



Develop Your Team Using the 5 Levels of Delegation

Many leaders do not understand that true delegation is a tool that can be used to grow their team and strengthen their relationships. As a Lean Manufacturing consultant, I've led many cross-functional teams with varying goals. I usually only have one week to get results with a group of strangers. I've learned to be very effective at using delegation with the teams. Not the old "do this and do that" kind of delegation that most people think of when they hear the word. Delegation that empowers teams to thrive and grow. I teach these principles to the teams, then we apply it throughout the week and always achieve outstanding results. These same principles also apply at home with children.

- 1. *Wait until told*** – No growth, respect, or responsibility. The leader simply tells others what to do. They "wait" to be told what to do next. Absolutely, the lowest level of delegation. Many people delegate at this level continuously with their associates and their children and wonder why they can't get them to think for themselves. How could they? They never have to.
- 2. *Ask*** – No growth or respect and only a very small responsibility. You, simply "ask" the leader what to do next. They still do all of the thinking, but at least they know when you're done with the last task. Slightly better than "wait" but still very low level.
- 3. *Recommend*** – Growth happens, respect is felt, and responsibility is taken. Everything changes at this level. The responsibility for determining your next task has been transferred to you. You are now required to think before approaching the leader with a recommendation. When you do, the leader can now evaluate your thought process. If the leader disagrees, they do not go back to level 1. Instead, they facilitate decision making by asking questions. This allows both parties to learn and understand during the process.
- 4. *Do it and report immediately*** – Increasing responsibility. At this level, you have made your decision. You have already taken action. You are simply notifying the leader of what has been done.
- 5. *Own it and report routinely*** – Full responsibility. At this level, you report to the leader at a predetermined interval or only when you feel it is necessary.

When delegating, it's always best to start at level 3. This allows the leader to learn how the associate or child thinks. Level 3 allows the leader to engage them in the thought process. As they build trust over time, the leader can then move them up to the higher levels of delegation. As they move higher, the leader will gain more discretionary time to accomplish other tasks.

Depending on the task, the leader may select to move someone from level 5 back to level 4 or 3. They would do this in order to either participate in the thought process or to be informed of the progress related to a special or new project. Moving someone to a lower level of delegation is always intentional and temporary.

Written by Mack Story