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Chapter VI

Delegation

In this chapter, delegation is introduced, and the difference between delegation and assignment is reported and evidenced.

The chapter proceeds by defining exactly what delegation means, presenting the WH (*what* and *how*) of the delegation process, since it is impossible to delegate each task, and the way in which you delegate must be carefully considered.

Values

As I have done for the other chapters on management, I will try in this section to evidence the values that are necessary for successfully applying this very particular management practice. After the values, some practical hints will be proposed that consider in great detail what delegation means (Blair, 1995; Myers, 1999).

Simplicity

Simplicity always has to be considered as strictly related to delegation. It is better to delegate tasks that are simple to people who are just starting to have

new responsibilities and to delegate complex tasks to skilled people, always considering the simplest way to obtain a good result. While delegation of simple tasks is quite obvious, it may not be so easy to understand how to *simply* delegate complex tasks. In the second part of this chapter, several hints on the practical approach to delegation will be considered, but the main concept to keep in mind is always the approach to gradual delegation, giving access to information and support delegated people. This is to avoid the blind delegation in which delegated people are not aware of the tasks to be fulfilled and, therefore, can be astonished by the new responsibility without knowing how to deal with the problems they have to face.

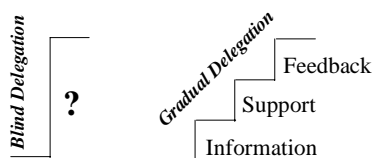
Feedback

As evidenced in Figure 1, feedback is also part of the process of gradual delegation, since you have to give feedback to delegated people in order to control the process and to be able to suggest changes when the approach seems to be too bad. Feedback is also needed by the manager when a task is delegated to a very skilled person who also can increase the competencies of the manager by suggesting evaluation methods and solutions to problems that are different from that usually adopted by the manager.

Courage

Without any doubt, you need courage to delegate activities to someone else. If the person is able to solve the delegated problem, you have saved some work, but if you have delegated a task to a person who cannot solve it and provokes a disaster, you have on your shoulders the weight of the failure, since you are the manager and decided to delegate the task.

Figure 1. Blind delegation vs. gradual delegation



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