

# Supervisor/HR Supplement Newsletter

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Helpful Resources From Your Employee Assistance Program

## Delegation with Confidence: Five Essential Steps



The old maxims "if you want something done right, do it yourself," do not address the busy manager with assignments and deadlines facing them every day. Many managers find themselves limited simply by the hours in a day to meet the many demands confronting them. Giving up control and authority is a challenge that many managers fear more than working twelve hours a day, six days a week. But the effective manager is one who understands their limitations and has confidence in both their ability to delegate, and their subordinates. There are five steps that insure that the delegation process will yield the best results for the manager and the recipient of delegated tasks:

- 1. Clarify the assignment.* Look carefully at the task and what is required to complete it. What steps are involved in the assignment? What knowledge is needed? Who in your organization is best qualified to assume this task? If you are not clear in your assignment, the results will definitely be in jeopardy. Finding the employee with the necessary skills and experience to do the job is only half the challenge. Once that employee is designated, you have to be clear about what you want done. For best results, delegate the outcome of the assignment. Let your subordinate choose methods and strategies that they feel will best allow them to complete the assignment. As long as you've made your goals clear, your chosen employee is the best person to determine the way to reach a positive outcome.
- 2. Specify the range of authority.* Every time you delegate a project, you also delegate authority. But every assignment, and the authority required, have inherited constraints. It is fruitless to give an assignment and not delegate the authority needed to gather information, enlist others' help, and utilize company resources. When you clarify the assignment, examine how much authority is required and inform your designee of the range of discretion you are giving them. Be clear about constraints and limits that you are granting, and the boundaries involved.
- 3. Inform all affected parties that delegation has occurred.* Your designee is going to need cooperation to complete the given project. Also, they are acting in your place and to avoid misunderstandings and confusion, let everyone know that you've delegated this task and to whom the task has been given. Failure to communicate with others will sabotage your employee's efforts. Also, in all organizations where established lines of authority are clearly drawn, changes can cause uncertainty and concern about other members of your team. Avoid "water cooler gossip" by being upfront with your employees and communicate your trust that they will cooperate with your designee as they would cooperate with you.
- 4. Allow your subordinate to participate.* Employees that are encouraged to participate in the requirements, methods, degree of authority, and timeframes of a given project are more motivated and enthusiastic in assuming tasks. When you give an assignment, draw on the thoughts and opinions of your subordinate to map out the assignment and your expectations. This illustrates a manager's confidence in the recipient and their abilities. A cooperative spirit goes a long way to ensuring success. When employees feel they have a voice in a given project, there is a higher degree of satisfaction, motivation, and accountability for performance.

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Deer Oaks EAP Services, your Employee Assistance Program, is always available to you and your dependents. If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks at:

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## Continued: Delegate with Confidence

5. Establish an open line of communication for feedback and monitoring progress. As you set time tables and reporting guidelines, also make sure that your employee has a route for questions, advice, and concerns that may arise. Delegation is an ongoing process and communication is essential to its success. This communication should involve not only concerns of your subordinate, but the manager's concerns as the project progresses. Periodic monitoring insures that problems along the way are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. Each step involved in an assignment should have a corresponding timeframe and specific reporting requirement. Mutual understanding and acceptance of these reporting requirements is vital to a smooth transition from your actions to the actions of your designee.

Delegation is an issue facing managers more and more as personnel budgets are tightened but demands on managers' time and expertise are growing. Delegating is not a sign of limitation or failure to meet expectations, but a sign of a confident and secure manager who can draw upon the talent within their organization.

Indeed, delegation is the truest test of a manager's confidence. The mission of every manager must be trust in themselves and trusting the team they have assembled. After all, why build a great team if you don't use its talents to the fullest degree?

By: *Melissa Vokoun*

Article Source: <http://www.leadershiparticles.net>

## Leading with Integrity

Leadership is often defined as getting other people to do what you want. Using this definition, it is no wonder that many people revert to using underhanded tactics to try to "trick" their followers into doing what they want. This is a shortcut to leadership and doesn't result in long-term value. It is this type of "leadership by trickery" that makes people automatically suspicious of their leaders. If you want to develop a long-term foundation for leadership, these types of shortcut tricks will only prevent you from achieving your goals. Once some of your followers realize that they have been tricked, you will lose any credibility you started with.



If you want a solid leadership foundation, you must take the long view and consider how every action will impact your ability to lead further down the road. To build trust with your followers, you must act with integrity. Leading with integrity means doing what you say you will do. Many leaders get themselves into trouble by making commitments off the cuff and then not following through on those commitments. If you are careful of what you say, you will increase your integrity with your followers simply because you won't have to back out of commitments you made without thinking. When you do make commitments, make sure they are tied to realistic timeframes. If you tell someone you are going to give them a raise next year, you are making a commitment despite many factors you can't control. Sometimes saying that you will give them a raise when sales reach \$1,000,000 is a better commitment because it is tied to a goal that will enable you to give the raise.

Sometimes leading with integrity means going through with something to keep your word even when you would rather not. Not keeping your word will often hurt you much more than any inconvenience that is caused by keeping your word. If you ever have to go back on a promise, don't hide it under the rug. Take the time to apologize to the people you made the promise to. Apologize and try to come up with some way to work things out even if you can't make the original commitment.

Another important part of leading with integrity is delegating responsibility. Many leaders fail by delegating responsibility and then taking back over when their delegate does something they don't want. When you delegate, you need to be willing to part with the responsibility. If your delegate does something differently than you, you need to support their decision. That doesn't mean you can't steer them in a different direction, but always support their decision whenever possible. If you delegate responsibility and then pull it back, you will demotivate your followers and make it difficult to delegate other items in the future. Leading with integrity is avoiding the shortcuts that many leaders take. By avoiding shortcuts you can build a strong foundation that will amplify your leadership skills as you develop trust with your team.

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## Ask Your EAP!

The following are answers to common questions supervisors have regarding employee issues and making EAP referrals. As always, if you have specific questions about referring an employee or managing a workgroup issue, feel free to make a confidential call to the EAP for a management consultation.

**Q. What is a “blame culture” as it applies to business and work settings?**

**A.** A “blame culture” exists when fear and blame are used to manage productivity issues resulting from problems and mistakes experienced by employees. In the book, *Stop the Blame Culture* (Gower Publishing Company, 1998), authors describe how a blame culture sabotages productivity by causing employees to seek conformity rather than opportunities that require risk. Evading accountability and responsibility, and being able to quickly gather data to prove innocence becomes the corporate mindset. Reduced communication, reduced innovation, and inhibited entrepreneurial thinking result. Businesses can move away from a blame culture by changing the corporate mindset to establish new traditions that value learning and appreciation for mistakes as opportunities for improving productivity and innovation. This improves morale, increases energy, promotes positivity, and facilitates the achievement of ambitious goals.

**Q. I have an employee who won’t go to the EAP, or at least I don’t think this person has gone yet. I am considering giving assignments that will cause the employee to quit. Should I discuss this strategy with the EAP?**

**A.** Although your question is one for legal and HR experts to respond to, by your own definition this would be mistreatment of your employee. It, therefore, sounds unethical or at least extremely risky. The EAP will not discuss this strategy with you because to do so would cross the boundary of advising you on administrative and disciplinary matters. It sounds as though you need some coaching on effective ways to manage this troubled employee and motivate him or her to accept a referral to the EAP based upon performance-driven intervention techniques. If an employee really wants to keep a job, there is almost always a way to motivate the employee to visit the EAP voluntarily prior to being dismissed. Work with the EAP to find that strategy.

**Q. It seems like bullies in the workplace have some type of power, even if only imagined. Is this correct? What’s the supervisor’s role in prevention? Would training for employees help reduce risk?**

**A.** You’re correct. Employees who bully often possess some degree of power—supervisory, tenure, delegated, indirect, or team leadership. Some bullies may perceive that or mistakenly believe they have power or authority, and this alone is enough to prompt their aggressive behavior. Obviously bullies can exist anywhere in the organization, so conducting general education and awareness is helpful. This should include self assessment for the potential perpetrator or victim. Throw in a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying and a significant reduction of the risk can be accomplished. Supervisors should be aware that a bully is often a trusted employee who is relied upon by the immediate supervisor for knowledge, expertise, and skills. He or she can be passionate and loyal to the organization. Nevertheless, if a supervisor becomes overly dependent on this “right-hand man/woman” relationship, bullying behaviors may emerge, aided by the protection or special relationship the bully feels exists with the supervisor.

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