

*Delegation of Responsibility and Authority*¹

INTRODUCTION

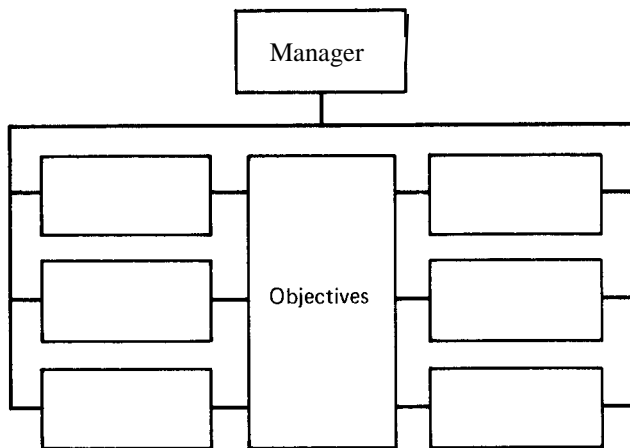
Whenever a group of people work together, delegation is necessary: there must be some process of sharing the work that has to be done and the decisions that must be made. We define delegation as the work a manager does to *entrust responsibility and authority to others and to create accountability for results*. Delegation is a process of *entrusting*, because it means that a manager is sharing with others work and decisions that otherwise he would carry out himself.

THE ELEMENTS OF DELEGATION

There are almost as many interpretations of delegation as there are people writing about it. The major elements of delegation—responsibility, authority, and accountability—also vary widely in definition. These are discussed below.

When a manager is faced with the problem of delegation, we assume that he is the leader of a group of people. His problem is to work with his group in accomplishing specified end results.

If the manager is to get help, work must be done by others (responsibility), decisions must be made (authority), and there must be an obligation to perform (accountability).



Responsibility

If a person does not know what he is *supposed* to do, he will do what he prefers to do. Therein lie many of the basic problems of organization. To clarify the delegation of responsibility, our first need is to distinguish between assigning work to a *person* and to a *position*. During the early, *centric* stage of organizational growth, we tend to assign work to people in terms of their personal interests and special competences. We permit people to take on the work they prefer just so long as nobody else contests the point, and as a result, the content of the position tends to change with each new person.

The matured *radic* approach is to assign the work to the position. Then, whoever fills the position assumes the obligation to do the work. In matured organizations, it is typical to find a succession of highly capable people marching in and out of positions over the years, with little change in the basic responsibilities of the position. Although a difficult procedure, it increases efficiency, reduces friction, and gives every person, and not just a few selected individuals, an opportunity to use his best abilities. We define *responsibility*, then, as the work *assigned to, and made a continuing obligation of, a position*.

¹ Excerpt from *The Louis A. Allen Professional Manager's Guide*, Louis A. Allen Associates, Inc., Copyright 1969.

Authority

People will not perform much work unless they can make decisions related to it. For example, if the superintendent must go to the plant manager for permission every time he wants to talk to a supervisor, or check material, or approve a schedule, he will spend most of his time checking with the plant manager, and neither of them will get much done.

Again, if a machine operator must go to the foreman every time he wants to start or stop his machine or reposition his work, he will spend most of his time talking with the foreman. The solution in each case is for the person doing the work to make as many decisions related to that work as possible.

The more powers and rights a manager can exercise with respect to the work he does, including the making of decisions, the more completely he will accomplish that work. In addition, he will demand much less of his superior's time. And as an added bonus, the person who is given authority to make most of his own decisions likes his work better and gets more personal satisfaction from doing it. We define *authority* as the sum of the powers and rights assigned to a position.

Accountability

At some point in this process of sharing the work to be done with others there is a need to check to make sure that the job is performed properly and decisions are made the way they should be. One way is for the manager to check everything in person. But this will take too much of his time. Moreover, it tends to antagonize his people, who don't like the boss continually peering over their shoulders.

The professional manager solves the problem by establishing limits within which the work must be done and the decisions made and holding people to an obligation to perform within these limits. He makes this obligation meaningful by ensuring that the people involved understand and accept (U/A) it. For example, he may establish that a supervisor may hire his own people provided (1) the vacancy is approved, (2) the personnel department is used to recruit special competences. We permit people to take on the work they prefer just so long as nobody else contests the point, and as a result, the content of the position tends to change with each new person and test, and (3) the salary offered is within the approved salary range. Within these limits, the manager may give the supervisor wide latitude in hiring his own people.

We define *accountability* as the process of *establishing an obligation to perform the work and make the decision within established limits*.

THE NATURE OF RESPONSIBILITY

When a manager is assigned work, a basic question is whether he is expected to carry that work to completion, to a state where nothing further is to be done to it, or whether he is doing it for somebody else. For example, a sales manager is expected to establish his own sales objectives and to carry these through to the final recommendation. This is one kind of responsibility. The personnel manager interviews prospective salesmen *for* the sales manager. This is another kind of responsibility. Here we distinguish between *terminal* responsibility and *advisory* and *service* responsibility.

Terminal Responsibility

A person who is assigned terminal responsibility has the obligation of seeing to it that the work involved is carried through to completion. If the Marketing Manager has terminal responsibility for developing and maintaining an annual marketing plan, for example, he is the one who is called to account if the plan is not developed and maintained properly. A person with terminal responsibility can get help, advice, and service from others, but if he misuses the advice, or fails to get the help he needs, he is accountable.

Advisory and Service (A/S) Responsibility

The person who is assigned advisory and service responsibility is obligated to do the work necessary to provide advice; that is, suggestions, recommendations, and counsel. He also provides service; that is, he

does specified work for somebody else, usually one who has terminal responsibility. The person with advisory and service (A/S) responsibility is accountable for the nature and quality of the advice and service he provides, but not for the finished work into which the advice and service enters. This is the obligation of the person with terminal responsibility.

To be properly performed, advisory and service responsibility should carry its commensurate authorities. For example, the person with A/S responsibility should have the right to make the recommendations he feels best suited, without undue influence. He also should have the right to full consideration of his suggestions.

THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

We have defined authority as the sum of the powers and rights assigned to a position. Here we refer to formalized organizational authority. A person either has, or has not, the right to make a decision to spend a thousand dollars for new equipment. He has, or has not, the power to grant a salary increase up to 7 percent of salary. But not all authority is defined and formalized. Differences between informal and formal authority are outlined below.

Informal Authority

A great many decisions are made without formal recognition. People who have special knowledge or great technical competence are looked to for decisions in their areas of expertise. If a decision of a certain kind has been made over a long period of time, it will continue to be made in the same way without further formalization. An assistant who works closely with the president has the authority of propinquity. He will tend to make many decisions that are obeyed by others in the organization, even though he has no formal authority to do so. The strongest person in the group will make many decisions which are obeyed because he is the dominant personality. These kinds of informal authority are well-known. Handling them is part of the art of management.

Informal authority tends to have these characteristics: it is unwritten, usually undefined. It is exercised by individuals, not assigned to positions. It tends to change frequently, particularly with the individual and the situation. It does not bear sanctions; that is, there is no recognized method of applying leadership force or of punishing people if they do not obey the informal authority. Thus, informal authority tends to be mostly characteristic of the early, *centric*, and immature stage of organizational growth.

Formal Authority

Certain powers and rights are more conventionalized, more subject to rules and structure. This formal authority is usually defined, often in writing. It tends to be assigned to positions, so that any individual assigned to the position automatically assumes the authority. Formal authority is stable, changing infrequently and then only on official notice. There are recognized means of enforcing this authority, so that sanctions can be applied to ensure conformance. There are two basic types of formal authority: command authority, and understanding and acceptance authority.

Command Authority. If an organization is to operate efficiently, some people must have the power and right to give commands to others. They also must have a means of enforcing their decisions. The superior who has other people reporting to him has command authority. This means that he can order the people who report to him to do certain things in the expectation that he will be obeyed.

His ability to enforce his authority depends on a great many factors other than organizational sanctions. He must be able to communicate with his people. He must know how to motivate them. He must be able to enlist their loyalty. But these things do not replace command authority—they are simply a means of enforcing it.

The person who is assigned the power of command also must have the equivalent rights. These are the right to solicit advice and service from others who can be of help to him and the right to control.

Recommendation Authority. Managers frequently have the power and right to make recommendations with respect to the work they do, but not to authorize that work; that is, give it final approval. Command authority may then be vested in a peer position or in the line superior. A manager with recommendation authority may have either advisory and service responsibility or terminal responsibility. For example, the Controller has advisory and service responsibility and recommendation authority for preparing a capital budget for the Engineering Department budget. The Engineering Manager has terminal responsibility and recommendation authority for developing the Engineering Department budget for the President, who has command authority to authorize the Engineering Department capital budget.

Understanding and Acceptance (U/A) Authority. We ordinarily think of authority as power—the ability to make things happen. However, if power is to be effective, it must carry countervailing rights; only in this way is the consent of the governed possible in human society. Of greatest concern in management organization is the right of the individual to understand and accept commands and decisions which he is expected to carry out. This *right is* understanding and acceptance (U/A) authority.

For example, in a previous example, the Controller prepared a capital budget for the Engineering Manager. The Engineering Manager has the right to understand and accept the proposed budget before it becomes his budget. Acceptance here does not necessarily mean agreement; we can accept things without agreeing with them. For instance, we think 25 miles per hour is too slow on a highway, but we accept the speed limit as a condition of driving. The significant aspect of *acceptance* in the management concept is that if the Engineering Manager does not accept, 'that is, is not willing to go along with the capital budget, he has the related right to appeal to the common line superior. U/A authority exists between superior and subordinate, line and staff, and peers. Often little understood, it is a vital aspect of mature organization.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

We know there is more to delegating than assigning work and authority. To make delegation a success requires highly developed professional skills. To master these we should understand and apply several basic principles of delegation.

Limits of Freedom of Action

One of our objectives in sound delegation is to enable each person to have as much freedom as possible to do his own work and to make his own decisions. This principle points to an important truth: we cannot work effectively as a member of a group and have complete freedom.

PRINCIPLE OF LIMITS OF FREEDOM OF ACTION

The greater the freedom of one in a group to encroach upon the freedom of others, the less the freedom for all.

Look at it this way: when a group of people work together, each tends to want to get as much as he can for himself, to do things in the manner he prefers and in his own good time. Each wants complete personal freedom. This intuitive want is operative until he knows better. However, we cannot have complete freedom as a member of a group without overstepping the rights of others and thus lessening *their* freedom. The more license the individual assumes to overstep the boundaries of another's freedom of choice or action, the less the freedom that exists for all. The conclusion? To have the most freedom, we must lose some of it—must accept limits. What persuades us to give up some of our freedom? The recognition that we stand to gain more for ourselves by losing some part of our freedom than by retaining it.

Perhaps this sounds paradoxical. But consider that we will accept limitations on our freedom to the extent we *feel* emotionally and *know* logically that if we restrict our activities so as not to overstep the rights and privileges of others, we will in the process gain the greatest possible degree of uncontested freedom for ourselves. The word "uncontested" here is the key, for our own freedom to act is always in jeopardy if we have gained it by assuming the rights or privileges of others.

In delegating, the job of the manager is to establish the limits of freedom for the people who report to him. He can best do this because he has the greatest objectivity and the best perspective with respect to the needs of the group as a whole and the requirements of other groups.

Control Limits

As we have already noted, we can assign work and authority only if we have a means of checking up to make sure that the work is done properly and the decisions carried out within the limits we have set. This principle tells us that *before* we delegate, it is important that we establish effective controls.

PRINCIPAL OF
CONTROL LIMITS

Delegation tends to be limited by the availability of effective controls

The most effective controls are based on performance standards derived from basic plans. If we want to know how well we are doing, we can best check against the objectives, programs, schedules, and budgets we established to guide our work in the first place. Sound controls therefore rest on sound plans.

Commensurate Authority

We know that authority *equal* to responsibility cannot safely be delegated, for this would mean that a person could make all the decisions related to the work he did. Were this the case, the accountable manager would have no means of setting the limits through planning or of making the vital control decisions.

PRINCIPLE OF COM-
MENSURATE AUTHORITY

The less the authority, the ore difficult the performance of responsibility.

Too often, delegated authority is not commensurate with responsibility; that is, people are not able to make their own decisions related to the work they do. When this is the case, as we have already seen, the inevitable result is that the manager makes many of their decisions and does a good deal of the work of his people for them. This not only overloads the manager but also devitalizes the jobs of others working with him.

It is an observable phenomenon that if a person cannot make his own decisions he tends to lose interest in his work. The reason: he is doing his superior's work and putting his superior's ideas into effect, not his own. Most of us find it much more difficult to do things the way somebody else requires rather than in the manner we have decided is best ourselves.

The person who is given commensurate authority makes and carries out his own decisions. In the process he secures an emotional ownership in what he is doing. In itself, this is one of the best ways to maintain interest and ensure productive effort.

This principle establishes the importance of delegating authority as close to the operating level as possible. The closer to the point of action a decision is made, the more effectively it tends to be carried out in terms of the action involved. The person who is doing a job knows most about it; if he can make most of the decisions required, he will do it with best knowledge of the operating situation.

Complete Accountability

When we need to check up on the work that is done and the results that are secured, we want to act quickly and effectively. Can we do this best by dealing with a group of people or with an individual? Logic, experience, and common sense all tell us it is best to deal with individuals.

PRINCIPLE OF COM-

The more complete the accountability of individuals, the more effective

COMPLETE ACCOUNTABILITY

the focus of control

This means we must be able to hold individuals, not groups, accountable for both methods and results. To delegate effectively, each manager should assume the total obligation for everything that occurs under his supervision. He can do this only if he has the authority to establish the plans and exercise the controls necessary within the broad limits that have been set. If there is not complete accountability, so that errors and deficiencies can be pinpointed quickly, people have a tendency to "pass the buck." Group accountability is possible, but it can be exercised only in exceptional circumstances.

Single Reporting Relationships

For effective delegation each person should report to only one superior on the same responsibility. If two different people give orders for the same work, confusion, contradiction, and lost efficiency are certain to result. If we report to two different people, we are never quite sure of what priority each job has. The instructions from the different bosses may differ. Too often, our solution is to play off one against the other so that we can have enough freedom to get the job done.

PRINCIPLE OF SINGLE REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The more people to whom a manager reports, the less accountable he tends to become.

Willingness and Ability

We often assume that once delegated, work will be carried out fully and effectively. But people can limit our delegation by their unwillingness or refusal to carry out the work or to make the decisions necessary.

How can this be overcome? Motivation and training are the answers. To the extent we give people the opportunity to participate in making the decisions and in determining how the work is to be carried out, we enlist their interest and support. When good work is done or decisions yield successful results, generous praise properly placed will encourage further constructive effort.

PRINCIPLE OF WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY

The effectiveness of delegations tends to be limited by the willingness and ability of people to do the work and make the decisions required.

BARRIERS TO DELEGATION

Managers often fail to delegate because of psychological and organizational barriers. Psychological hurdles arise primarily because the manager is afraid to delegate. He may be afraid that his subordinates will not do the job properly, and as a result, he may lose face. This fear is justified if his subordinates are untrained or poorly motivated. However, the manager's responsibility is to take positive action to overcome these deficiencies.

The manager may be reluctant to delegate because he expects his people to do their work and make decisions precisely as he would, if he had the time and energy to do everything himself. When it exists, this attitude is most frequently rationalized. The professional manager knows that, given the proper encouragement and training, people can develop many different ways of doing the same job effectively.

A manager may balk at delegation because he fears that his subordinates may do their work too well, and hence outshine him. However, this overlooks the fact that the most valuable skill a manager can possess is the ability to develop people who, in some respects, are more capable than he. Good developers of men are one of the rarest and most valuable assets in any organization.

Organizational barriers may block delegation. First of these barriers is failure to define responsibility and authority. If a manager does not know what work he is to perform, if he does not understand what authority he has, it is unlikely that he will be able to delegate parts of this responsibility and authority. Corrective action here involves clear and precise definition of the limits of responsibility and authority. Within these limits a manager can have wide freedom in delegating to others.

While there are limits to what he can safely delegate, a manager can feel free in assigning to others all operating work possible and as much of the routine and detail of his job as he can.

Delegation of Operating Work

Most nonmanagement work can be delegated, for this is the work subordinates are paid to perform. The manager of selling, for example, delegates all selling possible to his salesmen, and reserves for himself planning, organizing, and controlling of the sales effort, and effective leading of the salesmen.

Since the manager is often a specialist in the technical work he supervises, he may be the only one in his group qualified to perform certain parts of this operating work. The purchasing manager, for example, may be an expert in value analysis, or the industrial engineer in ratio-delay analysis. When this is the case, the manager does the operating work himself as long as necessary, but he should be on the alert constantly to delegate the work to another position.

The detail, routine, and repetitive portions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling are operating work if others are logically placed to do this as well or better than the manager himself. In budgeting, for example, the work of cost analysis or projection of cash flow can better be done by accounting for the manager. In selecting people, the personnel department can do most of the recruiting and interviewing for the manager. The general rule is to delegate everything possible relating to management work except the initiation and final decision. By initiation, we mean seeing to it that the work gets under way and is carried through with the necessary vigor.

Routine and Detail

Work that must be done over and over again in the same way should invariably be delegated. Management should concentrate on performance of unique actions; that is, of work that must be done differently each time it is performed. If a manager does not consciously delegate routine and detail, it will monopolize his time and will crowd out the opportunity for more creative and, in the long run, more satisfying management work.

WHAT NOT TO DELEGATE

The manager who knows what he cannot delegate will find this helpful in identifying the limits within which he can give people a high degree of freedom in doing their own work and making their own decisions. We have established that a manager can safely delegate everything but the work and the authority which only he has the unique capability to do. To be specific, our analyses show the manager cannot safely delegate final management decisions, decisions on overall operating problems, and work subordinates cannot perform effectively.

Final Management Decisions

The manager can never safely delegate final decisions on the overall plans that involve his own group, higher levels of management, and other units within the company. He also must reserve for himself final decisions on overall controls, organization, and leading. If he permits others to make these decisions for him, the manager is abdicating, not delegating.

Making the final decision does not necessarily involve doing the work leading to it. The best approach for the manager who will make the decision is to require the accountable individuals to develop their own recommendations to the point where the manager must only study the prepared alternatives and make the final decision. If he wishes to test individual viewpoints he can do this through personal discussion.

When the manager finds himself deeply involved in collecting information, sifting through data, or screening facts relating to final management decisions, this is a signal to search out subordinates or staff agencies that can do these things for him.

Decisions on Overall Operating Problems

Problems will arise concerning the technical work being carried on by subordinates. When these problems involve two or more subordinate units or the group as a whole, the manager should reserve the final decision. This enables him to give balanced consideration to all points of view and to consider also the requirements and prior decisions of higher levels of management and of staff groups with which only he has had contact.

So far as possible, the manager should encourage his subordinates to coordinate operating as well as management problems to the point of final decision. One caution: when he places such complete reliance on others he must anticipate that their personal preferences and even bias will color their recommendations to him. However, this tendency is present whenever people work together. The manager's best safeguard is to test the validity of both the facts and assumptions by careful questioning.

Work That Subordinates Cannot Perform Effectively

If people do not have the capability or are not trained to do the work delegated to them, delegation will not be successful. Particularly when new work is introduced, the manager must either do the work himself, have it done by staff groups, or see to it that his people are trained and capable of performing. The most common approach is for the manager to do the new work himself the first time. As soon as he becomes familiar with it, he trains others to emulate him. This has the advantage of making the manager's supervision more effective, but he must discipline himself to delegate the work as fully as possible or he ends up doing most of it himself.

HOW MUCH TO DELEGATE

We can establish logical limits for delegation in each of the management activities as shown below. In each case, final authority is reserved by the next higher level of management.

Forecasts

The manager may delegate the collection of data, analysis, the verification of trends, and the establishment of the limits of possibilities for the estimate being made. However, he should make the final decisions on the limits of the forecast. For example, if the maximum possible sales are between 150,000 and 200,000 units, the accountable manager should make the decision as to the specific figure to be used.

Objectives

The manager should make the final decision on objectives involving two or more of his subordinate units, his group as a whole, or his group and other groups within the company. Since an objective is a result to be accomplished, it is clear that the objective the manager sets is one of the most effective limits of freedom for the group as a whole and for each individual member of the group.

Programs and Schedules

The manager makes the final decisions on programs involving the group as a whole and two or more units of the group. If objectives have been properly set, he can, however, delegate great latitude to his subordinates in determining what to do to get the job done and the time limits needed. He can give his subordinates greatest freedom in establishing their own programs and schedules by first deciding the broad activities that must be accomplished and by specifying a completion date for the total job.

Budgets

The manager must make the final decision on budgets involving two or more units or the group as a whole. Since the budget allocates the money to be spent, the manager is closely guided in his decisions by

the budgets established at higher levels of management. once he has authorized a final budget, the manager should also reserve authority for any exceptions to that budget.

Policies

Since policies are decisions that apply to the company as a whole, most managers will have very little authority in establishing policies. However, every manager needs to explain and interpret policies for use in his own group. The manager should always reserve authority for approving exceptions to policy. He will generally have to go higher in the organization for the final decision on policy exceptions.

Procedures

Almost everything related to procedures should be delegated except initiation and final decision. That is, the accountable manager must see to it that the necessary procedures are developed and used. He makes the final decisions in application of procedures to his group. When procedures are established at a higher level, however, the manager's job is to administer them for use in his own group in the form authorized.

Decision Making

The manager should make those decisions involving the group as a whole, two or more members of the group, or his group in its relationships with other groups within the company. In making decisions, the manager can safely delegate the statement of the apparent problem, collection of facts, the analysis of alternatives and recommendations for final decision. However, he should make the final decision and should also authorize the course of action to be carried out.

Communicating

In creating understanding, the manager must do most of the work himself. He personally must ask, listen, tell, and understand. He can delegate the media aspects; that is, the preparation of letters, reports, notices, and so forth. In communication, the manager interprets to higher levels of management the requirements and viewpoints of his own group. He also communicates to his team the decisions, ideas, and viewpoints of other levels of management.

Motivating

The manager must do most of the work of motivation himself. He must provide for participation, personally give recognition, and show a real and continuing interest in each member of his team. The personal qualities most necessary for effective person-to-person relationships are least susceptible to delegation.

Selecting People

Here the manager must determine the qualifications of the person he needs, and he must make the final decision as to the person who joins his group. He may secure help from staff groups, from others in the company, and from his own superior in recruiting, interviewing, and screening the person whom he finally hires.

In selecting people for promotion, the manager consults with others in the area in which the vacancy has occurred to determine the qualifications required. However, the manager who has the vacancy makes the final decision as to who is accepted, although the accountable manager makes the final decision as to who is nominated for the promotion.

Developing People

The manager must do most of the work of development himself. He must appraise his own people, counsel with them to improve their knowledge and skills. He can secure help from staff agencies in the

establishment of the training program, the conduct of conferences and meetings, and in the utilization of teaching aids and devices.

Organization Structure

The manager makes the final decision as to his own organization structure if he has a general pattern established for him at the level above. He can delegate most of the work involved in organization analysis, the development of alternatives, and the evaluation of potential effectiveness of the options he is considering.

Delegation

A manager must do virtually all of the work of delegation himself. He must decide what to delegate and take the steps necessary to properly assign responsibility and authority. He must also establish and maintain accountability for both methods and results.

Establishing Relationships

The manager must establish the relationships that make for good teamwork in his group and with other groups. He must know the rules and personally teach them to his people, and he must see to it that effective relationships prevail between himself and his subordinates and his group and other groups.

Performance Standards

The manager must initiate and make final decisions as to performance standards. He must see to it that there are standards and that they are used effectively. While he can secure a great deal of help in the mechanical development of the standard itself, he must make the final decision as to standards as they apply to two or more individuals or to his group as a whole. Within the limits he has set, he can then delegate authority to the managers reporting to him to establish standards to apply to their own groups.

Performance Measuring

The manager must initiate and make final decision on the reports that apply to his group and those that are transmitted from his group. This necessitates a framework of overall reports established by the level of management above him.

Performance Evaluation

The manager must appraise his own work and results and those of the people who report to him in terms of the standards that have been established. However, some other group should reserve authority for evaluating the significant variances and exceptions. This preserves sound checks and balances in the control system.

Performance Correction

The manager must initiate and make final decisions on the correction of deficiencies and variances that apply to his own group. So far as possible, he should require each person reporting to him to correct his own mistakes and to report the action taken.

In each of the items listed above, it is understood that final authority is always reserved by the next higher level of management.

KEY POINTS IN IMPROVING DELEGATION

The manager who wishes to delegate most effectively should give consideration to the following points.

Define Responsibility, Authority, and Accountability

The responsibility, authority, and accountability of each person should be defined in writing. This helps clarify for both the superior and the subordinate the work that is to be done, the decisions that are to be made, and the results to be accomplished.

Written statements enable us to determine whether the work load is properly balanced: whether one individual or component has too much work, another too little. It helps in eliminating unnecessary work and is an important means of control because if we know specifically what results people are expected to accomplish, we can best hold them to account for achieving them.

Objection is sometimes raised to defining responsibility and authority under the assumption that if we pin a man down in writing, we will tend to fence him in and cause him to lose interest and initiative. This is not the case, for a written position guide helps clarify each person's responsibilities. It makes it possible for the individual manager to develop his own area of work and authority as fully as he is capable but prevents him from overlapping the work assigned to others.

Most difficulties in definition arise from the attempt to define how a job is to be performed. A better approach is to spell out what is to be done and to specify this in terms of limits, not details. This also applies to authority. Instead of attempting to pin down each decision a manager can make, it is much better to outline the limits of authority within which he can make any decisions that he feels necessary.

Provide the Proper Climate for Delegation

If the boss doesn't delegate to us, we find it difficult to delegate to our subordinates. Delegation must begin at the top. Most often the boss is unwilling to delegate because he is afraid that his subordinates will not do the work properly or make sound decisions. Often enough, the superior reaches this conclusion because he is asking himself, "Will he do the job exactly the way I would do it myself?" When he uses this yardstick, the boss is rarely satisfied. He penalizes both his subordinate and himself and forgets that at one time somebody had to demonstrate faith in his ability by giving him his first opportunity to learn how to do the work and make the decisions.

Every manager should be willing to give others on his team a chance to fail. When a man is delegated challenging work, and is given large authority to make his own decisions, he has a sense of guiding his own destiny and can enjoy a feeling of real accomplishment when his efforts are successful.

Know When to Recall Delegation

When ability to perform diminishes, delegated authority and responsibility should be withdrawn temporarily until the situation improves. For example, when a new man comes into a position, the manager will withdraw certain of the responsibility and authority he has delegated until he determines the capabilities of the new incumbent. As he becomes confident of the new man's ability, the manager redelegates the responsibility and authority. Withdrawal of delegated responsibility and authority may also occur in cases of emergency, when new units are formed, or when a new manager enters a position. This ebb and flow of responsibility and authority is to be expected. However, the manager should be aware of the human tendency to retain authority. Once the need for recall has passed, he should discipline himself to delegate the power to make decisions as completely as possible.

Clarify Performance Standards

To be effective, accountability must be based on clear, understandable, and measurable performance standards. If we have not developed plans which are understood and accepted by the people who report to us, it will be difficult to hold them to account. Before delegating, we should make sure that we have a good planning structure, that sound objectives, programs, and budgets guide the activities of our subordinates and provide the yardstick against which the performance can be measured.

Enlarge Jobs in Depth As Well As Breadth

The capacity of individuals increases as they become more proficient in their jobs. They are able to take on more complex and demanding work. One way to accomplish this is to delegate new work to the most capable people. Another is to encourage improvement in depth. Everybody can think of new and better ways of doing their jobs, of reducing costs, and increasing efficiency. Stress on this rather than on the acquisition of responsibilities already delegated to others will give better results and consistently higher morale.

Reward Outstanding Performance

People who do a good job want to be told about it. They want others to know. The best source of this recognition is the manager. By giving credit freely we encourage repeat performance of the kind of outstanding work we want. Sooner or later, this recognition should be reflected in an increase in salary or other compensation.

Keep in mind that to a dissatisfied person on the team, increased delegation is often a morale builder. Giving people more important work to do and letting them make more important decisions shows most clearly that you have confidence in them and helps them to feel important.

TECHNIQUES OF DELEGATION

Delegation can be facilitated by use of the techniques of loyal opposition and of completed work. These are outlined below.

Loyal Opposition

If people are to do the best possible job for the manager to whom they report, they will have to disagree with him on occasion. A major reason is that the person who is actually doing the work can see more clearly than his supervisor what is required and will have better defined views of immediate operating needs. Because of the difference in viewpoint, he will frequently disagree with his superior about the work itself.

TECHNIQUE OF LOYAL OPPOSITION	Offering constructive disagreement where indicated on the basis of facts with loyal support of the final decision when made.
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Should we make our disagreement known or keep it to ourselves? It is an important part of every manager's responsibility to disagree when necessary and to encourage disagreement on the part of his people. To be constructive, however, this disagreement should be offered in terms of the technique of loyal opposition, which involves the steps outlined below.

Look at Both Sides. Before disagreeing with the boss or anybody else, it is a sound rule to first find out what we are disagreeing with. This means finding out precisely what is the viewpoint or opinion of the other person. Questions are the best means of finding out, and they are most effective if asked in person.

Make Disagreement Factual. Disagreement should be limited to the facts and logic of a situation and should not be extended to include personalities. The important requirement here is to analyze and assess what happened, but to avoid criticizing persons and personalities in the process. A moment's forethought will generally enable us to state disagreement without criticizing the person with whom we disagree.

Don't Look for Sympathizers. When we disagree with the boss, it is best to avoid banding together with others of a similar viewpoint. The attempt to find supporters and to build

behind-the-scenes opposition to the boss' viewpoint is always dangerous. It is often one of the best ways to win a skirmish and lose a battle.

Give Recognition. If a person steadfastly supports a point of view contrary to your own and in the process requires you to re-examine your premises, he has made a contribution to the effectiveness of your management. The best way to encourage more of the same is to give sincere recognition both for the loyal opposition and the spirit in which it was offered.

Support the Final Decision. The accountable manager's job is to weigh all the evidence, consider every viewpoint, and evaluate disagreements. Then he can make the final decision. Once the decision is made, everybody on the team must accept it and support it as if it were his own. If there is still disagreement, it should be voiced in private to the manager accountable. To complain and criticize after the die has been cast is destructive in the extreme.

Completed Work

The technique of completed work is a means of forestalling the natural tendency of subordinates to get the boss to do much of their work for them. If the technique is to be successful, two cautions should be observed: First, completed work does not mean that the manager refuses to talk to people about their work after it has been delegated; second, completed work is not accomplished simply by telling people, "Here's the job. Now don't come back to me until you have finished."

TECHNIQUE OF COMPLETED WORK

The process of requiring managers to carry assigned tasks through to completion through their own efforts.

The technique of completed work can eliminate much of the routine and detail that consume a manager's time. To be practiced successfully, it requires observance of the points outlined below.

Know What You Want. Before you can get others to do completed work for you, you must know exactly what you require. The best way to do this is to think through the assignment and jot down the key points on a piece of paper. Nothing will beat the "jot it down" habit. In making your notes, be sure you have this minimum clearly in mind.

1. *What results do you expect?* Can you state clearly and concretely what should be accomplished when the job is finished?
2. *What are the major program steps?* Are there specific activities that must be carried out in a prescribed order? If so, better think these through or you will find that what is done differs from what you want.
3. *Establish the major schedule.* If nothing else, you will want to specify the date on which a special job should be completed. If there are intermediate dates, be sure to think these through.
4. *What are the limits?* If there are budget considerations, be sure to specify these. Keep them as general as possible, but also remember the best way to control expenditures is to budget available funds beforehand.

Know the Limits. If you have done a good job of planning, in the process you will have set the limits within which you can give others great freedom to act on their own. Keep in mind that if

you take thirty minutes now to think the matter through and establish sound limits of action, you will invariably save yourself hours of wasted effort later.

Know the Check Points. To maintain effective control of the work you have delegated, require periodic check-backs to report on progress and to bring up questions and problems. Think through carefully the strategic points on which you want your subordinate to check back. Jot these down, because you will want to discuss them with him later.

Set the Example. Before requiring completed work of those who report to you, make sure you are practicing this with your own superior and with others with whom you work. Unless you are setting a good example, requiring completed work of others will result in a poor response and hold you up to personal criticism.

Take People Action. The technique of completed work is not a mechanical procedure. It requires a keen understanding of people and a careful approach in terms of human limitations. Here are the people action steps:

1. *Communicate.* If you want completed work to be successful, don't practice it on people; make sure they understand what the technique is, why it is necessary and how they can use it themselves to improve their own delegation.

2. *Educate.* The best way to master completed work yourself is to educate other people in the technique. This requires a careful step-by-step explanation of what it involves and practice in the method.

3. *Participate.* Encourage people to contribute their ideas and suggestions as to how to make completed work effective. Remember that each time one of your men sees his ideas incorporated in what you are doing, he develops an emotional ownership which commits him, more strongly than anything else, to helping you make your overall idea a success.

4. *Delegate.* Once your people have learned the technique of completed work, give them authority to carry out their own work within this framework.

5. *Reciprocate.* You respond to sincere praise for good work. So will others. When people carry out a completed job effectively, don't hesitate to give them a pat on the back. Even more effective is a brief recital of the job and its results at a staff meeting so that everybody will be informed of the success and will be motivated to improved efforts themselves.

6. *Evolve to Excellence.* As with other professional management practices, we must keep in mind that complete success will not be full-blown. We must start where people are. This is generally at a relatively inefficient stage. By consciously extending our delegation, we can evolve to excellence in a predictable manner. Here are the steps:

a. *Start easily.* Instead of trying to install the total technique of completed work all at once, begin in the easiest manner by first adopting the habit of requiring people to provide their own answers to each question they bring up. Practice this for a period of a few days or a week. Each time a question is presented to you, consciously respond by asking "What answer do you have?" or "What do you think?" In itself this will probably reverse a great deal of upward delegation.

b. *Require solutions not problems.* As soon as you and your people are in the habit of practicing completed work on the matter of questions, go to the next most difficult area—that of problems and solutions. When a problem is presented to you, require a recommended solution before you give active help. This demands management judgment. In cases of emergency, you may have to act

yourself. But gradually introduce the requirement, "Please let me have your recommendation," and you will find that this is a major step in improved delegation.

c. Discuss, don't decide. You know you will require checkbacks and that you will provide active coaching. When people come to report, or when you are working with them, be careful to help them think the matter through for themselves. By inference or by expressing a personal preference, you may make the decision for them without realizing it. For a time, the process of helping other people to think for themselves will be frustrating both to you and to your subordinates. With perseverance, however, you will find that this is one of the most effective tools for easing the workload on yourself and for building competence in others.

d. Select your assignments. To assist in the process of evolving to excellence, begin with simple, short assignments. As people become more proficient, require completed work on longer and more complex assignments.

e. Extend the check points. In the beginning, you will require people to check back with you quite frequently. With practice, training, and confidence you will find more and more that the checkbacks are abbreviated and are simply a means of keeping you informed of progress. When this occurs, you can minimize the person-to-person contacts and require a written statement at intervals to inform you of what has been accomplished. Eventually, you will reach the stage where check-backs at a mid point and at the completion of the job will be the normal procedure.

f. Suffer mistakes. If you give people authority, they are certain to make mistakes. Some of these will be unimportant and others significant. Keep in mind that the best way for an intelligent person to learn is to make mistakes and to profit from his experience. Patience is the key word here.

Discuss their mistakes with people. Be sure they have figured out how to prevent the same mistake again. Then give them their heads once more. If the mistake is serious, you may have to recall delegation for a time. But remember, if you don't want to do everything yourself, you will either have to train confident subordinates who can carry out completed work, or do much of the work of your people for them.

g. Require completed reports. The final step and most difficult in the evolution to excellence in completed work is that of requiring people to bring you letters and reports which are completed except for your own signature.

Begin with rough drafts. Ask your people to bring you a rough draft of the letter or report ready for final discussion. Review of these drafts will give you a good idea of the ability of each subordinate to think clearly and to express himself concisely. If he is deficient, you will have to make up your mind whether you will help him to improve or do his writing for him.

When you are satisfied with the rough drafts that are brought to you, you can then require final drafts. Demand that the final draft be ready for finished typing and your signature. At this stage refrain from making corrections on the final draft. *Discuss* the deficiencies as you see them and ask your man to make the changes himself.

Above all, don't make changes in written material to fit your own style of writing. There are many acceptable ways of saying the same thing. So long as the letter or report is in good form, don't demand that it be stated exactly as you prefer to write yourself.

The final evolutionary stage in completed work is the presentation of the finished letter or report for your signature. When you have accomplished this, you can be sure that you have attained a real standard of professional management.