Most of us are familiar with the saying, “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” However, as we begin to climb up the ladder of responsibility it becomes more difficult to accomplish all of the tasks that come our way without assistance. As a supervisor or manager you are expected to delegate responsibility and oversee the progress and outcome of the tasks you assign to others. In fact, knowing how and when to effectively delegate responsibility is essential to successful leadership.

KNOWING WHEN TO DELEGATE

You Should Refrain from Delegating When:
- The project or task involves sensitive or confidential information.
- You have been assigned a project because of your specific expertise in a given area.

It is Appropriate to Delegate When:
- There are less-specialized duties that can be completed by others.
- You want to offer staff members the opportunity to develop new skills.

HOW TO DELEGATE SUCCESSFULLY

- Assign responsibilities to staff members who are best suited to complete the project. Keep employee motivation and dependability in mind when making this decision.
- Avoid “typecasting” your employees. Try to provide all of your staff members with opportunities to learn new skills. This will offer them the opportunity to become better employees and more invested in the department. Additionally, you may discover a hidden strength. In time, you will learn all of your employees strengths and weaknesses, and thus be better able to properly match employees to tasks.
- Be sure to provide clear instructions. This includes giving the employee a clear timeline as to when tasks/projects are to be completed. If you are assigning unfamiliar or complicated duties, give the employee a typed list of instructions.

"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."
--Theodore Roosevelt
• Clearly communicate the expected outcomes. Also, consider setting up a schedule for receiving/giving feedback.
• Patience, approachability, and accessibility are essential. Make it clear to your staff that they can come to you with questions or for clarification.
• Try to avoid micromanaging your staff. Give employees some creative freedom in terms of how they go about completing the task.
• After the task is completed be sure to give your staff feedback. If an assignment is completed successfully, be sure to thank your staff by acknowledging their contributions. Likewise, if there are areas in which staff members can improve, provide that feedback in a constructive manner.

As supervisors and managers, it won’t always be possible or even appropriate to complete all of the tasks that land on your desk without assistance. Delegating tasks fairly and efficiently will reduce your stress level, boost office productivity, and allow you more time to work on specific projects that require a more specialized skill set. Moreover, delegating tasks will provide your staff members with opportunities to be valued contributors to the team, as well as develop new skills.