

## GETTING THINGS DONE

# Thinks ahead, planning and delegating work and leading change effectively

### Delegating

Delegating means giving the right task to the right person with the right level of responsibility. This is harder to do than it initially seems. It takes time to develop staff and get them to the point where their experience and confidence (in you as well as in themselves) is such that they seek and willingly take on new tasks.

### Reflection

How successful are you at delegating work now? Do you find you can confidently delegate work to everyone in your team and be confident they will carry it out effectively with appropriate support and feedback from you?

Take a look at this list of common difficulties in delegation:

- Micro-managing.
- Over-steering (do it my way).
- Delegating the least interesting work.
- Delegating and then taking it back.
- Trying to do everything and not delegating/delegating little.
- Delegating work without providing clear expectations, review points and boundaries.
- Delegating unfairly across the team.
- Delegating to team members with whom you have a poor relationship or who are very different to you.
- Not having a good understanding of the capacity or capability of team members.
- Not providing support or resources or check-in points.
- Not providing feedback or recognition.
- Team members do not carry out the work to the required standard.
- Team members pick and choose what work to do.
- Team members lack confidence to take on work.
- Team members seek continual reassurance before carrying out work.
- Team members go off track and produce work out of scope.
- Team members feel the workload is too great or unfairly distributed.

**Which of these have you experienced? What other difficulties or challenges have you experienced when delegating? What have you already done to improve how you delegate?**



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### In delegating work you will need to consider these factors

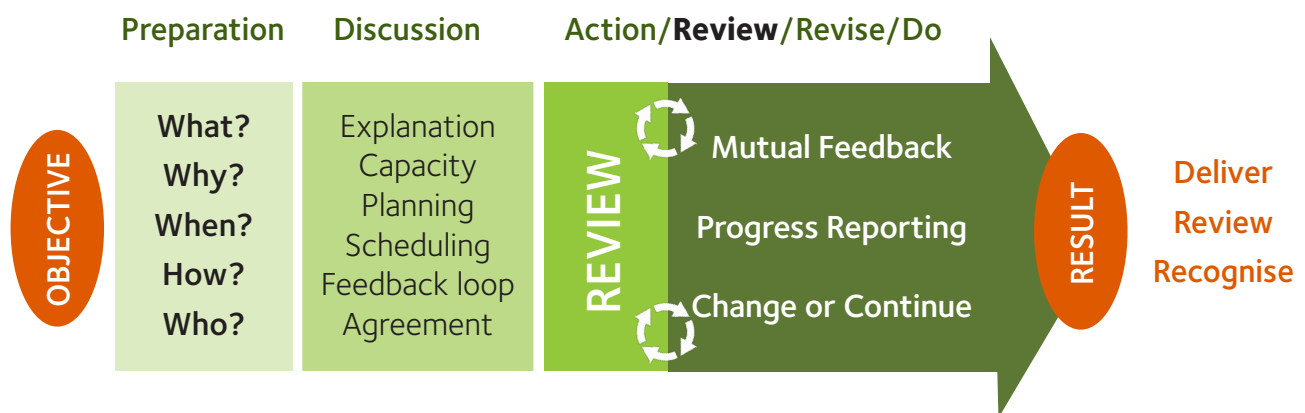
**Spreading the load:** Are you getting rid of the tasks you don't relish? There are always less appealing parts of a team's work. As a manager, you don't need to take all of these on, but you shouldn't delegate all the 'rubbish'. Use delegation to give variety, manage workloads fairly among team members, and build trust and a sense of shared purpose.

**Developing individuals:** How confident and competent is the person the work will be delegated to? Use delegation for positive reasons: to develop your team, motivate individuals, provide challenge and responsibility and offer encouragement and support. Take into account their personal preferences in how they like to be managed – ask them if you are not sure.

**Managing risk:** What are the risks associated with the work? Remember, you can hand over responsibility for a piece of work, but the accountability stays with you. Does the work have to be perfect, or just 'good enough'? Perfectionists may need to learn to let go. How can anyone become as good as you unless they get the chance? If the consequences of the work being incorrect or late are substantial, put in appropriate review points and support. Initially, this can take more time than simply doing it yourself but will be well worth it later.

### A process for delegation

Here is an overview of a suggested process for delegation (designed by a group of Oxford managers on one of POD's development programmes) to follow which you may find helpful. It reminds us that this is a dynamic process and you will need to check in with the person you've delegated to, not to be 'on their back' but to find out what they need from you to get the job done. NB. Never assume that an individual will find something easy, just because you do. It includes before, during and after delegation – to cover the entire process – and reminds us that it needs to work from both manager and team member perspectives.





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### ACTIVITY



**Considering the guidance provided above and looking at the suggested model:**

Which delegation steps are you most confident in? What is working well and how do you know?

Where in the delegation process would you benefit from improving your practice and how do you know? What could you try to do differently?

What three steps can you take now to improve your delegation? E.g. This could be asking for advice, reading relevant articles, asking for feedback on how you delegate, or trying



Complete the Reflection sheet