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Delegate to Accelerate Success

By Ed Sykes

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During the first season of the television reality show, The Apprentice, Donald Trump would give the ultimate winner the dream job of working for him, running one of his divisions and earning \$250,000 per year. On the final episode, the choice came down to two candidates, Bill Rancic and Kwame Jackson, for the "ultimate" job. Both were very qualified. Bill Rancic was the owner of a successful Internet cigar business grossing over one million dollars a year, and Kwame Jackson was a graduate of Harvard Business School and most recently worked for the prestigious Wall Street investment house, Goldman Sachs, as an Investment Manager.

In my opinion, the decision on who would receive the job came down to one thing...delegation. Both Bill and Kwame delegated tasks to their "team members" and achieved success. However, Kwame was asked several questions by Mr. Trump relating to how Kwame handled one team member, Omarosa Manigult-Stallworth. Mr. Trump wondered why Kwame let Omarosa get away with lying to him and not working with the other team members to make the project successful. Kwame responded to Mr. Trump that he didn't know he could fire Omarosa. Mr. Trump stated that Kwame should have asked if he could fire Omarosa.

Bill Rancic got the job. This drives home the point...learn how to delegate to accelerate success both for you, your organization, and your team.

If we know it is an important key for our success, why don't we delegate? Here are some of the excuses I routinely hear:

- * No Time - I have no time to teach a team member the tasks.
- * No Energy - It takes a lot of energy to follow-up and keep team members on task for success.
- * I Can Do It Better - I know what needs to be done and can do it better and faster so I'll just do it.
- * Why Should I? - Why should I train someone to do my job?

Why? If you are in a leadership position, your job is to take the time and the energy to train others to do more so that the you, your team, and your organization are more successful.

Delegate to Accelerate Success

Well, what are the benefits of quality delegation?

1. You multiply yourself - The more you delegate, the more you create team members that can accomplish much more in much less time. You are known as someone who gets things done with self-directed teams.

2. You create a motivated group - The more you delegate, the more your team members are motivated because they see you as someone who trusts them and their abilities to get things accomplished. Because your team is motivated, they take more initiative to create solutions, be more creative, and are willing to take on more responsibilities.

3. You master stress and time management skills - You are forced to prioritize your tasks and realize that there are tasks that you do not need to do, yet would be perfect tasks to develop your team members. By learning how to prioritize your tasks for delegation, you will be less stressed during the workday and go home at the end of the day satisfied that you accomplished more.

4. You are known as a person who develops people - The more you delegate, the more you will be known within the organization as a person who develops people. Remember, even when you think no one is watching, someone is always watching the way you achieve success by developing your people. Whether it's management, other teams, departments or divisions, someone is watching. The word will spread about how well you develop people. The results, management will see you as a developer of people; and other employees, both inside and outside of your organization, will fight to work for you because they know you have a motivated, creative working environment.

5. You create opportunities for yourself and others - By delegating tasks to others, you can then take on more advanced tasks that will prepare you for future opportunities when they become available. This is the main reason why the excuse "if I delegate my tasks to my employees, then they can take my job" doesn't fly in my book. Another reason why you delegate tasks is so that you can develop yourself for future promotions, monetary, and career opportunities. For example, if you want to become vice president for your organization and you know that skills B, M, Z are required by all vice presidents, then delegate any management tasks that you have already mastered to your team members so that you can then ask for more "vice presidential" tasks. When that position is available within or outside of the organization, who do you think will have the inside track? You will! Because you can say you already have the skills of a vice president, while developing the people behind you to fill the void when you are promoted. Also, as a leader, you never want your team members to be with you in the same position forever. Thus, delegating tasks continuously prepares them for opportunities that may come their way.

So how do we successfully delegate tasks? Here are my seven steps to delegating tasks to achieve success. These tips can not only be used in your organization for more success, but in every aspect of your life to accomplish more.

1. Understand the Task

Make sure you understand the task so that you can clearly communicate the task to the person undertaking the task. You must also understand what barriers and resources are required to succeed.

Also, you must understand what tools you have to make the task successful. Along with resources needed, if the person isn't progressing on the task, what options do you have as a leader and manager to make it successful? Questions you can ask is, "Can I provide additional training?" or "Can I acquire additional tools?" Or if they are not suited for the task, ask these questions, "Can I reassign them?" or if they turn out to be detrimental to the project or team, "What actions can I take to alleviate this situation?"

Make sure you click on the "Delegation Checklist" link at the end of this article to receive your free copy of this important tool that will give you the tools to make the best decisions when delegating tasks.

2. Find the Right Person

Find the person who is motivated to take on the task. You may have someone who has the skills to do the task but is not motivated to do it. This situation will not work. However, if you have someone that doesn't have the skills, but is highly motivated to learn and is excited about the opportunity, then this is a good candidate for delegation. The person must also be motivated to take on this task for the good of

the group as well as his/her own motivations. You might ask, "How does this assignment help you achieve your career goals?" It also helps the person has good communications skills to express any concerns.

3. Communicate the Task

Take the time to clearly communicate the task. Communicate the expectations of the task. And most importantly, communicate the ownership of the task. What I mean is that the person assigned to the task will be ultimately responsible for the success of the task. When communicating responsibility for the task, let the person know the consequences of not completing the task and the rewards of completing the task. For example, you might say something like this:

"Mike, this report to justify the new computer system is important because if it is not done on time our division will not have the tools to meet our customer's needs. By putting together the report by the June 15th deadline we will qualify for the new computer system which will allow our division to exceed customer service expectations, increase our organization's bottom line and earn you a bigger bonus and positive exposure for future opportunities. I know you will do what it takes to make this happen."

Note: If possible, show the employee how to do the task. Telling and showing the person delegated the task enhances the probability of his/her understanding and being confident with the task.

4. Provide Resources, Remove Barriers

Now is our opportunity to make sure that the person we are delegating the task to has the resources. Whether it is the time, people, or technology, it is our responsibility to find out after understanding the task, picking the right person, and communicating the task to provide the resources for success. I have seen time and time again in a variety of organizations where the person delegated the task has the ownership for its success but doesn't have the resources to be successful. Take the time to ask the following question, "What resources will you need to be successful?"

Also find out what barriers might be in the way to successful completion of the task and eliminate them.

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This could be people, organizational restrictions, or lack of knowledge. For example, with people, the task you assign might require the person assigned the task to work with someone who has a "challenging personality." Knowing this, you could make sure that this person with the "challenging personality" understands the importance of this task so that he/she does not hinder the success of the task.

Note: Let the person delegated know that you have an open door should he/she have any questions concerning the task. Open communication is important for this arrangement to work.

When you provide resources and remove barriers for the person delegated the task, you are ensuring complete ownership for the success of the task.

5. Guarantee Understanding

Make sure when the person leaves the meeting, that he/she understands exactly what is expected. The typical interaction between a manager or supervisor and the employee is the manager asks, "Do you understand everything we discussed?" and the employee of course says, "Yes." Then a week later the manager is disappointed with the results of the task and asks, "What happened?" and the employee says, "I didn't understand what I was supposed to do." We set that employee up for failure by not taking the time to make sure he/she understood what was expected to make this task successful.

By asking the question, "Mike, do you understand the task at hand?" you receive a closed-ended, or yes or no, answer. It doesn't give you one ounce of information on whether the person understands the project.

By asking an open-ended question, "Mike, please share with me your understanding of what is required to make this task successful?" the person giving the answer is required to give a comprehensive answer detailing his/her thoughts on the task at hand. The answer will give you an indication as to whether the task is understood or not. Also, at this point, the employee may give you in the answer a totally different and better way to accomplish the task.

6. Encourage Success

Let the person delegated the task know that you have confidence in him/her. Remember, in most cases, this task is new to hi/herm and by communicating that you have confidence that he/she will be successful gives the confidence to succeed. You might say something like:

"Mike, I'm glad we had the time to go over this task today and you understand what is required to be successful. I am excited and confident that you will make this task your own and put your unique spin on it. I look forward to hearing about your progress on this task and the successes along the way to its completion. Thank you for undertaking this very important task."

7. Followup, Reward, Followup, Reward

This is where I go back to The Apprentice. Kwame's follow-up, or lack of appropriate follow-up with Omarosa, could have led to his team's failing and morale going down. It did lead to Kwame not getting his dream job.

Here are some tips for good follow-up:

- * Make sure you know the level of follow-up required. One factor is the person you are delegating the task to and his/her level of knowledge and confidence concerning the task. Ask! Some people may want much follow-up, while other may require little follow-up. It also depends on how difficult the task is to complete.
- * Make sure you have scheduled follow-ups. Before you leave the first meeting, make sure you schedule your first follow-up; whether it is one day or week, schedule that first follow-up.
- * Reward progress at each follow-up meeting and in public if possible. Show appreciation (Read my article, "Appreciate to Motivate") in the meeting and, if possible, in public so that everyone is motivated to do more.
- * Correct to get back on track. In most cases it may be as simple as showing the correct way of doing the task or brainstorming so that the person responsible for the task will come up with the solution. This will keep the person and your team motivated toward the end result. Or, in Omarosa's case, what steps do you need to take to get the project back on track? Possibly retrain, reassign, minimize, provide corrective action or the ultimate action...terminate the person if he/she are knowingly disregarding your organization's policies and procedures. Believe me, "Omarosas" are rare if you have taken the necessary steps along the way to pick the right person.

Follow the steps mentioned and you will be well on the way to enjoying a successful career, business, and life and accomplishing far more in less time.

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How To Grow Your Micro-Business

By Stephen Pope

If you want to grow your micro-business (defined as a business with fewer than five employees), you might consider some of the findings of a survey by Statistics Canada.

1. The Findings

According to "Growth Determinants of Micro-Businesses in Canada" (Evangelia Papadaki and Bassima Chami, Small Business Policy Branch, Industry Canada), the survey by Statistics Canada revealed the following:

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Micro-businesses get much of their advice from family, friends, customers and suppliers. Accountants are more commonly consulted for business advice than lawyers and bankers.

Completion of high school was cited as a factor for growth in the micro-business. Perhaps surprisingly, college or university education was discounted as a factor for success.

Age or sex of business owners did not affect business growth. Nor was being an immigrant a significant factor.

For growth, being willing to delegate, assume risk, and share ownership all seemed to be factors for success.

Expansion of the local market was more important for growth than the export market for the micro-business.

Growth micro-businesses innovate and engage in e-commerce activities.

2. The Opportunities

This is encouraging news for entrepreneurs. You don't necessarily need a lot of money for professional advisors to grow your micro-business. Higher education is not a prerequisite for success. Age, sex or country of origin are not relevant factors for growing your micro-business.

If growth of your micro-business is your goal, you can't do everything yourself. You must be willing to delegate (or perhaps even share ownership of your business with others). Innovation, a willingness to take risks, and use of the Internet are also important to your growth.

Are you willing to delegate, take risks, and partner with others? Are you innovative? Do you employ e-commerce in your business? Are you using the Internet to expand your local business?

If you can answer these questions affirmatively, then your micro-business is poised for growth.

J. Stephen Pope, President of Pope Consulting Inc., has been helping clients to earn maximum business profits for over twenty-five years. For profitable Work at Home Small Business Ideas, visit



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