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WESTERN PAINTING & COATINGS CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Building on Your Management Skills:
Delegation

> "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling while they do it.
> –Theodore Rosevelt"

What is delegation?

In the work environment, delegation typically refers to the transfer of responsibility for specific functions and tasks from a leader to their subordinate(s). Delegation is considered key to successfully managing and leading people. However, delegation can be tricky business. Rather than just handing off tasks to subordinates, effective delegation skills emphasize allocating the right tasks to the right people.

What are the benefits?

Delegation, if done properly, has the potential to empower the workplace. When people are granted more authority, they tend to feel more satisfied with their role. Delegating tasks cultivates an environment of learning and growth. Employees have the ability to challenge themselves and develop a new skill which in turn makes them more versatile and motivated. At the same time, leaders are able to dedicate more time to focus on higher-level tasks. Effective delegation generates a win-win-win situation for all involved; the leader, their team, and most importantly, the business.

Why do some leaders avoid it?

Despite the obvious advantages, many leaders are still reluctant to delegate tasks. Rather than focusing on big-picture strategies, they spend much of their time juggling operational-level and higher-level tasks. Why? There are several reasons why a leader might choose to not delegate tasks. In some cases, they may be new to their role and feel uncomfortable telling others what to do. Many people also believe that they could complete the task more efficiently than anyone else. Delegators are ultimately accountable for the success or failure of the task, which prompts some leaders to believe that it's the safe choice to handle it all. However, opting

against delegation carries a steep cost. Leaders might become too overwhelmed juggling all of their tasks, eventually causing them to burn out completely. Aside from that, their team might become bored and frustrated that they aren't contributing enough. Thus, for the sake of company morale, leaders should engage in developing effective delegation skills.

5 Delegation Tips for Leaders

1. **Assess work opportunities.** Identify and determine what tasks would be appropriate to delegate. Ask yourself – What's the importance of this task? How long would you need to train your team to complete this task?

2. **Figure out your employees' strengths and goals.** Get to know what work they enjoy doing, what challenges them, and what their professional goals are to consider when delegating tasks to them.

3. **Set expectations.** Effective delegation is more than simply dumping more work onto someone else's plate. Make sure their responsibilities are understood! Each task should come with a clear set of instructions and expectations that address how to get the task done, the timeline for completion, what the desired outcome looks like, etc.

4. **Provide support.** Delegators should provide support to their team to ensure the task is completed successfully. Have you provided enough resources? Did you present clear guidelines? Have you followed-up with your team to make sure they're on the right track?

5. **Ask for feedback.** Feedback is extremely important, it allows you to identify what you did right and what you could've done better for the next time you delegate tasks.

Bottom line: Like many other skills, practice makes perfect! Delegation is a leadership skill that can be built and honed over time. Once a leader can delegate effectively, they can vastly improve the productivity and efficiency within the workplace – leading the company to achieving so much more!