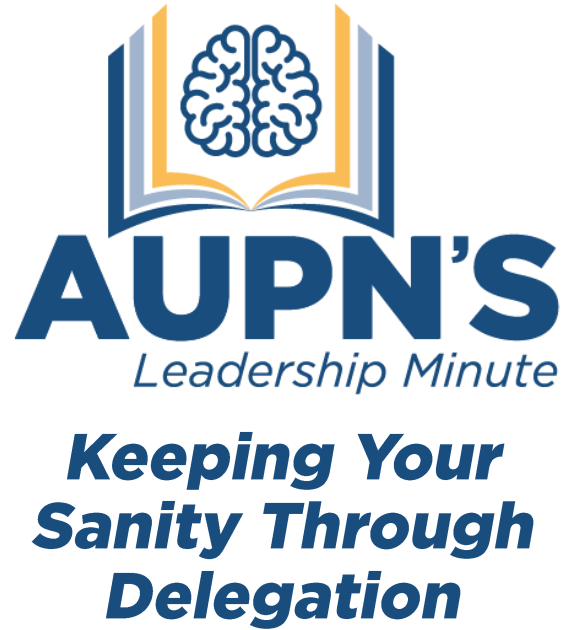




Donald S. Higgins, Jr. MD
Veterans Administration



John Greenfield, MD, PhD
University of Connecticut
School of Medicine

Delegation is an essential leadership skill

- Transfer of responsibility for a task or area to another person.
- Essential to manage a complex and busy organization
 - Important to be involved, but you can't do everything yourself
 - Retaining primary responsibility for everything limits productivity
 - Keeping all the important jobs fails to develop leadership talent in your faculty
- Benefits:
 - Empowers faculty and employees - trains them to take on more responsibility
 - Boosts morale
 - Increases productivity
 - Reduces leader burnout

Why chairs resist delegating

- For new leaders, giving up direct responsibility may be hard
 - Most rose to leadership positions through individual accomplishments
 - You became a chair because of your own work, not necessarily your management skills
- Many reasons for chairs not to delegate responsibilities:²
 - Think it would take longer to explain the task than actually completing it themselves
 - Want to feel indispensable to their team by being the keeper of specific knowledge
 - Enjoy completing certain projects so prefer not to reassign them
 - Feel guilty about adding more work onto another employee's to-do list
 - Lack confidence or trust in who they need to transfer the project to
 - Believe that they're the only ones who can do the job right
- As tasks become more complex, be less “involved” and more “essential”
 - You are not delegating enough if your plans stop when you are not around
 - Determine what tasks and decisions to take on yourself, and assign or decline the rest
 - Lead by shaping the thoughts and ideas of others instead of dictating their plans

Delegation Tips for Chairs²

- 1. Know What to Delegate
 - Can someone else do the work better, or is it good for their career?
- 2. Play to Your Employees' Strengths and Goals
 - Assign specific tasks appropriate to level of authority and skill set
- 3. Define the Desired Outcome
 - What does good look like?
 - What timeline for specific stages or completion?
 - How will accomplishment be measured?
 - What consequences for not completing the task or doing it poorly?

Delegation Tips for Chairs²

- 4. Provide Resources and Authority
 - Ensure that your delegate has the training, resources, or level of authority to complete the assigned project
 - Resist the urge to micromanage and specify every detail
 - Focus on the desired end goal and why it is important
- 5. Monitor Progress Regularly
 - Establish a clear communication channel for regular progress reports
- 6. Empower experimentation
 - New ideas /approaches may be useful even if exact goals are not met.

Delegation Tips for Chairs²

- 7. Be Patient
 - A task may take someone with less experience a lot longer than you
 - Don't fail to delegate just because you can do it faster
 - As delegates get more experience, their efficiency and skills improve
- 8. Deliver (and Ask For) Feedback
 - If task not completed as requested, offer constructive criticism.
 - Show your appreciation when a task was done well.
- 9. Give Credit Where It's Due
 - Taking unearned credit for work of others will undermine morale
 - Recognizing success of others shows you value their work
 - Demonstrates that you are an engaged leader

Organizing Delegation in your Department

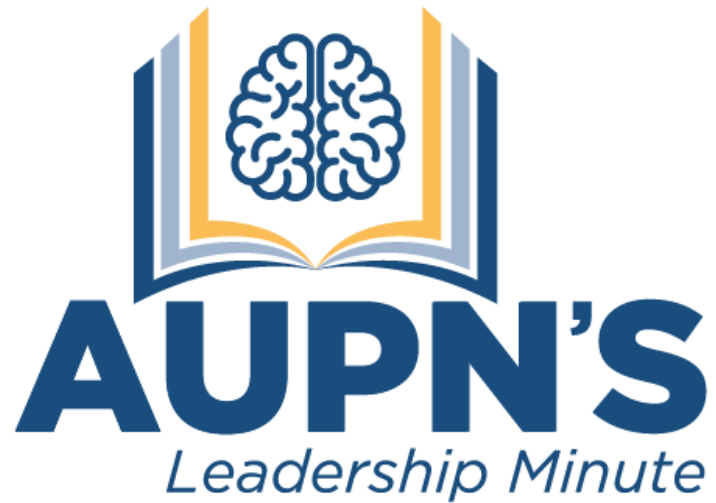
- Department hierarchies provide a structure for delegation
 - Vice chairs for Clinical/Research/Education/Administration
 - Clinical divisions with division chiefs
 - Support staff can take on routine administrative tasks
 - Some chairs hire Project Directors focused on specific big goals
- Consider with each new task:
 - Does it really need to be done? – If not, say no.
 - Does it really need to be done by me? – If not, delegate it.
- Reassign tasks that are not performed to your satisfaction
 - Resist the urge to “just do it yourself”

References

- 1. Sostrin, Jesse. To Be a Great Leader, You Have to Learn How to Delegate Well. Harvard Business Review online, <https://hbr.org/2017/10/to-be-a-great-leader-you-have-to-learn-how-to-delegate-well>
- 2. Landry, Lauren. How to delegate effectively. HBR online. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-delegate-effectively>

Leadership Minute Summary: Keeping Your Sanity Through Delegation

- Department chairs should resist the urge to retain all important jobs and decisions to themselves.
- Delegation of tasks will make you more productive, empower your team, and improve morale.
- You should delegate tasks appropriate to the skills and authority of those assigned, with specific goals and timelines, and require periodic progress reports.
- Resist the urge to micromanage, and encourage experimentation and new ideas.
- Provide the time and resources needed for the task.
- Give public praise or private constructive criticism, and give credit for a job well done.
- Delegating smaller tasks allows you to focus on the big picture and steer the course for your department.



AUPN's Leadership Minute is
brought to you by...

*The Association of University
Professors of Neurology*

Copyright 2022