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## **Want to Impress? Delegate!** **By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC**

Do you desire a higher functioning team? *Delegate*. Want a more creative, productive team? *Delegate*. Crave more control over your time and energy? *Delegate*. Want to impress your Board and those above you in your organization? *Delegate*.

Delegation is one of the toughest skills for new leaders to master, yet it is one of the primary keys to success for highly effective leaders.

Why is it such a difficult skill to learn? New leaders want to impress, to look as if they have it all together from the start. A common thread for any new or seasoned leader who struggles with delegation is: "It is easier for me to just do it than to explain how it is done."

An underlying theme is trust. New leaders often don't know their people well enough to know what their skill sets can handle. They may have been disillusioned in the past through trusting too early and are not willing to take that risk again.

Trust can be an extremely difficult proposition when one's reputation is at stake. Consider Ronald Reagan's memorable quote "Trust but verify."

**A primary function of leaders at any level of your organization is to grow your people. It's impossible to 'grow' people whom you don't know or trust.**

Another underlying theme is the leader's own level of confidence. The more confident a leader is, the easier it is to have confidence in their people. The opposite is also true. A leader who privately has low self esteem is more challenged to find confidence in his or her team.

Below are my **Top '7' Tips** to master the powerful leadership skill of delegation:

1. **Get to know each member of your team on an individual basis.** Their interests, strengths, and desires will often lie beyond their current position. Each one wants to feel important and valued in your eyes. Your individual focus on them will provide high dividends and help you ascertain what to delegate in the future.
2. **Discover what motivates each team member.** Never assume they are motivated by what motivates you. Though they may say money, dig deeper. What makes them feel successful? What previous 'wins' are they most proud of? What activities make them lose track of time? This information makes areas of delegation more clear.
3. **Stretch beyond their current capabilities.** See more in each team member than they see in themselves. When you believe they are capable of more, they will as well.

4. **Decide what to delegate.** What is the 'highest and best' use of your time? What do you really enjoy? What routine tasks can someone else take on to free up your time? Start small to provide small successes upon which to build. Keep building successes.
5. **Be specific about the delegated task.** Be certain that the team member to whom you're delegating understands exactly what you expect. Don't allow them to begin the task with assumptions or unclear directions. You'll be setting them (and yourself) up for failure.
6. **Ask them.** It always surprises me when a client expresses that they want more out of a certain employee but don't know exactly what that looks like. When they ask this employee how they can perform at a higher level, the employee typically has a list of what they are excited to take on for their team or leader. All they needed was the question.
7. **Acknowledge and reward for a task well done.** Leaders too often delegate a task and forget about it unless there is a problem. I often hear: "I worked so hard to complete my task and wasn't even thanked." "The only time I hear from my leader is when the task wasn't done correctly, never when I perform exceptionally." If they've worked hard to perform for you, acknowledge their efforts privately or publicly.

Delegation is a powerful leadership tool. It provides you with the time you need to perform your job to at a continually higher level. Through this effort you'll avoid burnout and elevate your team's performance and overall level of satisfaction.

It's actually quite simple. If you want your team to excel, strengthen your skill of delegation. Your focus and efforts will be rewarded tenfold. It's a win/win for all involved.

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