6 tips for learning to delegate

Delegating is a vital leadership skill, but many people find it hard to do. These six tips can help you delegate more effectively and confidently.

1. Consider who you delegate to carefully. Don't make assignments blindly, says Alison Lazenby, managing director at Root Inc. Consider who is best suited to the task and who could use the project as a professional development opportunity.

2. Think projects, not steps. Delegating whole projects instead of smaller tasks gives people a sense of ownership and the opportunity to see work through from start to finish, Lazenby says.

3. Check in. Meet with people periodically to ensure everything is on track.

4. Foster autonomy. Allow your team to take the initiative on how things get done and avoid micromanaging, says Jackie Kellso, president of PointMaker Communications.

5. Don't frame it as a favor. It diminishes the importance of the task and turns it into a personal agenda between you and the other person, Kellso says.

6. Give recognition and praise. Thank people for their help with completing tasks, Kellso says. And don't take credit for others' work.

In some cases, you may find yourself delegating tasks up to your own manager or superior. When delegating up, it's important to describe the expected results of your request to create buy-in, says Scott C. Hammond, professor of management, Utah State University. For example, highlight the increased productivity you would expect if your superior made an exception to a policy that you aren't able to bypass on your own.