

Delegation

If indeed "getting things done through people" is the definition of leadership then effective delegation must be the cornerstone of leadership. Delegation, in simple terms, is assigning responsibility and commensurate authority to others to complete a task or tasks ranging from simple matters of routine up to complex activities.

There are a number of principles to keep in mind when delegating:

1. Delegation must be clear - it must be plainly understood what is being delegated, what the performance standards are, and what other special expectations or conditions are in effect.
2. Make sure that the responsibilities delegated match the competence and information base of the person being delegated to.
3. There should be a clear chain of command - and individuals must be held accountable.
4. The leader must be accessible for problem solving and other assistance.
5. Don't delegate only the "crud" work. Delegation tends to encourage initiative and the development of specific skills. To make the most effective use of this benefit you must provide members with significant opportunities.
6. No leader can delegate final responsibility - that is, responsibility for the ultimate success or failure of the organization or its program. You are still ultimately accountable.