

## Leadership Tips August 2006

# In This Issue: The Fine Art of Delegation

**Dr. Marilyn Manning and The Consulting Team, LLC**

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### The Fine Art of Delegation

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Effective delegation requires confidence and skill. You must express confidence in the ability of others and exercise your interpersonal skills when assigning work.

You're likely to end up practicing your delegation skills in both formal and informal situations—perhaps as the appointed team leader of a project or as the unofficial organizer of employees recruited to work on a rush project. When you delegate tasks, you have three primary goals: to inspire the respect of those working with you; to help less experienced staff members develop their potential; and to assure that the assignment is completed satisfactorily.

Manning offers the following guidelines to help you meet your goals:

- Prioritize tasks. Identify priority tasks so that the individual handling them can help you meet your deadlines and objectives.
- Provide samples. "Whether you're delegating a letter to be typed or an accounting sheet to be filled out, provide samples," Manning advises, "or misunderstanding will be inevitable."
- Offer training. Otherwise you're likely to waste time correcting errors and having unacceptable work redone.
- Establish checkpoints. "Check on the person's progress periodically to be sure he or she is on the right track," says Manning. "If you've delegated a report to type, for example, check

	<p>the first page so that you can resolve problems before they multiply." The number of checkpoints depends on the complexity of the assignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set deadlines for assignments. Establish a minimum warning period for alerting you to problems that could upset an imminent deadline.</li> <li>• Don't expect the delegate to mimic your personal style. Manning explains: "One manager I know, for example, has a brisk, abrupt work style. He once complained, 'I run to the copy machine—my clerk crawls!' Actually, the clerk's style is methodical rather than fast-paced. Beware of criticizing someone's style because it's different from yours," she cautions.</li> <li>• Don't expect two people to handle the same task exactly alike. For instance, if Jessica takes just two hours to complete an assignment that Chris labored over for three, check the quality for the completed work before concluding that Chris is too slow.</li> <li>• Don't oversupervise. "Some people require far less supervision than others," Manning points out. Often people who enjoy interacting with a group are receptive to frequent feedback, whereas those who prefer to work independently may resent it.</li> <li>• Be generous with praise. Always express appreciation for a job well done.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reverse Delegation</b></p>	<p>When staff members inappropriately delegate work to you what should you do? "Delegate it back to them," asserts Manning, "but be tactful." For instance, say, "Just let me run this past my boss." The usual response is an "Oh, never mind." Another option is to say something like "I'll try to get to it, but I'd better warn you that my boss has asked me to do X. So the earliest I can start is tomorrow at 10:00."</p> <p>"By pushing the task into the future, you're subtly encouraging the person to take the assignment elsewhere," Manning explains. "Remember, your boss's work is your number-one priority. If someone asks you to do something that would impinge on that priority, find a tactful but effective way to draw the line."</p> <p>She concludes: "But avoid a haughty 'I don't do that kind of work' attitude that reflects poorly on your image and on your boss's image as well."</p> <p><i>from Professional Secretary/Administrative Support Letter,</i></p>

Volume 33, #22.

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## About Dr. Manning

Dr. Marilyn Manning, CSP, CMC, the founder and CEO of The Consulting Team, LLC, and international author of seven business books, resolves difficult people problems.

She specializes in interactive speeches, workshops, and consulting in the areas of Leadership, Teamwork, Conflict Mediation, Executive Coaching, Meeting Facilitation, Strategic Planning, and Communication.

82% of Dr. Manning's work is repeat business.

For more information go to:  
[www.theconsultingteam.com](http://www.theconsultingteam.com).

## Drawing

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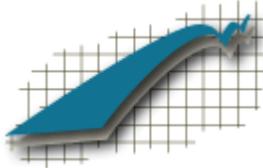
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