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Memo To Micro Managers: STOP! The 10 (Hardest) Steps To Effective Delegation

In my world as an investor, I find entrepreneurs who can't let go of any task. For various self-declared reasons, they alone can complete a given assignment. Or even worse, they *micro manage* someone else's work. Sadly, this personality type frequently delegates a task to a subordinate only to quickly take it back.



Stop it!

"It is better to fire the leader than let a good company fold."

--The Rules of Business According to Alan E. Hall

Innovators who behave in this manner rarely achieve greatness. I see this unfortunate behavior among entrepreneurs from time to time. For some reason, they don't understand that one person cannot competently plan, prepare, organize and execute everything that needs to be accomplished within an organization.

These types of entrepreneurs are ego driven. They see themselves as the best and brightest; no one could be better than they are. They are arrogant, possessive, selfish and proud; not a great combination of attributes. The downside? Employees are always looking for work elsewhere. They become frustrated, angry and disruptive. Instead of delivering expected results, they waste time, miss deadlines and often sabotage processes. They feel abused by the founder and often find ways to reciprocate the disfavours.

If I have invested money in such a leader, I quickly find the progress I sought has not been completed. "What happened to the approved forecast on revenues, margins and expenses?" I ask. The answer; "I've been working as hard as I can but my worthless employees just aren't trying hard enough. They're lazy."

“Really?” I respond.

Guess whose head rolls in the company? It’s not the workers. It’s the mindless and heartless boss who doesn’t get it. Oh, I’ve tried to educate, train, encourage and motivate such a leader on how to work with people. Believe me; I’ve done my best to change the poor behavior of managers. In the end, however, I’ve rarely succeeded. As a result, my axiom for the situation is – “It’s better to fire the leader than let a good company fold.” If you are reading this article and thinking to yourself, “Hey wait a minute, I’m just like the guy Alan terminates,” I strongly suggest you keep reading and follow the counsel I am about to impart.

Please note that every business founder and all supervisors, at all levels, in businesses large and small, need to delegate tasks to subordinates. Why, you ask? I believe there are several benefits to effective delegation:

- 1) Managers can get more important and urgent work done if they delegate lower-level priorities to subordinates. In essence, a leader can be more productive.
- 2) [Leaders](#) can better manage their own time. With a limited amount of perishable moments in a day, a wise leader will use each precious hour to concentrate on items that matter most to him and the company.
- 3) Smart entrepreneurs who entrust subordinates with assignments build better workers by letting them grow and improve their own skills. As such, they become even better contributors.
- 4) Employees who are trusted to carry out tasks feel respected and appreciated. When treated kindly they are loyal and energetic. They also remain committed and continue with a company longer.
- 5) Lastly, managers who delegate wisely will be successful and rewarded for their accomplishments.

If you’re beginning to fear the repercussions of your micro managing, consider these time-tested delegation principles to change your ways before it’s too late:

1. Consider what might be delegated to another worker and why. Explain its purpose and how it fits into the company’s overall objectives. Consider developing a list of tasks. Rank the most important and urgent assignments “A.” These you keep and execute. Delegate to a subordinate the “B” tasks that are still important but not critical. Any tasks on the “C” list can wait for another day.
2. Determine if a task should be completed in the near term or long term. Mutually agree with the project owner on a deadline.
3. [Select](#) the best person, from a pool of candidates, to complete the assignment. Give the employee the authority and responsibility he or she needs to accomplish the proposed workload. Tell the employee he now owns the project.
4. Clearly explain the task, with specific expectations of what is to be achieved, including timelines, connections with other workers and budgets. Ask the employee to reiterate the assignment. Do they understand clearly? Be sure the task list includes who the task is for, where it should be done, and perhaps how it might be done. As to this last point, I prefer letting the project owner develop her own methodology for finishing a given assignment.
5. Provide the project owner with training, support and resources.
6. Ask for regular progress reports. During this meeting, the delegator and the project owner should discuss any barriers, problems or achievements. If at all possible, the project owner – not you – should find solutions to their issues.

7. Allow the owner to fail. *What?* We all learn from botched jobs. Such experiences are extremely valuable and provide a basis for future successes. If the job is critical and can't fall short, don't delegate it!
8. Receive a final completion report. Again, this is an optimal opportunity for you and the project owner to review a finished task. Both parties should take the time to learn from the process and determine what needs to happen differently in future projects.
9. Express appreciation for a job well done. Reward performance. Celebrate. Invite the employee to accept another assignment. Feeling your approval and gratitude will help keep them motivated for success.
10. Ask the employee how you, as a leader, might improve the delegation process. This is the time for you to take note and make some personal improvements.

Do you recognize yourself in this article? Do you still have your job? Good. If you act quickly, there's still time to run an intervention before your investor arrives.

Any questions? You can contact me at @AskAlanEHall or send me an email at www.AlanEHall.com.

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