

THE DELEGATION RATIONALIZATION

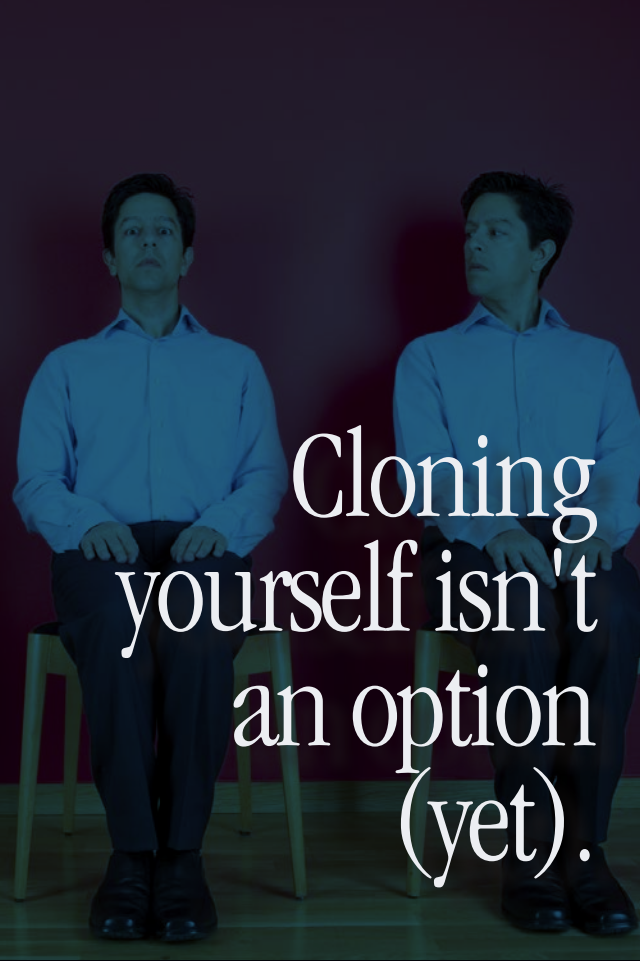


Sounds like an episode of The Big Bang Theory, doesn't it? But delegating effectively is no laughing matter -- especially when it comes to running an efficient, profitable business.

This guide provides best practices and practical tips for getting work off your plate -- while ensuring it also gets done correctly. In here, you'll learn:

- Why delegation is essential to career and organizational success;
- Tips for choosing which work to delegate;
- Best practices for identifying who should do work and how; and
- Where to turn for help.





Cloning yourself isn't an option (yet).

Until then, it's essential for you to spend time on strategic-level priorities and hand off "B" and "C" level tasks. Delegation allows you to:

- **Get more done.** No matter how hard you work, there are limits to what you can accomplish alone. Focus on your essential job functions and empower your team to help you finish the rest.
- **Put each worker's skills to their best use.** Delegate each task to the person best equipped to complete it, and watch productivity and quality increase at the same time.
- **Increase employee satisfaction.** People enjoy accomplishing projects in their skill sets, feeling part of a team, and avoiding unnecessary stress and overwork. Effective delegation puts you and your employees in this satisfaction-boosting, retention-promoting "sweet spot."

Time is your most essential resource as a professional. Delegation helps you leverage it effectively for maximum yield.





Stop being a control freak.

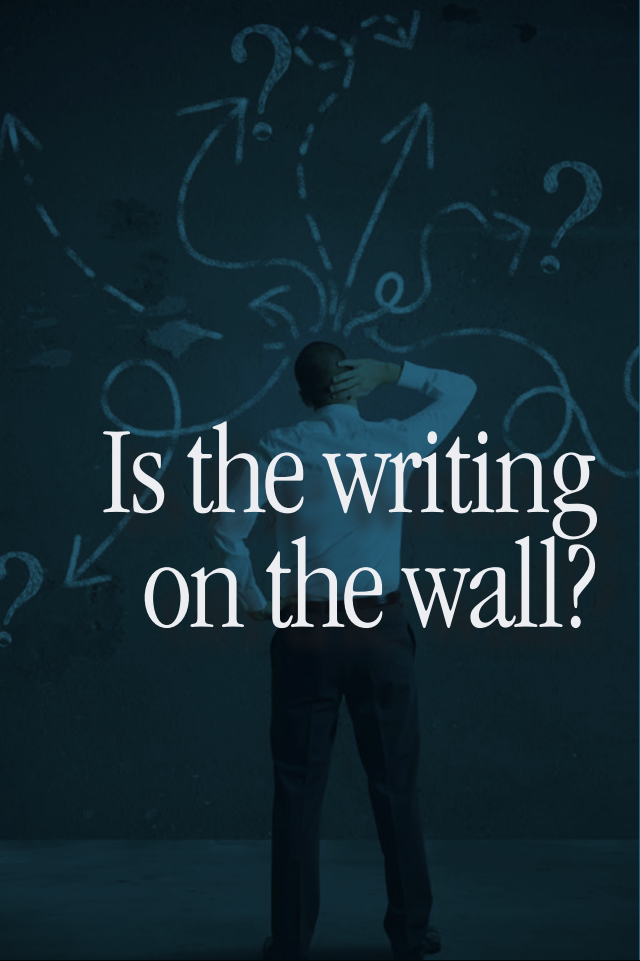
“It’ll only take me a minute.” “I’m the only one who knows how to do it right.” “If I delegate too much, the company won’t need me anymore.”

Excuses, excuses.

The reality? When you try to retain control of too much, you slow everyone’s growth: the organization’s, your employees’, and your own:

- **You get overloaded.** Productivity and energy levels diminish, making you less effective at the work you’re best suited to do.
- **Employees don’t learn.** Delegation allows employees to develop skills and abilities, making them more independent in producing better work in less time.
- **The business loses.** Tasks take more time. Your “big idea” energy and expertise are tied up in work your employees can handle -- but aren’t.





Is the writing on the wall?

Here are a few clear signals that it's time to start delegating:

- **You feel indispensable – but your staff doesn't.** If you're working round the clock but your employees don't have enough to do, it's time to fill their plates -- and empty yours.
- **You or your team are unclear on the goals.** Losing sight of the goal makes the work toward it seem confused or pointless -- so it no longer matters who completes it.
- **Your staff are asking for more work or offering their help.** Employees like to be busy. If your staff are constantly asking, "What can we do?", answer their question by delegating.

Delegating effectively pays off in increased efficiency, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Here's how to do it.





Eenie, meenie....

Determining what and when to delegate isn't child's play, but a sound decision-making process makes it much easier. Consider the following:

- **Is it a job someone else can do?** If so, delegate it!
- **Does the job help improve someone else's skills?** The employee who can learn the task with a little effort should be your “go-to” delegee.
- **Will the job recur in the future?** Teach an employee to do it now and watch the employee handle it effectively when it comes up again.
- **Is there time to delegate the job effectively?** Will you be able to explain the goal, field questions, or rework if necessary? If so, consider delegating the task.
- **Is it the right kind of task to delegate?** Short-term, recurring projects are good candidates for delegation. Long-term, strategic plans probably need your personal attention.






Miney, mo.

How do you decide which employees to delegate work to? Keep these points in mind:

- **Knowledge, skills, and desire to learn.** Make sure the employee receiving the task has the right experience and attitude for delegation. People do better work when they enjoy what they're learning.
- **Ability to work independently.** Independent learning and focus are essential to completing delegated work effectively. Do you have time to provide the background and training needed?
- **Capacity.** Can the workload be reshuffled effectively? If assigning a task to a particular employee will “overload” him or throw the office into chaos, rethink the assignment.





Once you know who should do the work, follow these steps to set that person up for success:

- State the goal clearly. Describe what the results should look like.
- Tell the employee how to act. Should they wait for instructions, recommend a course of action, or simply act and then report the results?
- Provide adequate support and be available to answer questions.
- Plan in “revision time.” Send work back for a re-do if needed, with specific feedback.
- Make sure employees have the authority they need to do the job.
- Reward outstanding performance.





When it's okay not to share.

Knowing what NOT to delegate can be as important as knowing what TO delegate. If a task fits in one or more of these categories, consider keeping it on your own plate:

- **It directly affects quality or innovation.** Quality should stay a key concern for business leaders -- and while staff can be encouraged to offer new ideas, deciding where to invest innovation time and energy should be the boss's job as well.
- **It directly affects finances or hiring.** Like quality, a firsthand knowledge of finances should never be delegated – although you can certainly ask for help with the details. Likewise, stay involved in the hiring process to keep the company headed in the right direction.
- **It's a crisis.** If the situation is critical, take charge, especially if the media is covering the event.
- **It's confidential.** Trade secrets, customer information, and potentially damaging information should be kept in the smallest circle possible -- which means not delegating unless it cannot be avoided.
- **It pays you back.** A task that gives you energy or puts you in a good mood is worth doing, even if you could pay someone else to do it more cheaply.





Still hesitating to delegate? Don't know where to start? Talk to your staffing partner!

Your staffing firm can:

- **Help you find the right people.** Find employees who can take on delegated tasks with a staffing partner's expert help.
- **Provide temporary support to “offload” low-priority tasks.** Let temporary staff take on the “nuts and bolts” work while your skilled employees tackle more complex concerns.
- **Be your hiring “delegees.”** Delegate hiring, screening, and strategic planning decisions to your staffing firm. You provide the information; your staffing partner does the work!

