

Effective Delegation and Control in Organizations

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Abstract – For effective management in an organization, the top management must delegate some authority to the lower level of management. Through delegation, every manager becomes responsible and accountable for all the operations under his department, division, section, unit etc. Delegation facilitates co-operative efforts to the individuals working in an organization. Delegation is the assignment of authority and responsibility to others in order to carry out these assignments.

The top management cannot perform all the tasks of the organization and duties should be shared with immediate subordinates until all activities are assigned to persons who are made responsible to perform them. Delegation of authority may either be formal or informal i.e. it may be put down in writing detailing exactly what authority is delegated or it may be merely mutually understood by both the superior and the subordinates. Authority delegated must be spelt out clearly to avoid ambiguity which may result in misinterpretation by the subordinate who may exceed the authority given to him or not fully utilize the authority and may end up taking every problem to the superior for decision making.

Keywords – Delegation, Organizations, Responsibilities, Department, Subordinates.

I. INTRODUCTION

For effective management in an organization the top management must delegate some authority to the lower level of management. Through delegation every manager becomes responsible and accountable for all the operations under his Department, Division, Section, Unit etc. Delegation facilitates co-operative efforts of the individuals working in an organization.

II. DEFINITION

Delegation is the assignment of authority and responsibility to others in order to carry out these assignments (Bell & Bodie, 2012). The top management cannot perform all the tasks of the organization and duties should be shared with immediate subordinates until all activities are assigned to persons who are made responsible to perform them. Delegation of authority may be either formal or informal i.e. it may be put down in writing detailing exactly what authority is delegated or it may be merely mutually understood by both the superior and the subordinates.

Authority delegated must be spelt out clearly to avoid ambiguity which may result in misinterpretation by the subordinate who may exceed the authority given to him or not fully utilize the authority and may end up taking every problem to the superior for decision making.

III. PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

Delegation of authority should be result oriented. Sahni

et al (2010) expounds on various characteristics of delegation which include :-

(i) *Functional Clarity.*

This refers to the function to be done, methods of carrying out these functions and results expected must be clearly defined.

(ii) *Matching Authority with Responsibility*

Authority should match duties to be performed as well as personal capabilities of the subordinate.

(iii) *Unity of Command.*

In order to reduce conflict a subordinate should be answerable to one superior.

(iv) *Principle of Communication* –

Lines of communication should be kept open for issuing directives and receiving feedback.

(v) *Principle of Management by Exception* –

Delegation can be applied to subordinates for routine duties and decisions making. However, the management must retain tasks for themselves which they alone are uniquely qualified to perform.

IV. FACTORS THAT LEAD TO EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

There are various factors that lead to effective delegation (Kansas, 2012). These include:

(i) *Define Assignment:*

Delegation can be effective only when duties and functions to be performed are properly analyzed and classified according to various levels of delegation.

(ii) *Select the Person in the Light of the Job to be done.*

The person should be carefully selected bearing in mind the requirement of the job to be performed. This should be based on experience, skills and general capabilities.

(iii) *Maintain Open Line of Communication.*

There should be clear understanding between superior and subordinate about the nature and extent of authority delegated. Other members related with the activities should be informed about the extent to which the delegatee is allowed to take decisions. Free communication is necessary for effective delegation.

(iv) *Training of Subordinate.*

The subordinate should be trained to use the authority delegated to him/her. The delegatee should be familiar with the plans and policies of the organization, so that they can take correct decisions.

(v) *Delegate Authority Commensurate to Results Expected.*

The subordinate should be told about results expected from them. How they achieve these results is left to them. The top management will determine goals to be achieved but it is left to the middle and lower level management to

decide what action should be taken to achieve the goal.

(vi) *Establish Proper Control.*

Authority can be delegated but responsibilities cannot be shifted to subordinates. The superior should ensure that delegated authority is properly used by the subordinates.

(vii) *Attitude of Management.*

Effectiveness of delegation depends on attitude of management towards delegation. Management should be willing to delegate authority to lower levels. However, if the delegated authority is being misused or the subordinate is not able to give expected results then the authority can be withdrawn.

V. THE PROCESS OF DELEGATION

The process consists of three steps :-

(i) *Allocation of work Duties to Subordinates.*

- Determine what subordinates are supposed to do.
- Consider capabilities of each subordinate and match them with assigned duties.

(ii) *Delegation of Authority and Extent of Delegation.*

- Give authority to subordinates to make decisions and implement the decisions on relevant matters (Dunham and Pierce, 1989).
- The authority must be stated clearly and possibly put in writing to avoid ambiguity and indecision.
- The authority should be related to tasks so that if tasks change then authority also changes.

(iii) *Creation of Obligation.*

This is obligation on part of the subordinate to perform their duties satisfactorily.

VI. ADVANTAGES OF DELEGATION

When used properly delegation has several advantages (Parikh, 2017).

These are:-

- (i) It results in quick decisions.
- (ii) Delegation gives executives more time for strategic planning and policy making. Strategic planning is done at top management and the day to day decisions are made at lower management levels.
- (iii) Delegation is a motivating factor. Subordinate respond to delegated authority with favorable attitude and this creates a sense of responsibility and dedication resulting in pride and morale boosting.
- (iv) Delegation can be a training ground for executive ability. By being allowed to analyze and make decisions accordingly this prepares the subordinates for problem solving process when they reach the executive level.

VII. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

(i) *Reluctance to Delegate (Superiors).*

Superiors may prefer not to delegate tasks as they can do the tasks better or their subordinate are not capable. This feelings may come up due to:

- (a) Insecurity where the departmental head is reluctant to take 'chances' and delegate tasks as they are accountable for the actions of their subordinates.
 - (b) The departmental head may feel the loss of power if subordinates do too good a job probably better than they would have done.
 - (c) Some Departmental heads are unable to plan ahead and to decide which task are to be delegated and to whom.
- (ii) *Reluctance to accept Delegation (Subordinates)*
- (a) Insecurity — many subordinates may wish that their heads make decisions instead of being held responsible for any failure. This often arises due to the fact that there is lack of confidence on the part of the head who may not accept the 'failure' by his subordinates as a normal thing.

- (b) The subordinates may not be given enough incentives for assuming the responsibilities. Taking more responsibilities means working harder and if there is no adequate compensation then the subordinate may be unwilling to accept the delegated tasks.

(iii) *Wrong grouping of Departmental activities*

If the activities to be performed by the department are not properly grouped then delegation becomes difficult.

(iv) *Unwillingness to trust the Subordinates or Lack of Confidence in the Abilities of the Subordinates.*

Many times superiors do not have faith in the abilities of their subordinates and therefore keep on postponing delegation until the subordinates gain more experience.

(v) *Desire for Personal Credit*

Some superiors would like to claim personal credit for the successful operation of the organization through his own efforts not the efforts of the delegatee.

(vi) *Fear that Subordinates will make Mistakes*

Some superiors fear that the subordinates will make mistakes if authority and responsibilities are delegated to them.

(vii) *Belief that it is Easier to do the Job than to Train the Subordinate to do So.*

Some superiors prefer doing the job and then delegating the authority to them. The superior thinks that the subordinate will not do the job effectively as himself. He also feels secure while supervising the job himself even for minor details.

(viii) *Fear that Subordinates will Surpass their Superiors*

Some superiors are afraid to delegate authority to capable subordinates because they know that these subordinates are better talented than them. Such superiors therefore suppress their subordinates' talents by not giving the subordinates any chance.

(ix) *Unwillingness of Subordinates to Assume the Authority.*

If the subordinates are not capable of taking decisions and assuming authority then they are likely to consult their superiors even for minor details. They do not want to assume authority because they are afraid of the failure and do not want to take responsibility for the failure.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITY

This is the state of being answerable for discharge of duty. It should be equal to the authority delegated for the discharge of duty. That is if a person is responsible for the results of a given operation he/she should be given enough authority to do what is necessary to ensure success.

IX. ACCOUNTABILITY

This is the state of being required to stand for your actions. Each departmental head is accountable for all the operations under his/her department.

X. CREED OF DELEGATION

- (i) Mutual trust in sharing of responsibilities with juniors.
- (ii) Analysis of the job to be done — job description
- (iii) Choosing the right person for the job — job analysis.
- (iv) Transfer of authority, decision-making and responsibility.
- (v) Creation of a sense of obligation and accountability.
- (vi) Willingness and ability to tolerate initial failings of juniors.
- (vii) Willingness and ability to train.
- (viii) Delegate but do not abdicate.

XI. SUMMARY ON DELEGATION

1. How to delegate? When delegating, it is necessary to remember that:-
 - (a) Responsibilities/duties should be delegated to those that have the necessary/relevant ability, knowledge, experience, interest and enthusiasm. It is dangerous to delegate to someone who is not interested, indifferent or unwilling to perform the tasks given.
 - (b) The duties/responsibilities delegated must be precise and where necessary clearly spelt out in writing. Clear directions must be given.
 - (c) The person to whom duty/responsibility is delegated must not be over-burdened — fair distribution is necessary. Heavy tasks should be delegated to committees and not to individuals.
 - (d) Delegation should not be half-hearted. It should be complete -- gaps, overlaps and splits should be avoided.
 - (e) Delegation needs to be strengthened and supported by mutual trust so that the delegatee develops confidence which should lead to better performance.
 - (f) It should be made clear to the delegatee that delegation goes with accountability. This makes the delegatee considerate and cautious.
 - (g) The delegatee should feel supported if he/she is to perform effectively.
 - (h) It is necessary that delegation is strengthened by clear channels of feedback to the delegator so that checks are made in time. Therefore, scheduled consultations/ meetings/briefs are necessary.
 - (i) The delegatee must be motivated so that they can perform better.

XII. CONCLUSION

It is important to remember that, whether your Department/Division is big or small, you cannot manage it alone successfully. You will be inviting chaos and inefficiency. You must learn to delegate responsibilities and authority to your subordinates in your own interest and in the interest of the institution you are trying to serve. Your health may suffer by trying to do too much; in any case you cannot possibly deal efficiently with all tasks, which other people may have time and energy to do.

Furthermore, some members of your Department/Division may become unhappy if you do not entrust them with some responsibilities which they are eager and ready to carry out. You will strain your relationship with them. Obviously, one effect of not delegating responsibilities will be poor organization inefficiency and failure to achieve the goals of the institution. Therefore you should see the department not as your '**own**' but as one which every member is playing some vital role and in which one of your main duties is to co-ordinate and supervise the various functions. You must establish a chain of command to make things work harmoniously and efficiently. **You must delegate.**

In delegating, you should bear in mind that you are still the boss of the Department and the **Accounting officer** of both funds and all other activities in the Department. Once again I remind you — 'Delegate but do not abdicate'.

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