

# Delegation

Delegation is the key to a successful organization. Sharing responsibilities keeps members interested and enthusiastic about the group. You might be reluctant to delegate because you want to make sure the job is done right (your way), but you can make members feel unimportant and become apathetic if you don't share the responsibility of making the organization a success.

## **Group Benefits**

- members become more involved and committed
- more projects and activities are undertaken
- a greater chance that projects will be completed
- increased opportunities for members to develop leadership skills
- more of a chance to fill leadership roles with qualified, experienced people
- the organization operates more smoothly

## **Leader Benefits**

- not being spread too thin and therefore is less likely to burn out
- gaining satisfaction seeing members grow and develop
- acquiring more experience in executive and administrative functions

## **When to Delegate**

- there is a lot of work
- a member has particular qualification for or interest in a task
- routine matters need attention
- details take up too much time and have to be divided

## **When NOT to Delegate**

- the task is something you would not want to do (menial work)
- someone is under-qualified or overqualified for the task
- the work is your own specified responsibility

## **How to Delegate**

- Ask for volunteers by a show of hands or passing a sign-up sheet. (Interest is a great motivator!) However, this method can be impersonal and you could be "stuck" if no one signs up.
- Appoint or suggest someone. Sometimes a member lacks self-confidence and won't volunteer; appointing him/her demonstrates your confidence in him/her.
- Assign through a committee. This takes the pressure off an individual and reinforces organizational structure.
- "Best fit" of person with the task is the most effective. Try to spread the enjoyable and responsible tasks around, giving more members status and value.

## **Guidelines for Effective Delegation**

1. Choose the appropriate people by interviewing and placing your members carefully. Consider his/her time, interest and capabilities. Specific responsibilities to be delegated to a particular person must be appropriate for the growth of that person at that time.
2. Explain why the person(s) was (were) selected for this task.
3. Delegate segments that make sense, not bits and pieces of the task. Share the "big picture". People like to know how their segment will help the larger program.
4. Discuss the task at hand. Discuss ideas; mutually set goals and objectives. Whenever possible, give those who will be responsible for carrying out a program a voice in the decision-making. Do not lower standards - don't insult your members!
5. Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person. Explain what is expected of the person(s) and what the bounds of authority are. Be sure agreement is reached on areas where the person can function freely. The end result is important, not the various steps. Everyone accomplishes tasks differently.
6. 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. Give accurate and honest feedback. People want and deserve to know how they are doing. This is both an opportunity for showing satisfaction and encouraging growth. Allow for risk-taking and mistakes.
7. Support your officers and committee chairs by sharing information, knowledge, and plans with them. It is incredible how many errors are made simply due to a lack of information. Share their failures as well as their successes.
8. Delegate. Most responsible people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder, or taking back parts of their assignment before they have a chance to do it. As a leader, it can be hard for you to let go. Let them do the job! Delegating does not eliminate work, it simply changes it. As you delegate appropriately, a multiplier effect occurs.
9. Follow up. Check periodically to see if people have any questions regarding how a project is supposed to be done. This will also let you know how that individual is progressing on the task.
10. Evaluate. You must not overlook the need to evaluate and measure the extent to which actions conformed to plans, if the plans went well, or if the original plans were appropriate and worthwhile. Use appropriate feedback techniques. One of your most important roles as a leader is to help your members learn and grow through both their successes and failures. Your members are your greatest resource. Let them create and turn their creativity into action!