

## To do or to delegate?

In my work as a leadership coach, I have found that one of the hardest things for new managers to learn is how to delegate tasks to others. They find it difficult to balance the need to delegate with their desire to retain control and it can seem easier just to do more themselves.

In this article, I am going to look at:

- Tips for delegating effectively to all temperaments and styles
- How to appeal to different temperaments when delegating
- How to choose the appropriate interaction style when delegating

### Tips for delegating effectively to all temperaments and styles

Most people are motivated when they feel they have some autonomy over what they do and how they do it, so it is important to delegate in such a way as to maximise their sense of empowerment. It's also important to provide support when you delegate, so as not to overwhelm people with too much responsibility before they are ready.

Here are some tips for delegating in a way that achieves "supported empowerment":

- Decide on **areas of responsibility** to delegate (eg producing the monthly financial report) rather than one-off tasks ("*do the report today*")
- Clarify your **expectations** with the person to whom you are delegating (eg the content of the report, the deadline)
- Delegate the responsibility with the appropriate **authority** to carry out the task
- Ask open questions to ensure they **understand and agree** eg "*what are your thoughts*", "*how will this affect you*", "*how will you go about it*", "*when can we review progress*"
- Agree with the person how you are going to **monitor** it – what progress reporting is required
- Monitor progress on the due dates as agreed, not before
- Ensure the person agrees to do it and has the **skills** to do it, and find out what help they might need from you or others
- Use delegation as a way to give people the **opportunity to learn and develop**, not just to dump tasks on them that you don't want to do

### How to appeal to different temperaments when delegating

Temperament is about your core motivation – why you do what you do. It is about your core needs, and reflects what is important to you, and what you value. When our core needs are not met, we experience temperament-related stress, and may adopt unhelpful behaviours. When our core needs are met, we perform better and we may operate in a state of 'flow'.

*Understanding the core motivation of your team members enables you to delegate to them in a way that taps into their core needs.* This means they are more likely to be engaged and willing to be accountable.

The chart below shows the core needs of each temperament, what they tend to want from their leaders and what aspects of work appeal to them.

Temperament	Core needs	They like to be recognised.....	Appeal to their desire to.....
Improviser (SP)	Being noticed Making an immediate concrete impact Having freedom	For <i>how</i> they work and contribute	Solve problems in the moment and get immediate feedback
Stabiliser (SJ)	Being responsible Contributing to the team Having structure and consistency	For the <i>results</i> of their toil	Work in a team and contribute to concrete results
Theorist (NT)	Being competent Having autonomy and control Being an expert	For their <i>ideas</i>	Demonstrate their competence and work with experts
Catalyst (NF)	Being special Making a difference Having purpose or meaning	For <i>who</i> they are	Help others develop and grow

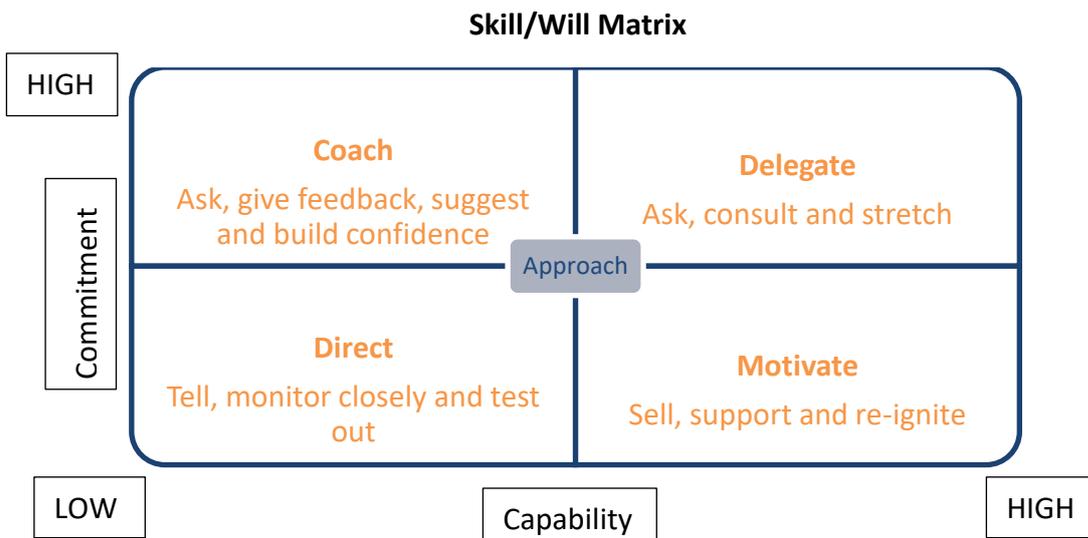
Credit to Susan Nash and David Hodgson

### How to choose the appropriate interaction style when delegating

Interaction Style is partly about how you communicate and build rapport with other people - the impact your behaviour has on them. Interaction Style is highly situational – while we have a style that comes naturally to us, we can flex it when required.

*When you delegate, it's important to consider the person's level of skill and motivation and adapt your Interaction Style accordingly.*

The “Skill – Will” matrix is a useful tool to help you judge what style would be most effective for delegating to someone, depending on how committed (will) and how capable (skill) they are.



Source unknown.

You can adapt your Interaction Style depending on what approach you believe is needed for the person ie depending on where they fit on the commitment and capability axes.

- For someone low in commitment and capability, a Directing, “tell”, approach might be appropriate, to clarify for them what to do and how to do it. In this case, an In-Charge/Mobiliser or Chart-the-Course/Navigator style could be the most effective Style.
- For someone low in commitment and high in capability, a Motivating approach might be appropriate to help them become energised towards the task. In this case, Get-things-going/Energiser could be the most effective Style.
- For someone high in commitment and low in capability, a Coaching, approach might be appropriate to help them work out and build their confidence in how to achieve the task. In this case, Behind-the-Scenes/Synthesiser could be the most effective Style.
- For someone high in both commitment and capability, a Delegating approach (ie leave them to get on with it in their own way) is likely to be most appropriate.

For each Interaction Style there are different strengths and pitfalls related to each approach – a Mobiliser style will work well with someone low in commitment and capability, who needs a Directing approach; however, a Mobiliser style can be a complete turn-off for someone who is motivated and would prefer to be coached to help them work out what to do for themselves, rather than be directed.

If you have a Synthesiser style, listening and being patient with your team member may come naturally to you and this fits well if a Coaching approach is required; but this style may be ineffective, and could potentially be seen as “soft” by an individual who is not performing because they lack motivation.

The point is to be aware of when you need to flex your natural Interaction Style and adopt the characteristics of another style, in order to delegate in the best way for the person’s situation.

Here are some of the benefits and pitfalls of each style when delegating:

<b>Your Interaction Style</b>	<b>Benefits when delegating</b>	<b>Pitfalls when delegating</b>
In-Charge Mobiliser	Gives clarity about the task, what needs to be done by when <i>Useful with new, unskilled or demotivated employees</i>	Can take away responsibility from others <i>Not so useful when you need buy-in from others</i>
Chart-the-Course Navigator	Gives clarity about the course of action, the steps to be taken <i>Useful with new, unskilled or demotivated employees</i>	Can limit the scope for others to put in their ideas <i>Not so useful when people need to be energised</i>
Get-Things-Going Energiser	Gives enthusiasm and a sense that everyone is working together <i>Useful with employees who need encouragement</i>	Can seem overwhelming and unfocused <i>Not so useful when people need a plan to work to</i>
Behind-the-Scenes Synthesiser	Gives openness and a sense that everyone’s input is important <i>Useful with employees who want to bring their own ideas</i>	Can seem unclear about what is required <i>Not so useful when people need clear direction</i>

To sum up, when delegating, you need to consider what you are delegating, why you are delegating, and how to delegate appropriately, taking temperament and interaction style into account.

(Note: some parts of this article are adapted from Catherine's book *How to Get On with Anyone: gain the confidence and charisma to communicate with any personality type*)