DELEGATION KIT
for
MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS

MANAGEMENT & INSERVICE TRAINING UNIT
DELEGATION KIT

This is the first of an occasional series of kits on Management Skills.

This kit as with subsequent kits is in two parts. The first part is a brief theoretical review of the topic. The second part is a document that is intended to take the user through the practice of the topic step by step.

It is intended that the kit should at worst be thought provoking, at best an invaluable aid to good management.

Users are encouraged to reproduce the practice part of the kit as required. If users would like an 'original' for reproduction or amendment and subsequent reproduction, (the document was produced using wordperfect v.5 software), users should send a 5 1/4" Medium density disk to MDISTU and the document will be loaded onto the disk and returned.

Any comments or inquiries concerning the kit should be directed to M.D.I.S.T.U. The author is Ian Louden (02 804 5408).

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Principal
Corrective Services Academy

30th January, 1990

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Almost every organization gives managers and supervisors responsibility for a wider range of tasks than they can possibly handle personally. Other people are needed to help them with their responsibilities.

Successful managers are those who can delegate competently.

Delegation of authority therefore makes organization possible. It is impossible for one person to exercise all the authority for making decisions. There is a limit to the number of persons managers can effectively supervise and for whom she/he can make decisions, once this limit is passed authority must be delegated.

Some other reasons to delegate are:

- It improves the overall quality of decisions and their acceptance.
- It provides a more effective division of labour than would be otherwise be possible.
- It permits subordinates to exercise a quick response when necessary.
- It provides a form of management development.
- It provides a form of job enrichment.

DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Duties maybe assigned to subordinates with appropriate delegation of authority. However responsibility cannot be delegated. A supervisor's own responsibility is not in the least diminished after delegating authority to a subordinate. In fact delegating of authority might increase the supervisors responsibility. The supervisor then is responsible for personal supervision of the subordinate in addition to having responsibility for seeing that the work of the organization is accomplished.

Similarly a supervisor cannot reduce accountability to higher authority through delegating. A manager is still accountable to higher or other authority for authority delegated and for tasks assigned for subordinates.

The principle authority - responsibility - accountability problem in organizations is that people at all levels try to maximize their own authority, whilst at the same time they may try to minimize their own responsibility and accountability. Similarly managers may attempt to maximise the responsibility and accountability of subordinates while minimizing the amount of authority and power delegated to their subordinates. This is a most fundamental violation of the principles of organization and job design. It results in the progressive abandonment of the pursuit of organizational objectives as they are subordinated to mutually exclusive individual goals. It is appalling management.
THE RISK OF DELEGATION?

The risk that managers take when they delegate authority is inherent in the managerial job. If all managers fully appreciated this fact perhaps they would be more inclined to delegate adequate authority.

The manager who is unwilling to accept the risk of poor subordinate performance is really not qualified for a managerial position. The managerial position inevitably involves risk; assuming risk, therefore is an inevitable part of the managers job.

HOW MUCH CAN A MANAGER DELEGATE?

A manager can delegate to subordinates the right to do anything the manager has the right to do except those things he or she is specifically prohibited from delegating.

There is one additional exception.

The manager cannot totally delegate authority for performing the managerial functions of planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling. To delegate total authority in these areas would mean that the manager gives up the role of manager.

RESISTANCE TO DELEGATION

Resistances to delegation may come from the delegator or the subordinate. Normally the chief focus of resistance to delegation is the delegator.

Delegator

- Lack of confidence in subordinates. The delegator rightly or wrongly believes that his/her subordinates aren't 'up to it', and so doesn't delegate, or delegates only to the same one or two persons. This of course establishes a self fulfilling prophesy as the subordinates, or the majority of them, never get a chance to learn and therefore remain, or are seen to remain 'not up to it'. Managers must be prepared to allow subordinates to make mistakes, (not to permit gross failure).

- A belief that she or he can do it better than any subordinate. This may well be true but it will usually lead to reduced effectiveness. There is a law of comparative advantage which argues that a manager best contributes to an organization if he or she concentrate on tasks that contribute the most to achieve the organization objectives -and assign other tasks to subordinates even if they could achieve those tasks better themselves.
A desire to retain absolute control. Some people enjoy the use of and are motivated by the acquisition and maintenance of power. It is logical that people of this type are drawn to management and supervisor roles which have power. Unfortunately such persons are not usually predisposed to use the power of such positions for its proper purpose, which means a significant amount of delegation. Rather they hang on to their power. This means that such a manager is overworked or ignores work, the quality of such a person's work is usually comparatively poor, and they fail to properly develop their subordinates who are frequently alienated by such a person. This is not good management.

A fear of failure. A fear of being believed to be or being demonstrated to be incapable to both superiors and subordinates.

A fear that if they delegate subordinates will be better than they are, showing them up.

A lack of ability or skill. Sometimes people who are managers and supervisors do not know how to delegate properly and according avoid doing so. This is rather uncommon, most managers know how to delegate but don't. Some managers and supervisors are too disorganized and/or inflexible in their own management practices to be able to plan effective delegation properly.

A belief that it would result in bad decisions and prevent standardisation. These may be realistic assessments which if true indicate that the manager has an urgent need for staff development on the one hand and an urgent need to review procedures and establish standards and controls on the other.

Subordinate

Lack of Self Confidence. A person who lacks confidence in their own abilities will be threatened by and resisted moves to give them more responsibility which would increase their stress and anxiety (apart from any other consequences).

Happier following orders. Related to a lack of self confidence but not the same, a person, even one who is self confident, may for many reasons, but usually relating an unsatisfactory past work experience, avoid a situation which makes them more accountable. They would sooner follow than lead.

Low need for achievement. Some individuals, even those in leadership roles, are more motivated by other goals than achievement e.g. affiliation or power. Such persons can often regard delegation as an obstacle to their primary goal.
The quality of the leader - follower relationship. For good or bad reasons a subordinate may develop a set of beliefs and feelings about his/her manager/supervisor so that he/she operates covertly or overtly to undermine the manager/supervisors position. This could include the avoidance of delegated authority.

The subordinate maybe overburdened with work, lack time, lack information, or lack resources to take on additional work.

Insufficient incentives are provided for accepting and effecting delegation. Delegation usually means extra work for the subordinate (as well as the delegator). There must be some perceived benefit for the subordinate for effecting such a delegation to the best of his/her ability. The avoidance of getting into trouble if they don't accept and perform is unlikely to be an effective incentive. In fact it is likely to be counter productive. There should be some positive reasons associated with the undertaking of delegated tasks. These maybe to do with training and development, promotion or acting up, and job enrichment.

The above items are not exhaustive, but they do describe the most commonly reported resistances to delegation.

The manager/supervisor should be familiar with such resistance and consider them carefully when planning and practising delegation. In particular the manager/supervisor should remember that most frequently reported failures in delegation lie with not with subordinates, but with their managers.

HOW DO YOU DELEGATE?

1. Identify and define the job/task to be delegated and consider the risks of delegation. Answer the questions - Do I know enough about this task to delegate it properly? Is it an appropriate task to delegate?

2. Decide what delegation or decision making authority you wish to make. Answer the question - Have I really made the right choice or am I being too cautious or too reckless?

3. Decide what resources you will need to delegate to ensure the achievement of the task. Answer the question - In light of what I know about the problem am I really delegating enough authority?
4. Decide on the person or persons to whom you will delegate in the light of the task to be done. Answer the question - In my choice am I reflecting a proper balance between existing ability and staff development?

5. Brief and motivate the person or persons chosen. Answer the questions - Have I stated the intended outcome of the delegation in measurable terms (i.e. as an objective)? Have I emphasised the importance of the task? Have I emphasised what constitutes effective performance? Have I clearly stated the boundaries of the delegated authority (& resources)? Have I clearly stated the appropriate controls for the delegation? Does the person or persons fully understand his/her new responsibilities? Does the person or persons accept this delegation? Should I give the person or persons a written instruction? Have I recorded the appropriate information to enable me to monitor progress? Have I provided the person or persons with a positive incentive for good performance?

6. Monitor the progress of the delegation and provide proper assistance and psychological support. Answer the questions - Are the controls providing me with sufficient feedback? Am I maintaining open lines of communication? Am I providing appropriate counselling and/or training? Am I reinforcing success? Am I maintaining a proper balance avoiding permitting excessive dependence on the one hand and avoiding taking over what was delegated on the other? Do I need to reduce/increase delegated authority and/or resources?

7. At the end of the delegation reward effective performance and review and plan to rectify unsuccessful performance. Answer the questions - Have I identified effective performance and have I reviewed it with the person or persons providing them with positive reinforcement? Have all parties identified unsuccessful performance and located the causes(s)? How will remedial action be planned and undertaken?

It is generally most advisable for a delegation to be formalized in writing. This promotes clarity in the planning for and the execution of the delegation, and it reduces the possibility of inadequate communication leading to misconceptions and wrong assumptions. A suggested format for a written delegation follows.
DELEGATION
RECORD/WORKSHEET

Those items that are boxed are suitable to give to the persons to whom you are delegating.

1. You are considering delegating authority to achieve something: state in general terms what it is you want achieved:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Answer these questions:

2.1. Is the task central to achieving your work units/organizations objects?

NO ☐ YES ☐

2.2. Is the risk of failure/delay/or partial success in achieving the task acceptable?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2.3. Are there members of my staff who, with some supervision, could handle the task?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2.4. Do I know enough about the task to be able to delegate it effectively?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2.5. Can I use the delegation as a developmental opportunity?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2.6. Can I provide adequate incentive/motivation for someone to commit themselves to the achievement of the delegated task?

YES ☐ NO ☐

How many ticks did you make in the right hand column of boxes?

The more ticks you made in the right hand column the less suitable the task is for delegation, ideally there should be no ticks in that column!
3. Having completed item 2 do you still believe that you should delegate this task?

YES   NO

If No, Complete item 4 only.

4. In responding to the question at 2.4. you hopefully ticked the YES box. Before you proceed any further you must possess enough information about the task to:

4.1. Write a clear, measurable, and timebound objective for the task, can I do this?

YES   NO

4.2. Establish controls that progressively measure the achievement of the achievement of the task, can I do this?

YES   NO

If your answer to 4.1. & 4.2. was YES the you should proceed to write your objective below. Make sure your objective is stated clearly, in terms that can be measured, and has a time limit.

OBJECTIVE

You are to __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
You now have to look at your objective and decide what will constitute failure and success in achieving the objective.

**CRITERIA FOR FAILURE**

You will not have achieved the objective if

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If your answer to the question at item 3 was NO then you should not proceed any further, with this Delegation Record/Worksheet. You have determined that you will have to perform the task which you have now defined. You can now proceed to plan how you will achieve your objective.
5. You now have to decide how much authority you are going to delegate to ensure that the task(s) is achieved.

As you decide this you must be sure that you give enough authority to get the job done (no more). Most mistakes made in this item are because not enough authority is granted.

A simple model of delegating decision making authority to subordinates is as follows, choose the level of delegation you believe to be appropriate.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

1. Take action - No further contact with me is needed.

2. Take action - Let me know what you did.

3. Look into this problem - let me know what you intend to do.

4. Look into this problem - let me know what you intend to do; delay action until I give approval.

5. Look into this problem - let me know alternative actions available with pros & cons and recommend one for my approval.

6. Look into this problem - give me all the facts; I will decide what to do.
Some combination of the above, (If the problem is complex it may require different levels of decision making authority for different components), as follows:

A. Level [ ] for ______________________

B. Level [ ] for ______________________

C. Level [ ] for ______________________

D. Level [ ] for ______________________
To complete your delegation of authority you must decide how much of what resources you control you will allocate for how long to ensure the delegation is achieved.

DELEGATION OF RESOURCES

The following resources are allocated to you whilst you are engaged in achieving the objective set at item 4. **Note** these resources are not available to you for any other purpose.

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6. You now have to decide on the person or persons to whom you are going to delegate authority.

Look at your answers to items 2.1. - 2.6. Who is your first choice:

__________________________________________________________

Think about your first choice ask yourself.

6.1. Am I just playing safe?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

6.2. Couldn't I afford a less safe choice

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If your answers to 6.1. & 6.2. were YES think again about your first choice.

SELECTED

The person(s) chosen to who to make the delegation is (are):

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

7. Having selected the person or persons you will delegate to you might now like to consider if the controls stated in the delegation of decision making authority, (item 5), are sufficient. For example:

7.1. Do you want routine meetings with the person(s) to whom you make the delegation.

No [ ]

Yes one per day [ ]

Yes one per week [ ]

Yes one per month [ ]

Yes one per .... [ ]
7.2. Do you want correspondence on the matter to be through you?

No

Yes

7.3. Do you want written progress report

No

Yes 1 per week

Yes 1 per fortnight

Yes 1 per month

Yes 1 per

7.4. Are there obvious critical stages in the achievement of the overall objective?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

7.5. If your answer to 7.4. is YES identify the stages(s) (in sequence).

7.5.1. Stage 1 is the completion of ____________________

Which should be complete by ____________________

7.5.2. Stage 2 is the completion of ____________________

Which should be completed by ____________________

7.5.3. Stage 3 is the completion of ____________________

Which should be completed by ____________________
7.6. If you answered 7.5 do you wish to include additional monitors (meetings, reports etc) to address each stage described?

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<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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For Stage 1 a ____________ is to be completed by/held on ____________

For Stage 2 a ____________ is to be completed by/held on ____________

For Stage 3 a ____________ is to be completed by/held on ____________

8. You now need to turn your thinking into action by briefing the person(s) you selected in item 6.

It is usually a good idea to give your briefing verbally to allow question and answer but also to have the major items of importance, (for example those items that are boxed in this record/worksheet), summarized in writing so that you can give a confirming set of written instructions to the person(s) to whom you have made the delegations.

Now ask yourself have I arranged sufficient controls to enable me to monitor progress?

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<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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If your answer is NO think through the matter of controls again until your answers is YES.

The following questions should be used as a quick reference during a briefing.

8.1. Have I explained the situation, including the goal of the delegation?

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<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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8.2. Have I explained why he/she/they were chosen, in a positive light?

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<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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8.3. You've stated the objective of the delegation?

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<th>YES</th>
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8.4. Have I emphasised the importance of the task?

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<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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8.5. Have I clearly stated what Decision Making Authority is to be delegated?

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<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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Before you can move onto the next stage in the delegation, where the person(s) to whom the delegation was made executes the delegation you must be assured that all the answers to the questions 8.1. - 8.10. were YES, and the answer to question 8.11 was NO.

If not you will have to backtrack to a point where you can sort out the problem.

At the end of the briefing some details in your original thinking may have changed as a result of discussion during the briefing. Amend any entries in the preceding items that may have changed.

9. You now have to monitor the progress of the execution of the delegation.

You could do this by making the appropriate notes in your diary showing when reports/meetings etc. are due and what happened.

- You could open a diary just for monitoring delegations.

- You could simply maintain a log using the suggested format (overleaf).

However you do it you should maintain sufficient records to enable you to follow the execution of the delegation, and if appropriate, identify where errors occurred and what caused them.
DELEGATION LOG

1. Timetable of Planned Events (e.g. Visits, Meetings, Reports):

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<th>TYPE OF CONTACT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DUE TIME</th>
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2 Notes taken during planned events:

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
<th>ACTION REQUIRED</th>
<th>BY WHOM</th>
<th>BY WHEN</th>
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10. The task for which you delegated your authority should now be complete, or have been concluded in some way. You now need to consider what worked well and what didn't. You need to reinforce successful behaviour (more than you will have already done) with the person(s) to whom you made the delegation.

You may wish to discuss unsuccessful behaviour with the person(s) (again more than you will have already done). You may wish to get feedback on your own performance as a delegator. Finally you will want to be clear in your own mind what lessons there are to be learnt from this delegation.

<table>
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<th>Things that went well this delegation were:</th>
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<th>Things that should have worked better with this delegation were:</th>
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What did the person(s) identified in item 6 do well? List them and reinforce this successful behaviour in a briefing interview.

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Do you believe that the person(s) identified in item 6 know where and why they were unsuccessful?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

Do you believe that those persons accept appropriate responsibility for their unsuccessful performance?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If your both answers are YES there is probably not much point in debriefing the persons on their unsuccessful behaviour.

If one or more of your answers are NO then it maybe appropriate to debrief the persons on their unsuccessful behaviour.

Can you instance unsuccessful behaviour by giving specific examples from your records?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If YES, go ahead. If NO then it probably isn't going to be a very productive meeting.
What did the person(s) identified in item 6 do unsuccessfully?

List them and provide examples. Seek to get the person(s) to identify the unsuccessful performance.

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<th>Item</th>
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Having raised the issue of what went wrong you must now consider what can be done to improve the person(s) performance.

Did they/he/she know how to perform successfully, what they didn't perform successfully during the delegation, i.e. have they successfully done it before at some other time?

YES [ ] NO [ ]

If NO the probability is that the problem is a lack of skill or experience - in other words a training problem.

Describe how you will meet the person(s) training need.

I will ensure that the training need is met by arranging for the following:

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If YES then you're saying they could do it, i.e. they had the skill to but didn't. This is not a training problem. The following questions might give you some insight into why.

**Is the desired performance punishing?**

- What is the consequence of performing as desired?
- Is it punishing to perform as expected?
- Does the person(s) perceived desired performance as being geared to penalties?
- Would the person's world become a little dimmer if the desired performance were attained?

**IF YES, THEN REMOVE THE PUNISHMENT.**

- What is the result of doing it the present way instead of the correct way?
- What does the person(s) get out of doing it the present way in terms of reward, prestige status etc?
- Does the person get more attention for misbehaving than for behaving?
- What event in the world supports (rewards) The present way of doing things?

**IF YES, THEN ARRANGE FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE TO BE OF MORE VALUE THAN NON-PERFORMANCE.**

- Does performing as desired really matter to the person(s)?
- Is there a positive outcome for performing?
- Is there an undesirable outcome for not performing?
- Does performance really matter to the person(s)?
- Is there a source of satisfaction for performing?
- Can the person take pride in this performance as an individual or as a member of a group?
- Is there satisfaction of personal needs from the desired performance.

**IF NO, THEN ARRANGE FOR POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE.**
Are there obstacles to performing?

- What prevents this person from performing?
- Does the person know what is expected?
- Does the person know when to do what is expected?
- Are there conflicting demands on this person's time?
- Does the person lack authority, time, resources?
- Are there restrictive policies/procedures that should be changed.

**IF YES THEN REMOVE THE OBSTACLES**

Describe here what you are going to do about this problem, (you may wish to discuss this with the person(s)).

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<th>What is to Change</th>
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If you have discussed unsuccessful behaviour with the person(s) you should now again review their successful behaviour. (This is known as the Sandwich Technique; Good, Bad, Good.)
11. The last thing you have to do is evaluate your own performance and decide in what way you would like to improve your own performance.

Overall I would rate my performance as an out of 10 (0 being the lowest 10 being the highest).

What I did well was:

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What I would like to improve on is:

How?

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FINISH