

Lighten the Load and Delegate

Help for the overworked committee member



A guide for sport and recreation clubs and associations in Western Australia.



Department of Sport and Recreation
Government of Western Australia

Help for the Overworked Committee Member

Have you ever heard your president, or secretary or committee member say: "I have too much on my plate – can't get around to that."

You may have heard your boss, or the general manager say: "I'm too busy."

Maybe they are too busy. But maybe they haven't had much practice in delegating – the third of the 4Ds: deal with, delay, delegate or dump!

If you are a "flat-out" president or a "snowed-under" secretary, this pamphlet will remind you that your committee won't collapse if you don't do everything – no one is indispensable!

This resource highlights some common sense steps to ensure that your workload will be lighter, that your group won't have members who just "make up the numbers" and that it will be seen as an effective team.

Delegation

We all say it's vital, so why don't we do it? Do you hesitate to delegate for any of the following reasons?

- "If you want something done right, do it yourself."
- "There are too many problems in getting others to do it – might as well do it myself."
- "I don't like palming off the dirty work to others."
- "I don't like fronting up to people if they mess up a job I've given them."
- "I don't want to appear bossy."

- "I like doing some things myself – I reckon I've earned the chance for recognition."
- "It takes too long to explain how to do it. I just want to get on and do the job."
- "I think you're weak if you have to get others to do the job."

Does delegation sometimes fail? Of course – and it's usually when we don't prepare properly.

Delegation = Proper Preparation

Here are steps you can follow to ensure that you prepare thoroughly before delegating:

STEP 1

What precise job (or part of a job) do you want done? Define it clearly (ideally, write it down).

STEP 2

What outcomes or results do you want? Identify them accurately.

STEP 3

"Horses for courses" – pick the right person for the job. Consider the following:

- Has the person got time? (However, don't choose someone just because he or she has the time. This can be dangerous.)
- Has the person got ability? (Go back to the job description and see what kind of person is needed).
- Can you appeal to the person's self-interest?

- Can you identify a challenge for the person?
- Can the person work with the rest of your team? (Some people are enthusiastic, even very capable, but if they antagonise others on your team, they can be a menace.)

STEP 4

Having picked the right person:

- Explain the job clearly, avoiding torrents of words!
- Don't underestimate the size of the job or, even worse, give the impression that it's not important.
- Check carefully that the person has understood you. This requires tact but it is essential.

STEP 5

Wrap up the agreement:

- Agree on the time for finishing all and/or each part of the job.
- Discuss and agree on the outcomes of the job.
- Find out if the person needs resources or help of any kind.

STEP 6

Keep your eyes open!

- Don't be a nag – but take a keen interest in progress.
- Ask precise questions, not: "Is it going well?"

e.g. How many?

Who?

Where?

STEP 7

Review and reward!

- Look at the successes and shortfalls.
- Identify the causes of the shortfalls. (Perhaps you didn't delegate thoroughly!)
- Try to give recognition – no matter how small.

Finally

Former IOC President,
Juan Antonio Samaranch said:

"The cemeteries are full of people who thought they were indispensable"

(The West Australian, 11 July 2001 p115)

Other Resources

This resource is part of the Club Development Scheme, which provides assistance to Western Australian sport and recreation clubs and organisations to become better managed, more sustainable and to provide good quality services to members and participants.

Other resources in the series are available on the department's website www.dsr.wa.gov.au.

