their authority and allows the subordinates enough freedom to make independent decisions.
3. **Clearly communicate the task to be accomplished:**[6][7] The manager himself must clearly understand all that is involved in the work to be assigned. If the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the task are not properly communicated to the subordinate, then the work performance rarely meets the expectations.
4. **Indicate what the subordinate is accountable for and how performance will be judged:**[6][7] Frequently, subordinates accept a delegated task without clearly understanding what exactly they are expected to do or what criteria will be used to evaluate their performance on the job. It is the manager's responsibility to make these issues clear, to encourage the subordinate to ask questions, and to check the subordinate's understanding of the delegated project.
5. **Give the subordinate enough authority to complete the task:** An essential element of delegation is granting power to subordinate. The subordinate must have the resource necessary to complete the task and the freedom to operate fairly independently.

6. ***Establish a schedule for progress reports and task completion:***[1][5] The manager who delegates must establish a certain system of continuous check to make sure that every thing is going in the right direction. Delegation does not mean abdication; the manager must retain some control over the task. The subordinate benefits also by having a clear schedule and the opportunity for periodic feedback on performance.
7. ***Be accessible but not meddlesome:***[6] The manager must be available to subordinate for any consultation. This is not to encourage dependence, but to promote dialogue and teamwork. On the other hand, the manager should refrain from repeatedly asking about the project or needing to be familiar with all details.
8. ***Credit for task:*** An effective delegator acknowledges the subordinate's successes and gives public recognition as well as private praise. Managers always look good when a delegated project turns out well. Thus, it is not necessary to take any of the credit. By letting subordinate shine, everyone benefits.

GUIDELINE FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

1. ***Analyze the task situation realistically:*** The manager must have a realistic approach towards the task. Unrealistic or unattainable tasks must not be given to subordinates.
2. ***Make sure the delegator functions as role model:*** Subordinates learn how to organize, manage time, and make decisions by observing their manager.
3. ***Delegate total projects, not parts of projects:*** Subordinates learn better when they can handle the entire task themselves rather than merely doing detail work.

4. **Handle mistakes constructively:** [1] Allow subordinates to make mistakes. An effective way to develop subordinates is to let them make mistakes on their own. The manager must resist the temptation to jump in to keep subordinates from making mistakes.
5. **Give support:** The manager must allow the subordinates to use methods different from his own. He must resist the tendency to become upset if things are not done in his way.
6. **Delegate good and bad projects:** The manager must resist the tendency to keep the exciting projects for himself while delegating boring or distasteful projects to others.

CONCLUSION

Considering all the above facts, we conclude that the delegation of powers is necessary for effective management. The manager must realize the fact that delegation does not decrease his powers but, in reality, it helps to increase his influence on his subordinates, by making them feel that he cares about them, and is interested in their growth by delegating manageable tasks to them. By delegating powers he will increase the productivity of the workers, thus he improves the overall efficiency of the organization.

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