

Delegating

Center for Student Involvement Resources

Delegation is the key to a successful organization. It helps people in your organization prepare for future leadership roles and frees up more time in your schedule so you can do other things. Sharing responsibilities keeps members interested and enthusiastic about the group. You might be reluctant to delegate because you want to make sure the job is done right (i.e., YOUR WAY). But you can make members feel unimportant and become apathetic if you don't share the responsibility of making the organization a success. Here are several good reasons to delegate:

Group Benefits

- 👤 Members become more involved and committed
- 👤 More projects and activities are undertaken
- 👤 A greater chance that projects will be completed
- 👤 Increased opportunities for membership to develop leadership skills
- 👤 More of a chance to fill leadership roles with qualified, experienced people
- 👤 Organization operates more smoothly

Leader Benefits

- 👤 Not being spread too thin and therefore less likely to burn out
- 👤 Gain satisfaction of seeing members grow and develop
- 👤 Acquire more experience in executive and administrative functions

An Appropriate Time to Delegate Is When

- 👤 There is a lot of work
- 👤 A member has particular qualifications for or interest in a task
- 👤 Someone can benefit from the responsibility
- 👤 Routine matters need attention
- 👤 Details take up too much time and have to be divided

The Time NOT to Delegate Is When

- 👤 The task is something you would not want to do yourself (menial work)
- 👤 Someone is under qualified or overqualified for the task
- 👤 The work is your own specific responsibility
- 👤 The area is big or is an unsolved problem, issue, or matter dealing with the personal feelings of another or with confidentiality – the “hot potato”

Ways to Delegate

- 👤 Ask for volunteers by a show of hands or passing a sign- up sheet (interest is a great motivator!) However, this method can be impersonal and you could be “stuck” if no one signs up

- 🧠 Appoint or suggest someone. Sometimes a member lacks self-confidence and won't volunteer; appointing him/her demonstrates your confidence in him/her
- 🧠 Assign through a committee. This takes the pressure off an individual and reinforces the organizational structure
- 🧠 "Best Fit" of person with the task is the most effective. Try to spread the enjoyable and responsible tasks around, giving more members status and value

Guidelines for Effective Delegation

- 🧠 Choose the appropriate people by interviewing and placing your members carefully
- 🧠 Explain why the person(s) was (were) selected for this task.
- 🧠 Delegate segments that make sense; not bits and pieces of a task, but share the "big picture". People like to know how their segment will help the larger program
- 🧠 Discuss the task at hand; mutually set goals and objectives (see CSI Resources on Goal Setting). Whenever possible give those who are responsible for carrying out a program a voice in the decision-making
- 🧠 Define clearly the responsibilities being delegated to each person. Explain what is expected and what the bounds of authority are
- 🧠 Find out how you will know when they need help
- 🧠 Support your committee chairs, officers by sharing information, knowledge, and plans with them. It is incredible how many errors are made due to lack of information
- 🧠 Delegate. Most people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder. The end result is important, not the various steps – everyone accomplishes tasks differently
- 🧠 Follow up. Check periodically to see if people have questions – they will let you know how they are progressing. There is a fine line between delegating and following-up
- 🧠 Evaluate and measure the extent to which actions conformed to plans. Use appropriate feedback techniques (see CSI Resources on Effective Feedback). One of your most important roles as a leader is to help your members to learn and grow through both their successes and their failures!