Three Reasons Why Delegation Fails

- The process of delegation has not been completed; responsibilities have been distributed without granting sufficient authority or creating a relationship of accountability.

- The leader refuses, consciously or unconsciously, to delegate. Many leaders have difficulty delegating responsibility, as they would often prefer to do it themselves to make sure “it’s done right.” While this approach may look efficient, it usually is not. Not only are there limitations to what one person can do, it also breeds apathy among non-involved group members.

- Delegation is blocked by incomplete (or ineffective) communication and definition of the tasks to be done.

Source: Delegating Responsibility, Pace University, http://www.pace.edu/StuDevNYC/delegating_responsibility.htm

Finding Balance Through Delegation

- Many of the times we find ourselves feeling “out of balance” may be attributable to our delegation skills. Perhaps we’re not delegating or we’re not delegating properly. In any regard, if you delegate effectively, you are more likely to find yourself “in balance” than not. For more information about balance, please refer to the “Finding Balance” brochure.
The Art of Delegation

Beware of spreading yourself too thin. There is only so much any leader can do or say. Are there others in your group who can or should handle some of the load? Do you feel swamped and overwhelmed at times? Perhaps the biggest problem is you have not delegated responsibilities effectively. Delegation of authority is one of a leader’s most effective tools. It relieves you of the tension of multiple demands. It also provides opportunities to involve members and mentor future leaders. Constructive delegation must be understood and utilized by any leader who desires to be successful.

► When to Delegate

- When there is a lot of work to do. Spread the work around.
- When you feel someone else has particular qualifications which would suit the task.
- When someone expresses interest in the task.
- When you think a particular person might benefit from the responsibility. Do it to get more people actively involved.

► When NOT to Delegate

- When it is specifically your responsibility, except in emergencies.
- When you would not be willing to do the task yourself. Occasionally, leaders make the mistake of delegating only the menial work, while keeping the appealing tasks for themselves. This may cause members to feel “used,” rather than valued or appreciated.
- When a group member does not possess the capabilities (or desire) necessary to do the task.
- When it is a “hot potato.”

► How to Delegate

- Ask for volunteers. Explain the task and see who is interested. Interest and belief in something is one of the greatest motivators for success.
- Suggest someone you feel would be good for the particular task. A request for volunteers is often met with silence. Don’t drop an idea when this happens. Use your perceptions to select people for the job. Often a person won’t volunteer because they lack self-confidence. Be encouraging.
- Don’t be afraid to assign the task to someone. They can always decline. Take the initiative.
- Spread the “good” tasks around. “Good” jobs give people status and value (and are motivational, as well). Make sure that the same people don’t always get the same jobs.

► Guidelines for Effective Delegation

- Choose the appropriate people by interviewing and placing your members carefully. Consider their time, interest, and capabilities.
- Explain why the person was selected for this task.
- Delegate segments that make sense, not unrelated bits and pieces.
- Discuss the task at hand. Set goals and objectives mutually. When possible, give those involved a voice in the decision-making.
- Define clearly each person’s responsibilities. Explain what is expected and the limits of their authority.
- Give accurate and honest feedback. People want to know how they’re doing. This is an opportunity to encourage reflection and individual growth.
- Support your officers and committee chairs by sharing information, knowledge, and plans with them.
- Really delegate. Most people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder or taking back parts of their assignment before they’ve had ample opportunity to do it.