



## Twelve Steps to Effective Delegation

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Clients often ask me about why they can't seem to delegate more effectively. Delegation is an essential management skill, one that enables you to leverage your time and use your skills where they are most needed – seeing patients. And yet, many doctors resist delegating. They feel it is quicker to do a task themselves, that they can't trust anyone else with certain things, or that "if you want it done right, do it yourself."

Even doctors who are willing to delegate may not do so effectively. It is part management technique and part art – and much more than simply handing work over to another person. Effective delegation requires being clear, letting go, and holding others accountable for results and outcomes.

To experience success in delegating, follow these steps:

1. Select the right person(s) for the task.
2. Decide which individual is responsible for the final outcome (as opposed to several people).
3. Provide explicit instructions and make your expectations clear.
4. Make sure the person taking on the task understands the underlying reason for the work – i.e., gets the "big picture."
5. Provide the necessary resources for success.
6. Establish buy-in and a deadline.
7. Build in accountability through dialogue, negotiation, and agreement.
8. Establish check-in dates to monitor progress.
9. Provide positive and corrective feedback.
10. Offer guidance and advice but don't micromanage.
11. Clarify the consequences for neglecting a task or not performing in the expected manner.
12. Give credit and appreciation once the job is done.

Clearly, the doctor who learns the skill of delegating will get more done, avoid misunderstandings with staff, and effectively lead a team toward achieving practice goals. By delegating in a way that makes it clear **who** will do **what** by **when** and by creating accountability, a practice leader can establish a culture of shared responsibility and continuous development of staff.