

FROM THE VAULT: Delegation Dilemma

The nature of leadership can make delegation hard. As leaders, we know **how** we want things done and **when** we want things done, and the idea of handing off responsibility is not intuitive because leaders are innately **responsible**.

However, delegation is not just about efficiency; it's a **leadership development strategy**. By delegating responsibility, leaders identify and grow other leaders.

THE FOUR LEVELS OF DELEGATION:

(These help provide clarity on what you're going to delegate and how you're going to do it.)

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|  LEVEL ONE: INVESTIGATION |  LEVEL TWO: INFORMED PROGRESS |
|  LEVEL THREE: INFORMED RESULTS |  LEVEL FOUR: OWNERSHIP |

INVESTIGATION

Goal: Assign research without requiring a decision.

- In some ways, this is the “pre-delegation” level and is a low-risk way to involve team members early and assess their capability.
- Once they gather information you can make decisions collectively.
- Helpful for younger leaders to give them an opportunity to contribute to the overall goal, while not burdening them with a massive task they're not quite ready for.

INFORMED PROGRESS

Goal: Delegate tasks but require regular updates along the way.

- Ensures clarity and support without micromanagement—which involves telling people how to do a task.
- Level two delegation isn't telling them how to do it, it's asking them to keep you informed as they do it while being available for assistance if they ask.
- Each project is different, therefore, the frequency of meetings and updates will depend on the size, scope, and leader.

INFORMED RESULTS

Goal: Allow someone to own the task fully and report the outcome.

- Best for shorter-term projects where evaluation happens at the end.
- It's not necessary to meet all the time. When the task is accomplished, you can ask about what they did and the details, but the goal is to know that it's complete.

OWNERSHIP

Goal: Entrust full responsibility with little oversight.

- Remain available if needed, but trust the person to manage the task completely on their own.
- Circle back to make sure your team knows that you're grateful. It doesn't have to be for every individual thing—just encourage them and thank them in general for their work.

WHY THIS STRUCTURE WORKS:

If level one (investigation) and level two (informed progress) are leveraged correctly, the **right person** will be chosen well **before** getting to level four (ownership). **Therefore, the chances of failure later on decrease.**

Level four delegation is not given to someone who's brand-new in the organization because no one knows their capacities or passions yet. But through level one, you can dig into those things more clearly to discover what they are. And in level two, you can walk alongside them as they accomplish a task to ensure they are learning what to do by the time they get to level four.

BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE DELEGATION:

1. Creates clarity for both the leader and team members.
2. Develops future leaders by giving them meaningful responsibility.
3. Allows leaders to focus on where they provide the most value and maximizing their impact.
4. Prevents leaders from burnout and organizations from getting stuck in a bottleneck.