

# UK bosses must learn to delegate to succeed

Communication and empowerment are the keys to keeping and developing good staff according to research - so where do you start?

If your business wants to keep and develop good staff the key areas for you to concentrate on are delegation, providing open responsive management and ensuring that your managers have greater assertiveness, emotional intelligence and self-confidence according to new research from the British Psychological Society. Research reported by Robert Myatt of Kaisen Consulting at the British Psychological Society's Occupational Psychology Annual Conference was collected from bosses and colleagues as well as direct reports and found that;

- Delegation was the single most common development need across all managerial levels (47 per cent of people). This statistic may provide part of the answer to the theory that UK business are less productive than those abroad - managers who are unwilling to fully entrust work to others and empower people will hamper any drive for efficiency.
- Approximately half of senior managers need to develop listening skills and openness to others feelings (ie; emotional intelligence). This was rated more frequently as a need than commercial and strategic thinking and decisiveness.
- Managers need to develop greater assertiveness, emotional intelligence and self confidence  
Further analyses found differences between needs for men and women. Men primarily needed to develop in terms of engaging with others by communicating and sharing information. They also were more likely than women to need training in broader business awareness. Women were most likely to need assertiveness and self-confidence.



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## Why start delegating?

While the prevailing economic climate may be the primary concern for most businesspersons, hiring and retaining talent - particularly in the present market - is a surprising second place. While the sincere mantra of 'our people are our greatest asset' may sound a little jaded these days there is no doubt that businesses which don't pay close attention to the principle may suffer in the marketplace.

A workforce which is unwilling to fully entrust work to others and empower people will be less efficient because people are carrying out tasks that could and in many cases be passed to others with broader benefits throughout the business.

## Make managing people a priority

According to the report the prevalence of delegation as an area in desperate need of greater development may reflect the common observation that

how to manage people. For example, knowing what work to delegate, how to decide who to delegate it to and what to do once the work has been passed on to others are essential skills, but are very rarely formally taught in business.

It is often the case that if people are required to analyse balance sheets, they are trained in 'finance for non-financial managers', if they need to design IT, they receive 'systems analysis' training. However, when it comes to managing a team, people are often expected to pick it up as they go.

## Start making decisions

Of course, if you have the time help others - do, but don't say yes to the detriment of your own workload. Having respect for your own time is essential. Being able to assess the necessity of your involvement and to delegate those jobs which aren't 'core' to your role is a vital part of both business management and time management. Remember, every time you say 'yes' to someone else, you are saying 'no' to something that you could be doing instead.

Mastering delegation can offer the greatest time-savings of all. If you have an assistant - use them efficiently. More importantly if there are staff at non-management level, but with a high technical proficiency consider empowering them to make relevant decisions. They will find the freedom and responsibility more rewarding and a key stage in their own development as staff members.

It can also be worth looking at your relationships with suppliers, service companies, etc and seeing if their roles can be expanded to manage other tasks in a more orderly fashion.