

Boot Camp for New (and lightly-trained) Supervisors Week 4, Day 1: Understanding How to Delegate

Delegation can be a challenge for new supervisors, but it's a crucial skill to develop. First-time supervisors are usually promoted because they are very good at what they do. Generally, they were successful employees with a lot of knowledge and ability. Once they become supervisors, it can be hard to let go of the "doing" part. It's difficult to let other people try and maybe not do it quite as well as they could have done it. However, as a supervisor, it's important to help employees be successful by not jumping in and doing the tasks for them. It's a supervisor's responsibility to develop employees' skills and experience.

When we are employees who are responsible for no one but ourselves, we are judged on our own actions and abilities. We can create our own success by how hard and how well we work. As a supervisor, we aren't just judged on what we do alone anymore. Our success is dependent on the success of everyone who works for us. That's a big difference.

The first step in delegation is to let each employee know what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and what outcome needs to happen for the employee to be considered successful. Essentially, we are saying, "These are your tasks. When you do these tasks like this, you will be successful." It creates a wonderful environment where everyone knows what they're responsible for and what they're supposed to be doing.

Once everyone has a clear idea of the tasks that they need to perform, it's important to make sure that they have all of the resources that they need to do those tasks. Sometimes employees don't have the authority or ability to get the resources that they need. It's our job as supervisors to make sure that they have everything that they need to be successful. Resources could mean information for a report or parts to keep a manufacturing line running. Supervisors are responsible for securing resources that employees cannot get on their own.

Another responsibility of supervisors is to remove obstacles that keep employees from performing their assigned tasks. An obstacle could be a process requirement that slows things down or a person who is being uncooperative. If something is making it difficult for a person to do his or her job, it's our responsibility to change the situation.

In summary, the first steps to consider in the delegation of tasks are:

1. Make sure that everyone knows exactly what tasks they need to perform and why those tasks are important.
2. Ensure employees have the resources that they need to do their assigned tasks successfully.
3. Remove any obstacles that are hindering employees in the performance of their tasks.