

THE ART OF DELEGATING

Planning an event takes a lot of coordination and work. It is a more enjoyable and successful event if the tasks are shared among the organization's members. However, this is sometimes easier to say than to do. Learning to delegate is a great skill to develop if you want to get the most out of your programming experience. Additionally, sharing responsibilities will make everyone feel like they are contributing to the growth of the organization. This will in turn keep them motivated to help the organization succeed.

When is it appropriate to delegate? You should delegate when:

- ◆ There is a lot of work
- ◆ A member has special skills for or interest in a specific task
- ◆ Someone can benefit from the responsibility
- ◆ Routine matters need attention
- ◆ Details take up too much time and have to be divided

When is it inappropriate to delegate? You should NOT delegate when:

- ◆ The task is something you would not want to do because it is menial
- ◆ Someone is under qualified or over qualified for the task
- ◆ The work is your specified responsibility
- ◆ The area is big or is an unsolved problem
- ◆ Is an issue or matter dealing with the personal feelings of another or with confidentiality

Who benefits from delegation? Everyone!

The benefits for the group are:

- ◆ More involved and committed members
- ◆ More projects and activities are undertaken
- ◆ The probability of completing more projects increases
- ◆ Members have additional opportunities to develop and improve leadership skills
- ◆ The future leaders of the organization will be more qualified to assume leadership roles
- ◆ The organization functions more smoothly

The benefits for the leader are:

- ◆ Able to give more attention to their tasks
- ◆ Less likely to suffer from burnout as a result of over extending oneself
- ◆ Assist with the growth and development of the members
- ◆ Develop skills in executive and administrative functions

How do I delegate?

- ◆ **Ask for volunteers.** This will allow you to see who is interested in the task and who believes they are qualified to complete the task. If no one volunteers, you will need to be creative in approaching someone to accept the responsibility.
- ◆ **Appoint or suggest someone.** This technique provides you the opportunity to promote someone who may lack the self-confidence to volunteer, but may be interested.
- ◆ **Assign through committee.** This takes the pressure off an individual and reinforces organizational structure.
- ◆ **Determine who may be the best fit for the task.** Try to give different members responsibility and opportunity for growth.

Adapted from the University of Michigan's office of Student Activities & Leadership

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

1. **Choose people carefully.** Be conscious of their time commitments, interests and capabilities. The responsibilities to be delegated to a particular person must be appropriate for the individual's growth at the time.
2. **Explain** why the person(s) was (were) selected for this task.
3. **Share the big picture** with those who are working on segments of the project. This will assist them in understanding how their work will impact the larger project.
4. **Discuss the task and share ideas.** Set goals and objectives. Allow those who are working on the project to participate in the decision-making process whenever possible.
5. **Clearly define the responsibilities being delegated.** Explain the parameters in which they are to operate and what the expected end result is.
6. **Determine a method for them to ask for assistance.** Explain your position as a support person, but make them understand that you will not be able to know if they need you unless they tell you so. Give honest, constructive and timely feedback to help the person know how they are doing on the project.
7. **Support your officers and committee chairs** by sharing information, knowledge and plans with them. Have open communication. Share failures as well as successes in an effort to help everyone grow.
8. **Delegate.** Once you have given the responsibility to someone else, let them do it! Don't look over their shoulder constantly.
9. **Follow up.** Check in periodically to see how the projects are going and to answer any questions that may have arisen. This provides you with an opportunity to re-evaluate the goals and objectives to see if you are meeting them.
10. **Evaluate.** Review the process and see if things went as they were outlined. Check to see if the original plans were appropriate. Use appropriate feedback techniques. This is an opportunity for everyone in the organization to grow. Use it wisely!

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