

# **Delegate Authority to Your Employees and Watch Your Customers' Loyalty Grow**

By John Madden

The effective manager is that person who has mastered the art of delegation and empowerment. Delegation is not to be confused with dumping work on other people with a disregard for overloading them - leading to *de-motivation*. True delegation means giving responsibility to others - with the resources and the training to do the job.

## **SHARE INFORMATION**

When it comes to delegating effectively, we cannot win unless we give the employee the information to do the job. Now this sounds rather simplistic - and you might say, "Well that's easy, I already give them information ... I tell them what has to be done ... they just have to go and do it." The problem is that often we just don't give sufficient information. It might be something simple like a restaurant manager who went out of town for a day, forgetting to give the combination of the safe to the person she put in charge. Or a shipping manager who took a day off to attend his son's graduation, but did not inform his employees that one of their co-workers was in charge, thus putting the delegatee in an awkward position when he had to make a tough decision.

## **UNTIE THEIR HANDS.**

Often the information that's not given is what is most needed. For instance, what does the person do if a problem occurs? What level of flexibility are you giving them?

I was conducting a seminar for about a hundred people in Springfield, Missouri. At lunchtime I went along with some of the attendees to the restaurant where a buffet was laid out. I said to the lady host who appeared to be in charge that I would just take a plate of food from the buffet, pay for it, and take it to eat back in the conference room so I could relax and rest my voice. The hostess said, "You can't take the buffet out of the restaurant". I asked why not. She said, "It's policy." After explaining to her that I was conducting a seminar for most of the people now in her dining room, she reluctantly allowed me to take the meal out of the restaurant.

This is a classic example of where we assign responsibility to another, and then we tie their hands by not allowing them to make decisions. We can all learn a lesson from the famous Nordstrom's stores policy where it says, "Rule # 1: Use your good judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules."

Have a checklist for occasions when you're going to delegate to someone, especially for the first time. Apart from the more obvious tasks that have to be accomplished, list some things that could happen that require decision-making by this person. Show them how they should be handled, and what flexibility they have in applying the rules.

## **HAVE FAITH IN THEIR POTENTIAL**

Part of the reason for hesitation to delegate is our fear that the person may fail. Or we may procrastinate because we don't have the time to teach them what they need to know in order to take on this responsibility.

You should take the time to cover all bases of authority, expectations, and responsibility

You should delegate not only the menial jobs, but also the more significant ones.

Employees will see this as a vote of confidence. How many times have you been pleasantly surprised by how an employee shone in a new role, or when given more responsibility? If we recognize and feed the potential of our people, we will become masters of delegation.

*John Madden is an international speaker, trainer, and author of "Leap, Don't Sleep" (How to get different results by doing something different). He specializes in customer service, coaching skills, stress management, creative problem solving, interpersonal skills, networking, and time management. You can reach him at 316-689-6932; email at [john@LeapDontSleep.com](mailto:john@LeapDontSleep.com); web site: [www.LeapDontSleep.com](http://www.LeapDontSleep.com)*