

## Delegate or Die!

by Megan Tough

### You Can't Do It All - Learning To Delegate

There is not a single management skill more critical to your personal and professional success as an entrepreneur than learning to delegate. But delegating successfully is much more than simply handing out assignments. It is more an exercise in understanding and accepting our own strengths and limitations.

In this fast paced world, we must choose what activities it makes sense for us to do ourselves, and what it makes sense to let go of. None of us can be an expert in everything - not because of any lack of intellectual ability, but more because we lack specific exposure or experience. We must learn to accept this fact and be OK with it.

How do you fill the gaps in your expertise?

Let's consider a real life example. My own areas of expertise lie in business and operational management, understanding people and coaching. This is my business. When I wanted to create a single web-page to market a workshop I was developing I had to make a decision. I have (very) rudimentary skills in web page creation. While all of the software I need is at my fingertips, the question is "Do I really have time to learn it?"

I ask myself: "Should I spend several hours - probably a whole day if I'm being honest - learning to grasp the software and design my own web-page" Or should I spend some money and hire somebody who already knows the software?" Then all I need to do is supply the content.

I am tempted to go it alone - after all, I love technology and knowing how to use it (that's my ego talking!). But at the end of the day, my time is better spent working on other aspects of the business. So I outsourced the job.

In making your own decisions, the key is in determining what you need to know, want to know, must know, and already know. And how your time would best be spent.

#### Find Experts and Build Partnerships

Jack of all trades, master of none. The old adage holds a lot of weight in today's entrepreneurial environment. No one can possibly run a small business alone.

Anyone who has their own business will know that they could never have gotten it off the ground without the help of at least an accountant and a lawyer. Perhaps you also needed a graphic designer or administrative assistance.

It is important to surround yourself with competent experts who have complimentary areas of expertise. Choose carefully and wisely and be ready to compensate these individuals for a job well done. These people are your business partners - people who will give you the advice and information you need to make decisions. When you build excellent relationships with your partners, you may be able to arrange better terms. Payment need not always come in the form of dollars. With strong partner relationships you may be able to trade your expertise for theirs.

#### The Power of Delegating

It is quite liberating once you really do let go and put your trust in other people. So don't ruin it by being a control freak! Remember - before delegating the job, you decided that this was not your area of expertise. You know what I mean - the feeling that nobody else could do it as well as you - even though you don't know how to. If you know that you have controlling tendencies, you must learn to be a good client and give your partner all the information they need to do the job in line with your expectations.

For example, your accountant needs certain facts to achieve the task of budgeting and forecasting cash flow for your business. You need to supply him/her with the necessary information to get the job done. You must understand the process and know what you need the outcome to be. You must also communicate these objectives clearly and monitor their progress (but not so often that they wish they never met you). Set meeting times for updates and a time line for completion.

The key is to identify good people, enlist them in your cause or business, give them the ball, and then allow them to run with it.

How Much is too much?

Excessive delegating can lead to disaster. A complete hands-off approach is abdicating your business responsibility. Let's take the example of your relationship with your accountant. Not being a CPA is no excuse for not understanding the budget of your company. You must understand how the budget works and be accountable for it. You must also be able to communicate this information to the relevant people in your business.

Most important, you must understand how the critical pieces of your business fit together to form the whole so you can make sound and effective business decisions. Should you not understand these processes, you run the risk of losing control.

One last note:

It is nice to want to do all the work yourself. For one thing, on the surface, it appears that it will save you money. However, time is also money and your time has a value. In today's world, being a "Jack of all Trades" is more likely to mean that you do a lot of things averagely.

If you understand your individual strengths and establish strong trusting partnerships to complement these, then your business has experts working for it in all areas. And that knowledge is comforting.

Megan Tough is a published author, coach, facilitator and speaker. Her business, Action Plus, works with professionals to create sustainable and profitable income streams. Make more money and have less stress! To learn more and to sign up for more FREE tips and articles like these, visit <http://www.megantough.com>

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